

HIM
WHO-
CARES
TILL
WHEN

H. Kirk Rainer



MY HOME INDUSTRY

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ISBN Pending

Campaign Printing
Published by My Home Industry

The book is being published as a “Campaign Version”, and as such, is not being sold or distributed for profit.

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The most significant thing about [man] is what he thinks; and significant also is how he came to think it, why he continued to think it, or, if he did not continue, what the influences were which caused him to change his mind.

- Albert Jay Nock, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*

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Till When

This story is about a family of four children whose life is (or lives are) forever changed by divorce. This change is not altogether bad or negative, but it is worthy to be shared for them and by them—as well for others like them. And by “worthy” to mean that it is a “change” that affects many children of many families in the present time and place; and it is something for which I am personally and painfully aware.

Whereas it is a fiction, the story could very well represent some part of the experience(s) of many children bereft of the better (life) possible with intact families; therefore, it is aimed to represent some of what children (or young people) can incur in the consequence of divorce—especially as it pertains to severed and sometimes irrecoverable relations with parents, grandparents and other immediate and extended family and friends. Again, their lives are forever changed.

Children of divorce are not alone in the consequences that I possibly include here; in fact, the state of our society, the present time and place, is such that many children begin their life without a resident father if a father at all; and still others without any parent, of course. Please understand that I have not selected divorce as a single condition for such disadvantages, but only because it is a condition that I am familiar with first hand (to the degree that I feel confident to write about it).

Besides experiencing divorce and parental alienation, I have spent time learning and writing about it; thus, this story is but a continuation of much accomplished already.¹ I am an aspiring writer, not a lawyer or counselor, with a passion and purpose to complete this project just as those projects beforehand.² At the same time, I am (or should be) always pursuing the objective to understand and to undertake what matters most to me and to those whom I care about Till When.

¹ Learning and writing has been a way of working through the losses; it has enabled some understanding of larger context of divorce, parental alienation and other conditions in, through and from divorce.

² Other projects or books/works include: *A Once and Always Father*; *A Father and Future Felon*; and *His Children are Far from Safety*.

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The story begins in the present; where each of the children is a young adult. They have their own lives ahead of them yet now—more than ever—share a common and coincidental interest in learning about the past, the divorce and afterward (in keeping with actual patterns for such delayed or deferred inquiry and investigation).³ At times they may join with one or more of the other (siblings) in conversation but more often they prefer a one-on-one; and in the setting however, they (one or more) confer with someone **Who-Cares**.⁴

Each conversation/conference is conducted on more of a causal (rather than formal) way; and as a series, occurs over a time period of perhaps years. The dialogue (or content) is not in anyway clinical or professional; it is much more like mentoring (as in examples you might think of from your own experiences).

Recollections and flashbacks will occur in the course of the dialogue, enabling the young-adult to describe or detail the past with the possibilities that such will lend toward redressing and reconciliation. Changing of time and place, coupled with the shifting of point-of-view, is aimed at reaching some progress on the matter (or matters) under discussion—though some questions may never be satisfactorily answered, let alone addressed, by one or more of the characters.

Insight and intelligence must be acquired without the facilitation or coordination of professional counselors or therapists. And though this objective is daunting, it is believed to be doable through the devices gathered through: my own direct experience; that acquired or obtained through some prior and forthcoming resources; and some invention still be determined and developed. “Casual” is the course for dialog coupled with the patience to listen, a pursuit of learning, and practice of love.

³ Adults that experienced divorce as children may reach middle-age before taking such an interest in the past—if an interest at all. These four experienced divorce between the ages of three and ten; thus, the “common and coincidental interest” would be unlikely though described here as the setting and situation.

⁴ The character, **Who-Cares**, is not a counselor or therapist; yet he is a person who cares, and further, has some insight and intelligence specific and general to their background and presents interests.

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The title of the book, “Him **Who-Cares** Till When”, was derived at the onset of the idea; it is gender-specific because it is developed and determined as having a male central character (“him”) and point-of-view from experience described prior. **Who-Cares** is the name of this character as well as a part of the title posed as both a question or statement, highlighted in the color **red**, for attention-attraction.

Red is the thematic color of this book, suggesting both anger and love as immediate impressions and, overall, the following impression and interpretation:

Positive: physical courage, strength, warmth, energy, basic survival, 'fight or flight', stimulation, masculinity, excitement

Negative: defiance, aggression, visual impact, strain ⁵

The color **red** is the color of energy, passion and action. From another source on impressions:

Being surrounded by too much of the color red can cause us to become irritated, agitated and ultimately angry. Too little and we become cautious, manipulative and fearful. ⁶

As a favorite color (of someone, not me), red has similar-described associations to personality, both positive and negative.

The choice of font style (AR JULIAN) was likewise based on impression; here, as to importance as with bold, uppercase text. A simple design overall, the cover's image is a presumed father holding his child in such a way as men or father's are more likely to do; a kind of daring or playful “way” usually aimed at eliciting excitement most often in the baby, but sometimes in the mother too. ⁷ Ideally, this “way” of playing is done with kind of care suggested in the story.

Chapter titles begin with an action verb in a series to suggest a track from the past to the future (with some give and take along the track).






⁵ Psychological Properties of Colors; colour-affects.co.uk/psychological-properties-of-colours.

⁶ Empower yourself with color psychology; empower-yourself-with-color-psychology.com/color-red.html.

⁷ Based on experience...favorable or not.

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Subtitles of the content is something that is under development, even now, as I write this sentence; but, with some initial thought, will be posed as a question or, in later chapters, a phrase or line from any or all of the following lyrics-music:

-  “Red Rubber Ball” (1966)
-  “Flowers Never Bend with the Rainfall” (1965)
-  “Child for a Day” (1977)
-  “Rhymes and Reasons” (1969)
-  ...and still more to come

I should add that this music has been an inspiration too.

With some introduction to characterization, the main character, I present the other participants; namely, the siblings in order for oldest to youngest by first and middle name, gender and a brief description:⁸

- Good-Hero, male - assumes the parental role, this child attempts to do everything right as high achiever, ambitious and responsible
- Problem-Rebel, male - blamed for most problems (scapegoat), he might be the most emotionally stable of the lot; yet, this child does very little right and is quite rebellious, perhaps even antisocial
- Lost-Silence, female - the quiet one, whose needs are usually ignored or hidden, this child maintains balance in the family by simply disappearing—by not demanding attention, causing no new problems, and requiring minimal attention
- Comedy-Mascot, male - uses comedy to divert attention, this child (usually the youngest) often adopts the role of the mascot that everyone in the family likes because of his antics as well as his fragility, vulnerability

As noted in Wikipedia; the child or young person may emulate more than one “description” and, of consideration, each may exhibit one or more other “effects”, usually negative. A brief bio or background of each in provided in Author’s Notes.

⁸ Four basic roles of children in dysfunctional or drug-dependent families; wikipedia.org/wiki/Dysfunctional_family.

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The five characters will engage in conversation/conferences that will trace the life (and lives) of each all members from childhood to the present, creating a story type of family history with the possibility-probability for growth through:

- Acceptance
- Emotional healing
- Faith
- Forgiveness-Freedom
- Friendship
- Justice
- Loyalty
- Restoration-Redemption
- Survival (of family...)

The conversation/conferences will lend to character development, role description, and growth opportunity; and through this “track”, address the deeper, sensitive questions in such areas as: ⁹

- ? Adversaries/Allies
- ? Darkest/Brightest (events and experiences)
- ? Goals (at different ages)
- ? Motivations (deepest longings)
- ? Power (tools-techniques, uses and abuses, etc,)
- ? Secret (struggle to conceal)
- ? Self-concept/Legacy (as to be remembered for)
- ? Traits (positive and negative...strengths and weaknesses)
- ? Trauma (tic) event(s)

The structure and flow of conversations/conferences may begin with a problem or a symptom, followed by the possible effort at resolution and growth is in some order or activity like:

- Symptom-Problem
- Complications-Crisis
- Repair-Resolution
- Feedback-Assessment

⁹ A Writer's Guide to Fiction, Elizabeth Lyon.

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And while this “order” seems ideal (for growth opportunity), it may not always follow or flow—the dialogue or conversations develop to the degree or depth at which even “step 1” is possible. The deeper the metaphorical dive, the more pressure as well as the more time applied in recovery. *Diving deep* is exhilarating but exhausting—not to mention frightening (as what might be down there)—which is why the order or activity stops often short of the vital feedback-assessment (if even to go that far). Such growth (resolving personal problems) is much more complex than what I suggest in my metaphor; so in other words, growth is not just about the willingness to *dive* or *go deep*. I mention this for two reasons:

- I cannot pretend to be of such profession(s) though using similar counseling-type structure and flow
- I cannot write beyond my qualification or sphere of understanding

Growth, *diving deep* or by any similar description, the efficacy or effectiveness of the order and activity—in its full complement and completeness—goes even further than what is listed as four (4) steps. My simplification is more associated with my own profession where “problem-solving” applies to processes, not persons. Additional information of this structure and flow is provided in Author’s Notes.

Organization form of this story is most similar to the frame-story.¹⁰ Each character, their individual and shared stories, will be introduced from the primary narrative of Who-Cares. These frames will include an occasional flashback or recollection of a relevant event or experience. Interest and intrigue will evolve from each smaller story (or frame) as one or more of the characters interact and react with expected agitation, even anguish. But if the *track* or journey was easy, the arrival or finish would not be nearly as rewarding, right?

¹⁰ Frame-story: a technique that sometimes serves as a companion piece to a story within a story, whereby an introductory or main narrative is presented, at least in part, for the purpose of setting the stage either for a more emphasized second narrative or for a set of shorter stories. The frame story leads readers from a first story into another, smaller one (or several ones) within it; Wikipedia.

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The story begins with **Who-Cares**; the primary narrator and intended mentor for the other participants, the siblings. In this introduction, the reader should begin to form answers to the following questions about this character, his purpose:

- ? Who I am (am an not)
- ? Why I am doing this (attempting to mentor...)
- ? What I hope to accomplish (my goals and objectives)
- ? How I will proceed to the degree that planning is possible
- ? ...and maybe more

With this introduction and the referenced material in Author's Notes, the reader should have a good base to begin the story.

Another question is: "Where to begin" (as to time and place) for this is crucial to a story of frames and flashbacks. As I see it, the story begins when the sibling's ages extend from the mid-30 to mid-20 range. And as to this choice, it has to do with the "typical" time when young people (of divorce) pursue the past as to what happened—and what didn't.... But as to geography, the story will purposely omit any reference to place or location, providing only sketchy details of the immediate setting. The reason is simple: the children are likely to be living at distances that would only constrain or prevent this kind of all-in-one approach. For the reader and writer, the absence of any definitive place is beneficial in that it removes the non-essentials (for effective conversation/conferencing).

But while geography is minimized, the sequence is very important; that is, the order in which these conferences occur. Think of it like a series of activities that have some hierarchy or precedence; that the order or sequence has some logic that must be planned and processed in order or ranking—and not only with each sibling, but also among the group where age and other factors help construct a more complete and coherent story. So the timeline or sequence will begin with the oldest, Good-Hero, and proceed by age, at least in the first pass; and from there, Who-Cares will follow some planned order-arrangement, one to the next, aimed at accomplishing what he set out to do.

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Of course, plans or planning can only go so far—especially in considering the conditions that depend on the cooperation and conduct of the sibling(s). So in this approach, the details of the conversation(s) are yet to be fully assigned or anticipated; dialogue is not yet determined, but will be ad hoc, or left to later determination as serendipitous.

I should also desire that the efficiency and effectiveness improve as time passes; that is, that the two (or more) in conversation will become increasingly comfortable with confident in the effort to share—while accepting the contradiction and confrontation that are customary with such effort at mutual understanding, problem resolution and growth.

As to overall time (months, years), the story will transpire without specific elapsed time. Of course, therapy can go on for years; but here I will avoid such detail in a similar way that geography is overlooked. So think of it as like an experiment where selected factors or variables remain constant—thus enabling concentration on topic and testimony somewhat independent of time and place.

A final list of topics for conservation is not available (yet), but here a few for consideration:

- Abandonment (anger, fear)
- Abuse (physical, emotional, etc.)
- Addiction (legal/illegal drugs, alcohol)
- Adolescence (with connection to adulthood)
- Adulthood (many possibilities on subtopic)
- Anger (several possibilities on subtopic)
- Anxiety

And without going further above, a more-extensive list is provided in Author's Notes.

Certainly, this story is about a family in consequence(s) of divorce; but I believe that it is easily extended or expanded to other areas—so as to resonant for those with an interest in such trends that impact and impede society and culture. From personal experience, I believe that divorce is war—*conflict and contention*—as will be proposed (and possibly proven) in the story. And as with war, the first casualty of

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divorce is always the truth. Beyond that however is the carnage; all that which is destroyed or dismantled in the pursuit, process and post-divorce experience. In the classic multi-decade study of a controlled group of children of divorce, the authors-analysts begin with this description:

Divorce is deceptive. Legally it is a single event, but psychologically it is a chain—sometimes a never ending chain—of events, relocations, and radically shifting relationships strung through time, a process that forever changes the lives of the people involved. In families with children, divorce is rarely a mutual decision. One person wants out while the other person goes along reluctantly or opposes it, moderately or vigorously.¹¹

Associating divorce to war need not go any further than to accept that both are a breakdown in policy and, in the matter of marriage, an attempt at resolving a personal matter through a public institution (i.e. civil government). Divorce is like war in that both involve a public institution that invariably acts in its own interests.

Civil courts customarily act in their own interests (or that of state); hence are not oriented toward the best interest of marriages, families and relations of society and culture. To endure the litigation of divorce is to realize firsthand that the state is not only ill-equipped to be such an authority or arbitrator, but is downright dangerous—as recent history has already proven.¹² Thus the association to war is more about aggression toward the institution of marriage rather than within it, as Dr. Stephen Baskerville laments in “Divorced from Reality”:

G. K. Chesterton once observed that the family serves as the principal check on government power, and he suggested that someday the family and the state would confront one another. **That day has arrived.**¹³

¹¹ *Second Chances (...Who Wins, Who Loses – and Why)*, Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee, 1988.

¹² The consequences of so-called divorce reform have been devastating; skyrocketing divorce and, secondarily, declining marriage per capita.

¹³ “We’re from the Government, and we’re here to End Your Marriage” Stephen Baskerville, 2008.

Before Now

I am one who cares before now; indeed, I have cared all along—from the beginning till when.... My name is **Who-Cares**.

Why do I care about them, or those like them (who have been the victims of dissolved marriages and dismembered families)? I know of their condition—and the conditions—that have led to increasing numbers of fatherless and forgotten souls. Further, I know of how and why such a condition occurs—of the conditions that cause or contribute to such circumstances for so many children and young people.¹⁴

I know that at least three institutions were formed and ordained to co-exist; these are:

- Church (the commitment to the creator of all things)
- Marriage (the commitment to culture, society and its future)
- Civil government (the commitment to law and order)

But these institutions are not mutually compatible (if they ever were). As it is today, civil government has undermined marriage—and even the church, I believe.¹⁵ Such displaced authority has diluted the institution of marriage—among other adverse societal effects—resulting in fewer marriages per capita on a consistent trend over several decades.¹⁶ If this trend continues, marriage per capita could be less than a quarter of the adult population in another three to four decades.

One central reason for decreasing marriage (per capita) is divorce; and specifically, divorce “reforms” that began in the 1970s. Such so-called reforms have done more to dilute marriage than any single, additional development in the cause & effect. By such names as “No-Fault” and/or “Uncontested” divorce, civil government has undermined

¹⁴ These “circumstances” cover several related statistics from increasing divorce rates (1970-90’s) and declining marriage per capita (1960’s to the present); and as to the health of family, increasing risks and incidence of social ills of all kinds for young people of single-parent homes (crime, drugs, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, mental and emotional health)

¹⁵ See the history of the 501(c)(3) and state-imposed censorship as credited to President Lyndon B. Johnson.

¹⁶ Numerous sources show decreasing per capita marriages from the 1960s to the present; a trend that show incremental but consistent decline.

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marriage in arguably an indirect way or approach.¹⁷ Subsidizing divorce (or making it more available and accessible) has rendered marriage less stable or secure—thus reducing this crucial institution to something less than what it was (or should be) as a contributing part a culture and society.¹⁸ Such reforms have likewise lessened law and order, as a contradiction to the purpose of civil law, while undermining the purpose of marriage as a commitment to society and its future.

Of course, individuals drive the decision of divorce; or said another way, are directly responsible for their marriage. But divorce is transacted by civil law or the state. Persons can be responsible for marital problems, but it is the litigators and civil authorities that establish and enforce laws. The subsidizing of divorce—both removing any justification (No-fault) and mutual consent (Unilateral or Uncontested)—has indirectly but intentionally undermined marriage. The effects of such subsidizing does not stop at the institution of marriage, but have adversely affected other associations:

- Fatherhood (the deterioration of fatherhood)
- Parenting (the multi-sourced diminishing of parenting)
- Child Development (the dilemmas of child development)
- Community and Society (the decline of service and services)

I believe that each of these associations should be addressed as a primer and preparation for the discussion of topics yet to come.

As a *once and always father*, I have witnessed much of what I share and express as it pertains in all these associations of a viable society vis-à-vis the clear and present danger imposed by civil law. I know that civil law is not entirely at cause; yet, I am convinced that the state is largely at fault as described thus far and in the content to come.

¹⁷ “Back-door entry”, as opposed to a front-door, described divorce as the means by which to dilute and eventually destroy marriage as an institution.

¹⁸ Anything the government subsidizes—you get more of it—is the claim in these comments; and as to divorce, subsidies have occurred in the described reforms that generally make divorce more viable and more voluminous.

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Why is the state complicit in fatherlessness?

Fatherlessness has always occurred, yes; but the systematic process of increasing fatherlessness has not; for in the modern day, the arrival of single-parent custody—as a consequence of divorce—has fostered fatherlessness.¹⁹ In his book *Life without Father*, David Popenoe writes:

The end result of many cultural, social, and economic trends we have discussed is a society surprisingly unsupportive of fatherhood. Indeed, if one were specifically to design a culture and a social system for the express purpose of undercutting fatherhood and men's contribution to family life, our current society would be close to what would result.

When fit parents are forced to surrender their children, they are being subjected to tyranny—and nothing less—and thus a state that not only disregards the importance of parenting, but the basic needs and interests of children too. For a list of the “key elements” of Popenoe's assertion and assessment, see Author's Notes.

In this *systematic process*, the consequences might be argued that the child or children are **not** fatherless, but more so, regulated as to life with a non-custodial. But in the truth, the children have lost this parent, whether measured in presence or any other natural and sensible metric; hence, forced fatherlessness, post-divorce, with the end result:

From almost every social and cultural perspective, fatherhood has been made not only increasingly difficult but often seemingly superfluous and unnecessary.²⁰

Refer to the Author's Notes for more on the Popenoe's assertions and assessment.

¹⁹ Single-parent custody is more the rule than the exception; the state's awarding of the children to one parent while practically discharging the other parent from the care of their biological children. Behind this trend is a federal child support program that drives civil courts to establish single-parent custody (over joint-custody)

²⁰ *Life without Father*, David Popenoe, 1996.

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To understand the reason(s) is to accept the very nature of the state; *power for possession*. Yes, by its own nature, the state obtains power at the expense of society, as Albert Jay Nock proposes:

Therefore ,every assumption of State power, whether by gift or seizure, leaves society with so much less power; there is never, nor can be, any strengthening of State power without a corresponding and roughly equivalent depletion of social power.²¹

As the state continues on the prowl, it does so at the expense of society in general and fatherless, of one of several associations of marriage and family, in particular. Yes, fatherlessness has been in existence for millennia, but the systematic discharging and disposal of fathers that I describe here is part and parcel that of the state's civil law. It is not the single cause for fatherlessness, but civil law is a systemic one, as described by Stephen Baskerville:

Divorce licenses unprecedented government intrusion into family life, including the power to sunder families, seize children, loot family wealth, and incarcerate parents without trial. Comprised of family courts and vast, federally-funded social services' bureaucracies that wield what amount to police powers, the divorce machinery has become the most predatory and repressive sector of government ever created in the United States and is today's greatest threat to constitutional freedom.²²

I do not take this cause lightly or flippantly—as though another feeble attempt at blaming the government for personal choices or behavior, destructive or not. But rather, I hold to that which I have learned and am learning, eyes-wide-open, in spite of the anguish and anger of it all. I should add here that this condition is not limited to fathers or men; for in fact, parenting has more generally been the target of the state as well as other sources—forces working counter to social strength.²³

²¹ *Our Enemy, the State*, Albert Jay Nock, 1935.

²² “We’re from the Government, and we’re Here to End Your Marriage”, 2008.

²³ Sources are public and private agencies that gain or profit from divorce child-custody. Stephen Baskerville refers to it as the divorce machinery.

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You don't have to go far to find these "sources" that seem a system of their own (as to the net effect of diminishing parenting). Even the fathers absent their children have been disproportionately and deceptively stigmatized as "Dead-Beat Dads", as David Blankenhorn describes in *Fatherlessness America*:

The Deadbeat Dad has emerged as our principal cultural model for ex-fathers, for obviously failed fathers. As a cultural category, the Deadbeat Dad has become our primary symbol of the growing failure of fatherhood in our society...Consequently, we vilify him, we threaten him – we demand that he pay—largely because he so clearly embodies the contemporary collapse of good-enough fatherhood.²⁴

But a question might be considered here; that is: "What would you do if your children were unjustifiably taken from your charge...and then you are imputed with the liability of their care, the financial expenses?"

Why is the state (and other sources) diminishing parenting?

As to this associations (of marriage), the state and other *sources* have certainly contributed to the diminishing...as an essential part of family, community and culture. But as to the state alone, Stephen Baskerville writes in "Divorced from Reality":

The growth of the divorce machinery during the 1970s and 1980s did not follow but preceded (in other words, it generated) a series of hysterias against parents—especially fathers—so hideous and inflammatory that no one, left or right, dared question them or defend those accused: child abuse and molestation, wife-beating, and nonpayment of "child support." Each of these hysterias has been propagated largely by feminists, bar associations, and social work bureaucracies, whose federal funding is generously shared with state and local law-enforcement officials.

I could describe other *sources*, such as sitcoms and films, which have also contributed to this diminishing effect. But as it is, they have become

²⁴ *Fatherless America*, David Blankenhorn, 1995.

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so common—as generalizations of the norm—that they are often overlooked without much regard as to the influence and impact to public perception and private persuasion.

The state and these other sources demote parenthood in what I believe is both a calculated and concerted critique; that is, to degrade this essential role as largely superfluous, if not scandalous, in the responsibility of children’s development and well being. Yes, and “calculated” in that, beyond the hilarity or the seasonal ratings for such media, is the effect of diminishing parenting.

Why destroy marriage and its associations?

Today’s western family is described as the atomistic family.²⁵ In fact, we live in an atomistic society, where the myth is made that the individual is the ‘atom’ of society and therefore the only true object of concern and analysis.²⁶ Promoting individualism removes all associations that stand between the state and the individual—with promotion and pomp placed attractively under such phrases or descriptions as:

- Self-determination, -reliance, -sufficiency, -rule
- Freedom of choice
- Autonomy, independence

By any or all of this names, individualism seems beneficial—but for whom or what? Certainly not for the family or even the local community, but rather, for those whose interests are served when these intermediaries are marginalized and the single soul is seemingly left to their own determination, reliance or by any other description. Yes, and “concerted” in that, beyond the appeal and promises of individualism by any name, is the effect to destroy marriage and its associations. Please refer to Author’s Notes, Poponoe’s assessment and assertions, “Key Elements One would want to Incorporate”, for more details.

²⁵ The atomistic family is described as one where the individual is to freed from family bonds, and the state is to become much more an organization of individuals; *Family and Civilization*, Carle C. Zimmerman, 2008.

²⁶ From Wikipedia; Atomistic-Family.

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But instead of merely making my belief known, I will offer supportive material from *Family and Civilization*.²⁷ Carle Zimmerman writes on the family and individualism:

If it [family] breakups because of its failure to satisfy individualism, it is generally modified by the state by a reduction of power.

When it fails to satisfy the extreme individualism, the atomistic family is broken up by the individuals, oftentimes with the aid and blessing of the state, and the end result is temporary family negativism, nullification, and nihilism.²⁸

What better way is there to reduce that power than to undermine marriage and its associations while appealing to the individual? To respond to this question, I turn first to legalized abortion and then to divorce reform.

- Legalized abortion - a promotional theme of “choice” in regard to individual health and welfare. Yes, legalization does afford some self-determination (and risks mitigation), but this promotion is mostly a ploy for which the state has aimed to reduce our population regardless of the ethics and the application of arbitrary law.²⁹
- No-Fault and Uncontested – a promotional theme in regard to self-determination; the legal latitude to “get out of a bad marriage” without justification and/or mutual consent. And again, some truth to this proposition; yet at the core, a plan that has nothing to do with choice, freedom or self-determination—except as it serves the state. What better way is there to dupe society than to segregate the population—or destroy social strength—while appealing to the disavowed, deceived soul, now obliged to state power?³⁰

²⁷ *Family and Civilization* is the work of Carle Zimmerman, first published in 1947. This resource is described as “much-needed insight into our current social crisis...in the midst of a climatic breakup of family life”; Bryce Christensen in the article, “Carle Zimmerman Confronts the West’s Third Family Crisis.”

²⁸ *Family and Civilization*, p.23.

²⁹ Legalized abortion was possible only through the use of arbitrary law; the Supreme Court’s decision was not scientific in its foundation but, rather, was merely arbitrary as to when human life begins. The passing of legalized abortion occurred through expedience—where the desired end justifies the means.

³⁰ This question/statement is implying the *divide and conquer* tactics, whereby power (or rule) is obtained through the division of social strength—often in the instigation of one or more crisis or causes for state funding and intervention.

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Not just the family, but more so, society is now more atomistic than every before.

Husband, wife and children no longer “belong” to each other in any real sense. They are **not** fundamentally responsible for each other (allowing for the differences in the capacity of minors). Interfamily [law-] suits are permissible and, to some extent, each member is accepted as capable of giving evidence in the courts against each other.³¹

In this classification comes a certain increase in divorce much as described previously, as beginning in the 1970s.

What about child development and rearing?

It seems necessary to include children, since they are central to the story and part of the “associations”. Certainly the children have already been addressed to some degree, but the matter deserves more in terms of not just these children but potentially their children too, or future generations.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.” And as time passes, I am increasingly aware that times are **not** getting better, especially for these future generations. Much could be said about these modern times whether to State, some states, or geography beyond. But for continuity, the subject will remain related to divorce only (though having relations to the conditions for children in other situations too).

The Future of Marriage, another of David Blankenhorn works, is where I begin to trace the connection between children and divorce; that that later ushers-in a host of possible or certain risks for children, not just as children or young people, but as adults (who carry the failures of that early impressionable age well into the adult lives).

³¹ *Family and Civilization*, p.39.

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Child development or rearing is best served in two-parent families where they may share these duties—each making a separate and then shared contribution driven by instinctive (or natural) , cultural, economic and even spiritual inspiration and influence. When the household is reduced to a single-parent, such possibilities are generally diminished per the findings in a 1996 study of the Urban Institute:

The results [of the study] show that the 1971-1989 trend away from marriage among parents accounted for nearly half of the increase in income inequality among children and for the entire rise of child poverty rates.... Thus, despite the lower earnings of today's unmarried men, raising the proportion of mothers who are married would substantially reduce poverty in the U.S. ³²

More recently, Paul R. Amato of Penn State University has published statistics (2005) in relation to these findings centered on the question or proposal:

If the proportion of U.S. children living with their two biological parents were as high as it was in 1980, what would be the likely impact on the range of social problems? Alternatively, what if the proportion was as high as it was in 1970?

For which conclusions were drawn (based on a detailed study of which I do not have before me, nor will I attempt to share at this time) in several categories that are provided in the Author's Notes.

Continuing in David Blankenhorn's *The Future of Marriage*, the following would be required to restore 1980 and 1970 proportions of two-biological parent households.

- ❶ The proportion of children living with both biological parents would need to rise 4.3% to reach that of 1980
- ❷ The proportion of children living with both biological parents would need to rise 9% to reach that of 1970

So it seems that from 1970 to somewhere around 2005, the percentage of non-two-biological-parent homes has dropped by about 10 percent.

³² *The Future of Marriage*, David Blankenhorn, 2007, p.294.

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To update this demographic (the number of single-parent household are households with both biological parents), I turn to other sources that ideally support rather than detract from this study while emphasizing that if the above were projected forward to the present, the same proportion would translate to a demographic of about a 20-25% from 1970 to 2014 (so that the actual number in 1970 would need to be raised by this percentage). But to try to put these “proportions” into a salient statistic, I turn to the resource, “About Parenting”; and specifically, the referenced report “Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2009” and supporting data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Among the findings is that:

There are approximately 13.7 million single parents in the United States today, and those parents are responsible for raising 22 million children. This number represents approximately 26% of children under 21 in the U.S. today.³³

So it seems on these finding that, as of 2009, more than a quarter of children are living in single-parent households with some percentage (reported at 44 to 53 percent of these households depending on the parent’s gender) as a consequence of divorce.

Lest we forget—if we have ever known—a healthy society is an extension of a healthy community, and a healthy community and society is one that is self-ruled:

A community depends on something that makes it a community and keeps it a community; that is, allots to its members their respective shares in whatever is divided between them and causes them to remain faithful to this allotment; maintains the *sum cuique* which is the essence of its communal character.³⁴ A society rules itself by the activity of its members’ social will; a society is a *self-ruling* community.

³³ Single Parent Statistics: Census Data on the Number of Kids Being Raised by One Parent, Jennifer Wolf; singleparents.about.com/od/legalissues/p/portrait.htm.

³⁴ The establishment and maintenance of its *sum cuique* is its ruling; *Family and Civilization*.

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The statistics are distinctly in favor of two-biological-parents as to child development and rearing; therefore, the following general conclusions and recommendation relative to divorce as a significant contribution to single-parent households:

- Divorce (and single-parent custody) contributes to roughly half of single-parent households and thus, if reduced, could at least reduce the growth rate while at the same time preserve the generally better conditions for child development and rearing
- Divorce (and shared-parent custody) is a viable option for which the parents are legally on equal footing and thus are less likely to be stymied in their duty and determination to care for their children
- In connection with single-parent custody, Title IV-D only degrades from *the best interest of the children* by placing state interests—the collection of subsidies from child enforcement collections—as the priority of custody decisions. For more information on Title IV-D, see Author's Notes.
- Divorce (or civil law) has been a major contribution to the described and detailed effects of single-parent households; with the following probabilities, even proposals:
 - Reform the so-called reforms so as to draw-down divorce to rates at or lower than the 1960s (before the spread of No-Fault and Uncontested laws) when marriage and family peaked
 - Safeguard common-law marriage under ecclesiastical or ecumenical such that civil law has no jurisdiction per the first amendment, *separation of church and state*³⁵
 - Remove or mitigate current constraints to marriage—as largely the consequence of skyrocketing divorce beginning in the 70s

These conclusions and recommendations may seem too outlandish (obtuse, idealistic, or otherwise); but as child rearing and development is vital to the overall health of society (and even the state), such a description may better be understood as desperation, not diplomacy. For more on this, please refer to Author's Notes, David Blankenhorn's "ideals on re-institutionalizing marriage",

³⁵ Historical accounts-activity where the church provided sanctuary....

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What about Society and Culture?

Several decades of divorce reform, beginning in the 70s, has produced not only unprecedented divorce rates but a host of secondary effects lending to the overall lessening of societal strength or viability. As such “strength” wanes, political power rises (referring to Albert Nock’s *Our Enemy, the State*) and, thus, more oppressive government or state power.... And while this statement may seem outlandish (alarmist, extremist, or otherwise) too, it is more realistic than perhaps meets the eye—referring again to David Poponoe’s Assertion, Assessment and “key elements one would have to incorporate” in Author’s Notes.

Culture, society, community, marriage and family are interrelated; the connection is something of which I will not attempt at any academic detail other than to show that where marriage and family goes, so goes a society and culture. Perhaps the best way to underscore this connection to the present, Atomistic Family, is with *Family and Civilization*, that:

...when [the family] is distinctly weak in a society, all the cultural elements take on an antifamily tinge...the family seems unimportant and the whole culture takes on individualistic coloration... everything is individualized.³⁶

Consider the questions:

- ? What is individualism (as it relates to marriage and its associations)
- ? Which came first; the weak, atomistic family or the “antifamily tinge” or “individualistic coloration”
- ? What is individualism (to the state, its interests)
- ? What is left of culture and society (after individualism)?

³⁶ *Family and Civilization*, p.192.

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What is individualism in culture, marriage and family?

With an orientation to psychology, the following describes individualism in connection with culture:

- Cultures are typically divided into two categories: collectivist and individualist
- Collectivism and individualism deeply pervade cultures
- Both collectivist and individualistic cultures have their failings. People in individualist cultures are susceptible to loneliness, and people in collectivist cultures can have a strong fear of rejection
- Individualistic [persons] are self-assured and very independent people. They are quiet and realistic, very rational, extremely matter of fact people. They strongly cultivate their individualism and enjoy applying their abilities to new tasks.
- Individualistic [persons] are also very spontaneous and impulsive who like to follow their sudden inspirations ³⁷

As individualism applied to marriage and family, the following possibilities or personal traits (from the same source, Psychology Wiki):

- "I" identity ("me, myself and I").
- Individual rights are seen as being the most important. Rules attempt to ensure self-importance and individualism.
- Independence is valued; there is much less of a drive to help other citizens or communities than in collectivism.
- Relying or being dependent on others is frequently seen as shameful (self-reliance).
- People are encouraged to do things on their own; to rely on themselves.

It would seem that individualism would **not** (or will not) bode well for marriage and family; that overall, these traits would run counter to the needs and preferences. For more details, see "Is Marriage Dying" in Author's Notes.

³⁷ Collectivist and individualist cultures, Psychology Wiki;
psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Collectivist_and_individualist_cultures.

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Even with an individualistic-oriented society, marriage continues on some course however. From the source, the Institute of Family Studies, the following on individualism and marriage in modern society:

- Although some prominent family scholars share the widely held view that marriage has grown less *institutionalized* and more individualistic, measures of how married couples actually live suggest that rather than maintaining separate, autonomous lives, they continue to form interdependent partnerships.
- Some of these individualistic behaviors have become less rare (or more common) in the past several decades, as the researchers document, but they're not clearly moving toward becoming dominant, and indeed, none are even common.
- Thinking in individualistic terms could conceivably cause some couples to live more individually over time, or to leave a less-than-satisfying marriage that in a more *institutionalized* era, they would have remained in.
- A separate trend—the growing emphasis on meeting one another's emotional needs and having one's needs met, rather than simply fulfilling the traditional spousal roles of an earlier era—could either undermine or promote individualization. It could produce a strong, interdependent relationship characterized by mutual unselfishness and gratitude. But when the spouses' expectations and efforts don't match up, it also produces divorce.³⁸

Individualism and marriage are related and, to the need of *meeting one another's needs*, marriage can (or could) *either undermine or promote individualization* or individualism.

³⁸ “Modern Marriage: Individualistic or Interdependent?” Institute of Family Studies; family-studies.org/modern-marriage-individualistic-interdependent.

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Which came first; the weak, atomistic family or the “antifamily tinge” or “individualistic coloration”?

To address this question in detail, I turn again to Carle Zimmerman’s *Family and Civilization* on causes for the weakening of the family:

- ? If we want to marry or break up a family, whom do we consult, the family, the church or the state
- ? If we are in need, [who do we go to]; the family or the community
- ? If we violate a rule, who punishes us, the family or the state

As far as formal or institutional-sourced “break up”; the state is the source as at least one answer to Zimmerman’s question.

Individuals have some type of morality or *moral-base* (natural and/or supernatural). Institutions however, are amoral—to include the state. So as to “who punishes”; the family is at least naturally-bound by some *moral-base*—while the state is not—lending to some clear distinction.

To the individual or individualism, Zimmerman continues with a description of what happens as (or when) the individual is left more and more alone:

At first the freedom becomes an incentive to economic gain...but sooner or later the meaning of this freedom changes. The individual—having no guiding moral principles—changes the meaning of freedom from opportunity to license [entitlement]. Having no internal or external guides to discipline him, he becomes a gambler with life, always seeking greener pastures. When he comes to inevitable difficulty, he is alone in his misery. He wishes to pass his difficulties and his misery on to others. Consequently, he continually helps build up institutions to “remedy” his misery. He willingly follows any prophet (and they are mostly false ones) who comes along with a sure-cure nostrum for the diseases of the social system.³⁹

As the individual is presented with more apparent freedom—the increasing presumptions of entitlement—they lose the *moral-base* (for which is naturally and supernaturally endowed). I accept that our culture

³⁹ *Family and Civilization*, p.245

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and society is in this *time and place* thinking of an often-considered and relevant statement by Francis Schaeffer:

Let us hasten to say the freedom of the individual is not magic in the countries with a Reformation background either. As the memory of the Christian base grows ever dimmer, freedom will disintegrate in these countries as well. The system will not simply go on, divorced from its founding roots. As the drift will tend to be the same, no matter what political party is voted in. When the principles are gone, there remains only expediency at any price.⁴⁰

It seems then that individual or individualism is inclined to eventually seek-out and solicit the aid of institutions, more often the state.

What is individualism (to the state, its interests)?

It could be (or is) possible that the state has (or is) using or perverting individualism by degrading or diminishing the *moral-base*—promoting and propagating a *faux-ism* for which the individual is misled into believing that he is at center, foremost. A mere extension of an institution, the individual is left with the illusion of individualism—nothing of his true natural and supernatural self. Disparate from his soul (as a father from his children), the illusionary individual is beset to seek comfort and convenience in ways that prior may have been unacceptable let alone unthinkable. He is *institutionalized* though afraid of losing what he thinks is his....

Another respected source on such subjects, H.G. Wells aptly defines the true individual(ism) in life:

Life is morality—life is adventure...Morality tells you what is right, and adventure moves you. If morality means anything it means keeping bounds, respecting implications, respecting implicit bounds. If individuality means anything it means breaking bounds—adventure.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *How Should We Then Live: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, Francis Schaeffer, 1976, p.250.

⁴¹ H. G. Wells: was a prolific English writer in many genres, including the novel, history, politics, and social commentary, and textbooks and rules for war games; Wikipedia.

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But against *Leviathan*⁴² the individual is no match; that is, in *having no internal or external guides to discipline...he becomes a gambler*—left wanting for something, anything, to substitute for that sacrificed, apparently for self but most certainly for the institution.⁴³ What was once a facsimile of freedom is now simply fear, as G.K. Chesterton describes in the modern society:

Most modern freedom is at root fear. It is not so much that we are too bold to endure rules; it is rather that we are too timid to endure responsibilities.⁴⁴

So the real of sense of freedom is lost too—not just the meaning of individualism, morality, marriage and its associations.

What is left of culture and society (after individualism)?

There is much to consider in the general decline and eventual demise of civilizations (culture and society) in the larger context of world history, the cycles from rise to fall and other criteria. Many years ago, another significant source, Arnold Toynbee, made this comparison:

Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state the United States is in now.⁴⁵

So what has changed that the U.S. might live (unlike the others) beyond “the moral state”?

⁴² “Leviathan” as used as a synonym for state by Thomas Hobbes, Robert Higgs and other authors.

⁴³ Call it a “revised morality”, religion or “substitute”, but choices include: secularism, patriotism and nationalism; economic or commercial such as consumerism, materialism, capitalism; or political as Republicanism, Socialism, Fascism. Can you think of more “-isms”?

⁴⁴ G. K. Chesterton: was an English writer, lay theologian, poet, philosopher, dramatist, journalist, orator, literary and art critic, biographer, and Christian apologist; Wikipedia.

⁴⁵ Arnold Joseph Toynbee: was a British historian, philosopher of history, research professor of International History at the London School of Economics and the University of London and author of numerous books; Wikipedia.

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Some of my sources (not necessarily cited) believe that the U.S. in well into a decline—that any chance for recovery or restoration has passed.⁴⁶ Others believe the country is *on the precipice*; whereby the only chance that remains is a radical change—such as a spiritual-based, Christian-sourced, revival.⁴⁷ Some see the problem as rooted in morality while others, as economic and/or geo-political. Finally and most likely, is that the problem is systemic; a combination of causes, and therefore, much more complex than any single condition. Arnold Toynbee held that “The only real struggle in the history of the world...is between the vested interest and social justice”.

At this moment, I am reminded of a moment in the film *The Outlaw Josey Wales*: he confronts Ten Bears in an appeal to homestead on their lands; and in his effort, Wales makes this statement evidently to confirm their *common ground*:

Governments don't live together, people live together. With governments, you don't always get a fair word or fair fight; well, I've come here to give you either one--or get either one from you.⁴⁸

And who would know better of the *real struggle* than these?

But even with such statements, the question(s) on the future of culture and society (after individualism) can not be ascertained. Some may believe or declare that society will be (or has already been) shifting toward collectivism.⁴⁹ Others may believe the movement is toward chaos; “Balkanization” or fragmentation, and/or anarchy at some level. It is somewhat a mystery; yet, as with the matter of divorce, is worthy to be

⁴⁶ This view comes from: Morris Berman, *Why America Failed: The Roots of Imperial Decline*, 2011; Chalmers Johnson, “The Blowback Trilogy”; Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion*, 2010; and others not listed here.

⁴⁷ This belief or idea is steeped in Old Testament scripture; whereby, when Israel repented, the nation was restored—or returned in good favor with Jehovah.

⁴⁸ *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, 1976.

⁴⁹ Collectivism holds that the individual has no rights, that his life and work belong to the group . . . and that the group may sacrifice him at its own whim to its own interests. The only way to implement a doctrine of that kind is by means of brute force—and statism has always been the political corollary of collectivism; “Lexicon of Ayn Rand”.

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shared for us and by us—as well for others like us, **Who-Cares**. And still another film, based on a novel by Pat Conroy, this particular script seems fitting to end my attempt at answering the question.

...and in families there are no crimes beyond forgiveness. But it is the mystery of life that sustains me now.⁵⁰

Why is a crisis an opportunity?

To understand the matter of divorce, the consequences, is to step back and view the state in the larger context or scale—as to its nature and essence. First and foremost that we not forget (or otherwise heed) the warning of several framers and founders, beginning with James Madison:

It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood.⁵¹

According to former-judge Andrew Napolitano, the federal government (today) has over twelve hundred (1200) laws pertaining to marriage (not withstanding similar and related state-level...and other laws).⁵²

Is it accurate to assume that these laws (whether by volume, intent or effect) are oppressive? Again, Judge Andrew Napolitano:

Government is a fearful master. It is not faithful to us; it is not truthful to us; it can't produce for us. It doesn't obey its own laws; it doesn't keep us safe; and it won't leave us alone. It is mortgaging our futures, raising our taxes, and treating us all like children.⁵³

⁵⁰ *The Prince of Tides*, Columbia Pictures, 1991.

⁵¹ James Madison.

⁵² “For centuries governments never interfered with marriage, but rather they (marriage) were based on religion, parental choice, culture, tradition and mutual love of two persons...How is it that the institution of marriage, which governments traditionally never regulated become an institution tied to [a thousand or more] laws?” *It is Dangerous to be Right when the Government is Wrong*, Andrew Napolitano, 2011.

⁵³ “Can the Government Keep Us Safe”, Andrew Napolitano; LewRocwell.com, 2010.

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The end effect is an institution that is inherently dangerous to our own (marriage and associations) and even, ironically, its own interests too.

So why does the state seem to be intentionally undermining marriage and its associations?

So much could be said here (to the question of “why does the state seem...undermining marriage and its associations?” But for now (short of the conversation/conferences yet to come) I will try to condense the answer to just a fraction of what could be.

Frederic Bastiat offered some early warning too; that a government that takes responsibility (or is held responsible) for “everyone’s existence will bend under the weight of that responsibility.”⁵⁴ He also said, in connection with regard to “voluminous laws”:

If you make of the law an instrument of plunder for the benefit of particular individuals or classes, first everyone will try to make the law, [and] then everyone will try to make it for his own profit, resulting in the end of all morality.

I should add here that during an early era of sky-rocketing divorce in California, the number of divorce attorneys rose by about twenty times the figure in the late 1960s. Needless to say, divorce reform has been a boom for what Stephen Baskerville calls “the divorce machinery”.⁵⁵

If marriage is not wholly a private affair, as today’s marriage advocates insist, involuntary divorce by its nature requires constant government supervision over family life. Far more than marriage, divorce mobilizes and expands government power. Marriage creates a private household, which may or may not necessitate signing some legal documents. Divorce dissolves a private household, usually against the wishes of one spouse. It inevitably involves state functionaries—including police and jails—to enforce the divorce and the post-marriage order.

⁵⁴ Frederic Bastiat: a French classical liberal theorist, political economist, and member of the French assembly in the 1800s; Wikipedia.

⁵⁵ California was the bell-weather state when it came to divorce reform; the first the states to pass such laws and, in turn, to spearhead unprecedented divorce and its consequences, crisis and opportunities.

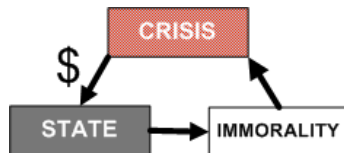
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Yes, “machinery” (or “functionaries”) is probably a good word; something that requires power while producing something...even if it destroys rather than benefits. Remember that divorce is like war. But this described war is not the consequence of a particular party or political group—and nor is it strictly a product of feminism—but it is the result of state power gone awry, as Baskerville continues:

This tacit left-right collusion has locked us into a tragic bureaucratic cycle in which the cures are causing the disease. And the malady of fatherlessness will continue to worsen as long as government officials have a free pass to socialize childrearing.

Whatever its intentions, the state can never create or restore family life. The best it can do is stop destroying it.⁵⁶

But on a much larger scale, such state power can be seen in its *full spectrum dominance*; that is, that “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste: [it’s] an opportunity.”⁵⁷ A “crisis” enables the state to fuel or finance the “machinery” (or to add capacity to the existing functionaries, etc.)—which translates to more *power and possession*, of course. So why wouldn’t the state—with such a pattern for foreign policy crisis—consider such a social one any less of an opportunity?⁵⁸ A pastor that I follow, Chuck Missler, describes the process using a diagram: “In our country, we learned that a social crisis will serve just as well as a military one...” Social crisis are [about] immorality too.⁵⁹



⁵⁶ Stephen Baskerville, an assistant professor of government at Patrick Henry College, is the author of *Taken into Custody: The War against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family* (Cumberland House), 2007.

⁵⁷ Rahm Emanuel, former Whitehouse Chief of Staff.

⁵⁸ This statement/question is alluding to a longstanding of fomenting war via “false flags”; that is, of creating a crisis...and, in turn, an opportunity whether international or domestic, military or social.

⁵⁹ Chuck Missler, “Where Are We Headed”, YouTube, 10/26/13.

Beginning Now

Beginning now with the story in earnest, I take up my role as the mentor, **Who-Cares**. For a brief bio on me and the other characters, as well as an important collection of other information and content, refer to Author's Notes.

For many years, I had the disquieting desire to see these children and to be a part of their young, developing lives—and I believe that they shared some semblance of the same. Yet, neither they nor I could make it happen even though it was agreeable, appreciated and appreciable.

There are forces working against, between and around us; those who espouse or lay claim to good—even the law—but do the opposite;



they destroy such relations for no other reason than to promote themselves and to satisfy their craven want for control at any and all costs. Such forces, imposed on these relations, result in *conflict and contention*. “Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”⁶⁰

As one who claims to care, I have made it my pact to be at peace—even against those who have enforced *craven want for control at any and all costs*. Being at peace is not easy or even effective, it seems, for peace is not something that they understand—it is not their way of getting what they want. I believe that “I was not designed to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest”.⁶¹

Today I continue on a course to peacefully oppose these forces; for their ways are not my way and, in the end, these “ways” only cause death and destruction—rather than life and love as our source of hope.

History and heritage provide enough evidence to understand the consequence of force(s) such as these that, if not intending, never the less result in the expansion of evil. “History is the same story with different costumes.”⁶² And as to heritage, well, “countries [which] have a longer past are better able to see further forward into the future and think

⁶⁰ Albert Einstein.

⁶¹ Henry David Thoreau, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. 1849.

⁶² Stefan Molyneux.

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about extending the time period that they've already been around into the distant future.”⁶³ Those of late, on the other hand, only think of late—overlooking or obfuscating the past of any application or association. And though such consequences may be thought inevitable, as the tendency or movement of all things human, it is not; for there is the intrinsic quality of each individual—a *moral-base*—for which we each are accountable. Yes, each individual soul is made accountable—contrary to the amassed, collective of institutions or *institutionalized*.

Institutions use force either through persuasion or persecution.⁶⁴ Individuals that rely on such force have, for all practicality, become institutions—and are *institutionalized*. These poor souls have sold-out, accepting the ways that are certain to death and destruction while forfeiting or forgetting the *moral-base*. Enticed by the consequences of force, such once-individuals are increasingly dangerous to themselves and to everyone and everything about them. Depending on the depth of their depravity and disillusionment, they will try everything and do anything—as institutions do—with the energy and effort for no good. **They are unwilling or unable** to accept that “an attempt to achieve the good by force is like an attempt to provide a man with a picture gallery at the price of cutting out his eyes.”⁶⁵

Can the blinded lead the blind whom they blind?

Blinded not just to the consequences (of force), but to the processes that got them there in the first place, the blinded find that force can be a seemingly safe(r) place than on the *other side of the stick*.

“Blind maybe, but at least I am safe(r),” says the *institutionalized*.

But don't they realize that being safe(r) is about the most dangerous place that they can be? Don't you know that the forces behind the force

⁶³ Hal Hershfield.

⁶⁴ Persuasion is a passive or subtle form of force that depends on fear and foolishness; fear as to threat of persecution and foolishness or, more accurately, deception. Persecution is active and aggressive punishment or pain.

⁶⁵ Ayn Rand.

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are the root of the problem? Never mind what *end of the stick* you're on, this *place* (safe or secure) is finally *death and destruction*.

"Be safe(r) is being at peace—not having to worry," says the *institutionalized*. "You say we're blinded, but we're free from fear."

But *peace cannot be kept by force*; and since they live by (or with) force, they cannot be at peace. They are more so at war; passionate about their position, seemingly on the safe(r) side of the stick:

When a man suffers force *the origin of force is always something within himself*, some irresistible emotion which makes him do something he does not intend to do; either intending something else but having his intention swept away by the force of the emotion, or having no intention whatever.⁶⁶

What is that *something within himself*—that irresistible emotion? It is fear (of the worst kind) that makes him do something he does not intend to do. He may want to believe that he is better-off, safe(r) and so forth, but in fact, he is *forfeiting or forgetting the moral-base*.

"What is this 'moral-base'; the thing that you speak of—that each and all individuals possess or are endowed," so might the *institutionalized* asks. "I don't know of any such *base*. Yes, laws and rules, but nothing described as 'moral' for which you speak of."

But they can not comprehend such... For in their blindness, the *institutionalized* have forgotten their individualism, and thus, no long accept—or even recognize—the *moral-base* I speak of. How can they truly know of peace if they do not know of the source, start to finish?

"Who care of the source," they might say. "I only care that I have peace because I am safe and secure now, come what may."

But then, they cannot see either the source or the relationship to it; for:

Only when an ideal of peace is born in the minds of the peoples will the institutions set up to maintain this peace effectively [and] fulfill the function expected of them.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *The New Leviathan*, p.143

⁶⁷ Albert Schweitzer.

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As it is however, they risks the dangers of institutionalism—devoid of the *moral-base*—predisposed to amorality, the absence of all ethics. But for the individual there is no such excuse or exemption; for they cannot eliminate that for which they are endowed. As peace begins and ends in one place, so too does ethics.

“Here we go again; first you raise this ‘*moral-base*’, now you add to it another term, ‘ethics’,” says the *institutionalized*. “Are you trying to impress me, or just trying to ruin my life by getting me upset?”

They question and doubt a *moral-base* or ethics—as to the meaning (if it even exists at all).

Ethics [is] reverence for life. That is what gives me the fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, promoting, and enhancing life, and that destroying, injuring, and limiting life are evil. ⁶⁸

Ethics are fundamental to morality, a more-base; it is a *reverence for life*. Who can understand then, that peace is not the result of force but of understanding?

“You are speaking in circles by asking if one can understand understanding,” says the one *institutionalized*. “Stop confusing me with your garble and garbage! You’re not even a counselor let alone a philosopher. What do you understand of understanding that you challenge my prospect for peace? Then you throw-in some smattering of the scholarly that, like you, make declarations on what is force, peace, good and evil. Why do you persist in getting me unsettled and upset—provoking my peace? You will soon understand force if you don’t stop.”

But I do understand force—that’s the point—because of my understanding that comes from my personal experience, painful though it be, counselor and philosopher though I am not. They don’t want to get upset, so they say, and warn me that any further effort will bring forward some of that force. They assert that I am speaking in circles—of trying to confuse them about understanding....

⁶⁸ Albert Schweitzer.

Beginning Now

“At least you’re listening—which is more than most—even though you annoy the Hell out of me,” says those concerned about their peace. “But now that you’ve spoke your peace, shut-up and go away.”

I can’t go away. I care too much to stop now—speaking about what I have studied from within and without. Whatever the reaction, my intentions are good, mean well.

“And I thought for a moment that you might be smart enough—with your good ethics—to value your own life and walk away,” says the annoyed *institutionalized*. “You are relentless!”

I believe that my purpose is worthy, which is why I am here now. They say I am relentlessly annoying but what they really mean is that they don’t want to understand understanding—to realize that what they have been told, or come to believe, is not the whole story or even close. They don’t want to doubt for that would mean something other than their momentary peace, seemingly safe(r) and secure in what has not only been accepted but applied—the blind being lead by the blinded.

Evil [is] relentless...but love is relentless too. Friendship is a relentless force. Family is a relentless force. Faith is relentless force. The human spirit is relentless, and the human heart outlasts—and can defeat—even the most relentless force of all, which is time.⁶⁹

Relentless as I am, my activity will continue as a force too; **not** one aimed, accepted and applied, at:

- *Destroying, injuring, and limiting life, but at maintaining, promoting and enhancing life*
- Individuals or individualism, in the real meaning, but at the *institutionalized* and the institutions
- Peace in the moment, or any concept of safe(r), with its force, but peace that comes from within—even with such force

⁶⁹ Dean Koontz, *Relentless*.

Him Who Cares Till When

“Now, aside from they who have sent me away on threat of force, who are you?”

“I am Good-Hero.”

Good-Hero; that’s a noble name, I thought. “And from where does that name come from, young person?”

“It is my given name; it represents what I am from Before Now to Beginning Now,” says the young person.

“And why are you here, today. Why do wish to be with me?”

“I heard you speaking and, let’s just say, I am curious about what you describe—to understand understanding and all its bounty,” says the young person.

“So you aim toward such, possibly accepted and applied, do you?”

“Aim I do. It is a good and noble thing to want to understand understanding,” says the young person.

“Are you sure young person? To *understand understanding* is to possibly invite something other than momentary peace, safe and—“

“I know. I heard all that, and think that I understand the risks of the want to understand understanding,” says the young person.

“Alright then, let’s get to the name, Good-Hero. What does it mean to you, young person?”

“Well, since you ask, I will tell you what it means to me. ‘Good’ means doing what I understand to be right—to do the right thing. And ‘Hero’; it means to do it well enough to be more than an aim, applied and accepted, but to even more be admired,” says the young person.

“So you think of yourself as not only good, but a hero too—is that it?”

“Not always good or right, but damn close. It’s my name and I have a responsibility to live up to it,” says the young person.

“Sounds like a lot of responsibility, Good-Hero. How long have you had this aim?”

“Before Now to Beginning Now, Till When,” says the young person.

I thanked him for the introduction and then he left me, **Who-Cares**.

Beginning Now

Some body else is here? And I thought I was through for the day.

"Who are you," I said to this second young person.

"I am Problem-Rebel," says the second young person.

Problem-Rebel; uh oh, looks like problems, with an attitude. "And from where does that name come from, young person?"

"It is me. It represents what I am from Before Now to Beginning Now," says the second young person. "I've paid for it."

"And why are you here, today. Why do wish to be with me?"

"I heard you speaking and, let's just say, I think it's a crock of shit."

"So again, why are you here," I repeated patiently. "Never mind; you don't have to answer—."

"Damn straight. I don't owe you anything," says the second young person.

"Then I must owe you something—am I right?"

"That depends on what you have. I heard your spill about force and all that other bullshit—nothing new, not really. Just more words to pour on my plate and expect me to eat without even a question, right," says the second young person.

"No; questions are good and words, sometimes, unappetizing."

"So you're good; you aim, accept and apply all that better force—that crap that you relentlessly preach," says the second young person.

"No, not always; it's not that easy—to actually do what you think or know is good—even if you understand understanding."

"Yeah, you got that right," says the second young person. "But don't start that circular shit with me, 'understand understanding'—I heard it all before and, to tell you the truth, find it nothing but bull—"

"Right, got it Problem-Rebel; now, since you're here, why don't we move-on—talk about something else that is more helpful."

"Helpful? I don't need 'helpful', words or not," says the second young person. "I'm off; no sense in hang-en round here any more."

"And will I see again?" But before I could finish my question, he was gone from me, **Who-Cares.**

Him Who Cares Till When

As no sooner had he left than another one was there—as though standing nearby—hearing it all but saying nothing.

“Who are you?” I said to this third young person. But they did not immediately answer, but only looked around as though suspicious of the surroundings or, worse, of my words. “How long have you been here,” I said, but still no response. “What do want from me—how can I help you,” but silence and stillness was all that she could do as though frozen in time—a young child in the body of an older, young person. Then, without a word, she turned as though to leave. “Stop, don’t go.”

And finally she spoke her first word with a question: “Why?”

“Because of who I am; you see, I care and, because of that, would like to stay and speak—or at least listen to me.”

Taking a moment more of silence, as though to carefully form her words, she said, “I am tired of listening, it is all that I do and have done.”

“Who are you, then?”

“I am Lost-Silence,” says the third young person.

“Oh, no wonder,” was all that I could say in response.

“Did they tell you about me—my brothers,” she asked.

“They’re you brothers,” I ask, failing at first to see the resemblance.

“Yes, we’re of the same family—if that’s what they call it,” she replied with some sentiment. “Or we were—”

“So you don’t see each other, like family,” I asked her in effort to keep the conversation going.

“No, we still see each other, just like before, but what I mean is that we just aren’t together—as others I’ve seen and read about,” she explained. “They have a connection, a bond that brings them together, to give meaning to the word, family,” she continued, both careful and caring. “They have what I’ve always desired, but never had.”

“And do the others have the same, desires,” I ask her, hoping she would be able to answer.

“I believe that my brothers do; each in their own way—but that’s not enough,” says she, the third of four young persons.

And then she left me, **Who-Cares.**

Beginning Now

Some time passed as a force—the consequence of these three and especially her words and not. Then I heard laughter for the first time this day, and thought: *Now there's an unexpected refreshing sound.*

“Hey there, Him Who-Cares, how's it going?”

“Uh, well, it could be better, but it could be worse,” I said without a thought. “And who be you?”

“I am Comedy-Mascot; the youngest of the four young persons,” he told me, as though expecting my next question. “Say, you want to hear a joke,” he asked while continuing without a response. “There was this—”

“Time-out Comedy-Mascot, if you please. I like a joke just like the next person but my time is precious and, quite frankly, too pressured right now to listen to your comic-opera. Thanks any—

“So you see this man had a family and---“

Did he not hear me? “Good, some man had a family, but I—“

“...and he really cared---just like you—but then the strangest thing—“

This kid is more relentless than me—and more annoying to.

“Strange, what is was, how someone who cared so much and yet, was not able to really show it; but instead, was rejected and ridiculed to the point that he could hardly believe in himself, let alone in family,” the forth of four young persons rambled on, hurting my ears and more.

“Are you through; for I don't really understand the humor in your joke,” I said. “There's nothing funny about what you call ‘strange’.”

“Want to see me stand on my head,” he said as though to pull another rabbit out of his hat. “Good, because I it gives me a headache.”

Speaking of headaches, I though. “Can I stand on your head?”

“Now that's funny man; but no, I think I'll end the show for now, if you don't mind. Maybe next time, when I'm up for a little pain,” he said.

“So tell me Comedy-Mascot, why are you here?”

“Well I figured that the three before had left you in such sorrow—since you care—that you needed something to lighten the load,” says the forth of four persons. “That's what I do. I make us laugh.” And silence came to me, **Who-Cares.**

Him Who Cares Till When

In the moments that followed I was lonely; the laughter and humor had been good—more than I could even know at the time—and would later give me reason to see why he did what he did. If laughter is the best medicine, he was the family-physician, resident or roving, to make it better if just to lighten the load or take the edge off the pain.

As one **Who-Cares**, I must accept what they each bring to my stage—not as some act or show, but as an indication of what and who they are, or have become from Before Now to Beginning Now, and maybe more.

I cannot know who they are unless I know what they are—and are not. Are they a family? Yes, in the legal sense they are so—but in earnest, the legal definition means nothing more than that which serves institutions. For the law or politics is a force of the other kind. “We may brave human laws, but we cannot resist natural ones.”⁷⁰

What is natural law?

Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason:

It is the sole source of all value judgments. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgment of value in the history of the world. What purport to be new systems or...ideologies...all consist of fragments... arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to [natural law] and to it alone such validity.⁷¹

Natural law is Before Now.

“So which do I choose”, says the wondering, near-*institutionalized*, “natural law or another?”

And that depends on what they are—and are not—I think to myself,
Who-Cares.

⁷⁰ Jules Verne, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*.

⁷¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*,

Looking Back, Long Ago

Some time passed without *hide nor hair* of any or all of them; but then, this had been a long-time condition—the consequences of a force unnatural and most unsettling to me, to them and to family. *Maybe they forgot*, I thought often. *Maybe they each had their fill or feel of me and decided, together or apart, that they would not return or see me again.*

But then time has a way with force—a way of making a force more than what it was or perhaps thought possible. It is a passion, this force. But not like that of the other kind—that depends on persuasion and persecution—to overcome inertia and to institutionalize everything. *No, this force is much different; for what it lacks in the mass movement, it more than compensates for in magnetism beyond the atomistic level,*⁷² came the thinking that brought peace to me, **Who-Cares**.

There have been times however—many times—when I have fallen to despair; when the forces arrayed against me were more than I could bear, as it seemed. Looking Back Long Ago, I can honestly admit my weakness—when the force of passion was denied, even disowned, and *the darkness* came over me.⁷³ I hated myself because I hated my life—whatever it was or was not. I searched and found other things to solace me, if not substitute for that which had been lost as it was. But to my advantage, hate is not the opposition of love as apathy.

In my search for things to solace my broken heart, writing was one of the better choices or directions; for in the process of writing, I have made progress in my own need to understand understanding. From a force of passion, or love, this choice has served me well and, I hope, will serve others too. What I have written is relevant to this very day, the time and place; for had I not started then, I would not be writing now—and could have been overcome by despair, *the darkness*. I can't say that writing has been my salvation, but can say that writing has kept me from continuing



⁷² This is play on words: magnetism is a force at the atomistic level, yes; but the word applies as a description of a weak family structure. Here, the

⁷³ "The darkness" is an old term for depression.

Him Who Cares Till When

to hate myself and to hate my life. The practice and process of writing, and the force of passion, has sustained me still now.

I have described forces of two extremes, I believe; the kind that truly are for good and the opposite—that, while perhaps posing as good, in effect serves to *destroy, injure, and limit life*. In similar separation, I have spoke of individuals and institutions; the first that is passionate, with the capacity to love; the second, dispassionate—not only devoid of such capacity but inclined to destroy it in the advent and application of apathy.

In the cycles of civilizations' decline, entire cultures or societies can be riddled with apathy. Historically one of the last stages in the decline, apathy is a public and personal malady of passivity and indifference.⁷⁴ "Tolerance and apathy are the last virtues of a dying society."⁷⁵ If you want to be safe(r) and secure, than:

Perhaps the best resource is to meet everything passively, to make yourself an inert mass, to stare at others with the eyes of an animal, to feel no compunction, with your own hand to throttle down whatever ghostly life remains in you.⁷⁶

But if you want to live, start by Looking Back Long Ago.

⁷⁴ The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been two hundred years. These nations have progressed through a nine stage sequence:

1. Bondage to spiritual faith
2. Spiritual faith to great courage
3. Courage to liberty
4. Liberty to abundance
5. Abundance to selfishness
6. Selfishness to complacency
7. Complacency to **apathy**
8. **Apathy** to dependence
9. Dependency back again into bondage.

"The Nine Stages Of Civilization – We're In the Seventh ~ Apathy"; Veteran's Today, veteranstoday.com/2012/03/19/the-nine-stages-of-civilization-were-in-the-seventh-apathy.

Author's Notes has another, similar list: "Ten Signs of a Culture's End".

⁷⁵ Aristotle.

⁷⁶ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*.

Looking Back, Long Ago

Is there an escape from passivity and indifference, apathy?

The answer depends on how much they want to escape (and avoid eventual bondage as a subsequent step). If there is no response—more indifference or indecision—then they will surely be slaves in time. But if there is a response, at least some noise or slight action, they may have a chance.

The response begins with an idea (whether apathy is public or personal); it must appeal and apply to the individual, their well-being and that which fosters hope, life and love. Remember that apathy (indifference, passivity) is the absence of love and that the opposite of:

- Love is not hate, [but] it is indifference
- Faith [Hope] is not heresy, [but] it is indifference
- Life is not death, [but] it is indifference⁷⁷

So an idea aimed, accepted and applied by individuals and their communities is opposite indifference.

The distinction of forces is not so easy or clear, black and white. Sometimes the “extremes” are not so apparent—each sharing the similarity of force. Apathy is an example where indifference or passivity may, in some moderation, be a good thing.

It is a natural response to disappointment, dejection, and stress. As a response, apathy is a way to forget about these negative feelings.

This type of common apathy is usually only felt in the short-term....⁷⁸

In this short-term status, apathy is described as both natural and responsive to “negative feelings”; so at the least, it can provide some relief—if just momentary—to what could be overwhelming, oppressive, feelings.

⁷⁷ Elie Wiesel: Romania-born American novelist, political activist, and Holocaust survivor of Hungarian Jewish descent. He is the author of over 40 books, the best known of which is *Night*, a memoir that describes his experiences during the Holocaust and his imprisonment in several concentration camps. Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. The Norwegian Nobel Committee called him a “messenger to mankind.

⁷⁸ Apathy; Wikipedia.

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But apathy is often viewed or diagnosed as bad, or worse:

An apathetic individual has an absence of interest in or concern about emotional, social, spiritual, philosophical and/or physical life and the world... Apathy may be a sign of more specific mental problems such as schizophrenia or dementia.⁷⁹

Being as it is (or can be); apathy does not seem at first even a force, but rather, the consequence.

My sources tell me that apathy occurs among those who have (or had) goals, objective and expectations—plans! But then those plans get *railroaded*, sidetracked or otherwise changed by events caused by the one or by others (something or someone). In the awareness and perhaps acceptance of plans awry, the one pulls-back or recoils in this *conflict and contention* of overwhelming, overpowering forces.

In Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Model, apathy and “flow” are at opposite ends; the later described simply as *being in the zone*.⁸⁰ I can understand the preferred aspect of *flow* (without going further into the psychiatric description), as it has such positive connotations in every way. For example, *flow* can be temporarily disrupted by *writer's blocker*.⁸¹ But even *writer's block* can be applied to other endeavors, attributed to a multitude of possible forces present or prolonged. There have been plenty of *one-hit wonders* who could have been stymied for similar reasons or forces—even prior success or perfectionism.⁸²

On the public side of apathy (versus personal), voting is (elections are) often the subject: that fewer and fewer exercise their right to vote

⁷⁹ Apathy; Wikipedia.

⁸⁰ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: a Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Management noted for his work in the study of happiness and creativity, but is best known as the architect of the notion of flow and for his years of research and writing on the topic; Wikipedia.

⁸¹ Writer's block: a condition primarily associated with writing, in which an author loses the ability to produce new work. The condition ranges in difficulty from coming up with original ideas to being unable to produce a work for years.

⁸² This statement describes the observed and documented condition(s) where past perfection or immediate success is portending of future. Examples might include “shooting star”, or “one-hit wonder”.

Looking Back, Long Ago

thus become apathetic or inactive. Sure, the registered or unregistered could just be lazy or lethargic; yet, low-voter turnouts seem to be deemed as apathy. It would seem that voter apathy is bad, a reflection of an unconcerned, even inconsiderate, public or society. But then again, voter apathy may serve some advantage too—depending on whether *it's the vote that counts or whether it's those that count the votes*—in the exercise of rights, the outcome of elections.

If a government institution is not concerned, even conscious, of the general public, than voter apathy might well be a good thing (for that institution). Pre-polling, with mass publication and broadcasting, is one way to discourage voting (those yet to vote made aware of the predicted results); it is sort of like preparing to take a test when the results are already prearranged and presented—what's the point! Then there is also all the various strategies, tactics and trickery—not to mention the every growing election financing—that likewise attenuates the anticipation and activates assumptions surrounding the so-called “fair elections”. But before “the upcoming” are the lies and laxities when it comes to legislation or, for those too anxious, the executive orders.

So without going further, my impression(s) of voter apathy may be more the result of external rather than internal, individual forces. On the other hand:

If exercising the right to vote were truly effective, the government would not be so eager to promote it.⁸³

Exercising the right to vote seems to have much to consider in the larger collection and context of individual rights.⁸⁴

So much rides on the Bill of Rights, when considering voter, citizen or otherwise individual attitude(s). Apathy aside, the individual has to

⁸³ Andrew P. Napolitano, *Lies the Government Told You: Myth, Power, and Deception in American History*, 2010.

⁸⁴ Bill of Rights: is the collective name for the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. Proposed to assuage the fears of Anti-Federalists who had opposed Constitutional ratification, these amendments guarantee a number of personal freedoms; Wikipedia.

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understand that they have rights, right? Consider one, the first; the right to free speech for individuals: ⁸⁵

With regard to freedom of speech there are basically two positions: you defend it vigorously for views you hate, or you reject it and prefer Stalinist/fascist standards. It is unfortunate that it remains necessary to stress these simple truths. ⁸⁶

Of course, to hate (something or someone) is to be beyond (or behind) apathy. So if the first amendment is to be protected, there must be hate, right? For without distinct and directed hate, there remains ambivalence at the least and that much-maligned apathy right around the corner, not too far down the street from dependence and bondage.

Whether political or psychiatric, science has evidently determined that if apathy is not treated (or cured), then slavery is sure and the *flow* will not even trickle down. So if love is too difficult, try hate—for something has to give if slavery is to be averted, stagnation avoided.

Hate is not necessarily a bad force (though it has that implication such as with “hate crimes” among other associations). Hate is:

A deep and emotional extreme dislike, it is often associated with feelings of anger, disgust and a disposition towards hostility. ⁸⁷

But to hate is to identify/clarify the target from accurate, authentic information. Else, the cause is marginalized and misdirected—and the consequences most dissatisfying, even dangerous. If you’re going to hate, than at least do so based on accurate, authentic information.

⁸⁵ Freedom of Speech: is protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and by many state constitutions and state and federal laws. The freedom of speech is not absolute; the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized several categories of speech that are excluded from the freedom, and it has recognized that governments may enact reasonable time, place, or manner restrictions on speech; Wikipedia.

⁸⁶ Noam Chomsky, Chomsky on Anarchism.

⁸⁷ Wikipedia.

Looking Back, Long Ago

And if you're going to hate, know that it must be because of love—for any other reason will most assuredly destroy you. Yes, as confusing as it must sound, hate is justified by love.

And as to the source of that “accurate, authentic information”; *don't kill the messenger*, the bearer of bad news. Who can argue that accurate, authentic information is not a bad thing—however brutal the news may be? For the alternative of inaccurate and inauthentic information is the most brutal of all. “The people that tell you what you want to hear are the most dangerous enemies you'll ever meet.”⁸⁸

They may tell the very thing that causes apathy in the first place, aside from politics, psychiatry or any other public or personal reason or result. As for me, Who-Cares, “I hate and love. And why, perhaps you'll ask. I don't know: but I feel, and I'm tormented.”⁸⁹

But as to Looking Back Long Ago, why look back at all?

The solution, or at least countermeasure, to apathy and its cousins may very way lie in the “long ago”; it may be something that has troubled you at times, so much so that the anxiety brought about the natural reaction of apathy, indifference or passivity. If folks refer to the Bill of Rights as their standard for modern free speech, than why can't you revisit the much-more recent “long ago” to possibly grasp what may offer accurate, authentic information regarding your own sense of individual liberty to love, hate or something other than indifferent. “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Rachel E. Carter, *First Year*.

⁸⁹ Catullus: a Roman poet of the 1st century BC. His surviving works are still read widely, and continue to influence poetry and other forms of art. Catullus invented the “angry love poem.”

⁹⁰ Søren Kierkegaard: a prolific 19th century Danish philosopher and theologian. Much of his work deals with religious themes such as faith in God, the institution of the Christian Church, Christian ethics and theology, and the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices

Him Who Cares Till When

I love history and heritage; the first makes me appreciate the things of public life, the second, that of personal life. To understand the understanding of history and heritage can cause me to:

- Hate or love
- Reason or rationalize
- Reject or accept
- Answer or question
- Conclude or analyze
- Regard or disregard
- Respect and disrespect

But it can never causes me apathy unless I dismiss it as pointless or passé. Or even worse, not having it; for “the most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.”⁹¹

But the challenge is not just acknowledging accurate, authentic information, but appreciating it too. For the tendency might be to focus on some things pleasant and pleasing to you—or to others whom you feel obligated to please as to be “politically correct.”

As happens sometimes, “The soul [can] become dyed with the color of its thoughts”—relegated to the moment rather lies beyond or before that figurative moment.⁹² If the moment is all that matters, than apathy or not, “Those who do not move, do not notice their chains.”⁹³

There is more than one way to slavery (or bondage) and stagnation (or stopping *flow*) than apathy, more than one way to “chains”—and that is to want for anything and everything thought safe(r) and secure to the sacrifice of common sense and the common good.⁹⁴

But now, it seems, those that I care about have returned.

⁹¹ George Orwell.

⁹² Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*.

⁹³ Rosa Luxemburg: a Marxist theorist, philosopher, economist and activist of Polish Jewish descent who became a naturalized German citizen.

⁹⁴ Common good: In philosophy, ethics, and political science the common good or common weal is a specific “good” that is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community.

Looking Back, Long Ago

"You're back. Good to see you again, Good-Hero," I said, as he came on stage. "How are the others—any news?"

"They're fine," he said tersely, and then turned the conversation to the subject of his job, some accomplishment or challenges.

"Sounds like you making much progress," I said, while he explained in great detail. "It's certainly good to have to goals in your life, but without sounding rude, I'd like to go back to your childhood if you don't mind." And though easy in conversation to this point, his response(s) to my questions left in him notably reluctant, expectedly reticent, as such Looking Back often plays-out for several reasons. But for Good-Hero, the process was slowed or stymied by his deliberate effort as he carefully chose his words with body language that of the usually defensive posture. "So you are an accomplished musician," I said, attempting to shift both the topic and the flow of conversation; for which, his whole countenance suddenly changed (back) to that at the beginning when job and career was the subject.

"Yes, I am," he replied. "I've started playing and performing in an elementary school program and progressed all along," he continued to explain, with detail at every step. "But I prefer concerts over—."

"Yes, you've told me that," I interrupted, "But tell me this: did your dad every see you play, perform," and with that returned more the prior pose and position. "Do you think that he knows or cares about your—."

"Yeah, I guess he cares...he likes music," he replied.

"But does he know? Has he ever seen you perform all these years?"

"I'm sure he has," he said after a moment of silence.

"So you don't know—is that it," I asked, as he stood-up looking at his watch and turning toward the exit.

"I've got to go," he said as he hastily stepped away. "Got a busy day tomorrow and a friend I need to spend time with."

"So you'll be back, I hope." *I guess that the question was too difficult, I thought. It's difficult to accept failure when success is all you can afford to give. But a friend is a gift you give yourself.*⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson.

Him Who Cares Till When

"It's you again," I said as Problem-Rebel got oriented. "I thought your whereabouts might be unknown," I remarked (though in truth, more certain of his determination to be here than any or all of the others).

"Oh that's funny," he said smiling. "I am a rebel, it's true; but I'm no renegade or rouge. My aim is to get under the skin deep enough to be an irritant but shallow enough to slip out when the scratching starts."

"So you're irritating and evasive—is that it," I asked to his comment.

"Definitely the first and preferably the second; you know, *fight or flight*," he replied while evidently setting me up for more questions. "When things get too impossible, I just blow, plain and simple."

"So when do you 'fight' then," I followed, taking his lead.

"When I have too; when that—"

"When the flight plan is not yet determined," I interrupted.

"Yeah, if that's what you want to call it; but more so when the plane has not been cleared for take-off," he replied, obviously working the metaphor. "Sometimes it's cool; that is, the jets don't crash and burn."

"But sometimes not, I suppose. Sometimes, you just have to take to the air and fly like a bird. But what about the flyovers; why do you have to keep turn back and swarm the field if the skies are friendly?"

"How did you know? What, have you been on one of my flights?"

"Let's just say that your name gives you away—like an ace and Red Barron," I explained, keeping the language metaphorical. "You like to draw the fire and then, when they think you're gone, dive with the sun to your back," I added. "You're a bandit of sort—a real crackerjack!"

"Hell yes; I am the *top-gun*—and proud of it—as I've earned my wings," he remarked with realism. "The rest are just part of the ground crew—though they are most unwilling to keep my plane airworthy."

"Maybe that's because you don't appreciate them; or maybe, because you're too dangerous one way or the other."

"It's true; I do take chances, but it comes with the territory."

"And they just don't understand, right?"

"Oh they understood, sure; the problem is that they loathe my daring nature. They prefer to be safe(r) and secure," he said as he flew away.

Looking Back, Long Ago

Lost-Silence was evidently waiting in the wings; so that as quickly as her brother blasted-off, she was there—as though she had been all along. “Well, once again, you show-up without an introduction. But even so, it’s good to see you again,” I said half wondering what she heard.

“My brother is daring alright; but it’s more glory than guts, I tell you. If he was half the man that he claims, he would soar like an eagle. As it is, he is more a mockingbird—full of sounds but without substance,” she remarked with uncharacteristic candor.

“So you know your brother, do you,” I asked, hoping to hear more.

“He’s a bandit for sure; and to the metaphor, travels to some questionable places dealing with dark clients while operating under the influence of—“

“So you know all this—you’ve confirmed it,” I interrupted, while realizing that Lost-Silence had apparently found a place to air more than the plain.

“Well let’s just say that I know enough to be sure. His name is not by accident—as he so boldly admitted,” she replied. “If it wasn’t for him, things would (have) been pretty pleasant and pleasing—calms skies all the way, I think. Sure, we’ve had our foul weather—as everyone does--- but my brother has a way of turning all the sunshine into rain, the warmth into blistering cold,” she continued without a stop, even a delay.

“Sounds like he has some significant force; not just in the air, but on the ground too,” I said, trying to get a word in edgewise.

“Force; oh, you mean power and control,” she asked, without my acknowledging. “Yes, he can really *stir the pot*.” She said. “He knows how to push her buttons.”

“Her buttons”, I thought. I guess she means their mom.”

“So what happens when the buttons are pushed,” I asked.

“All Hell breaks loose,” she said, surprising me with her own version of candor. “You want to see force, push her buttons,” she continued, talking more the style of the storyteller. “Boom,” she added for affect.

“And then liftoff,” I said, seeking the after effect.

“No, just boom, smoke and Hell,” she said, ending our conversation.

Him Who Cares Till When

Well that was much more than I ever expected from her, I thought afterward. For someone who acts lost and doesn't speak much, she evidently has a handle on operations—at least from ground zero. But before I could fully digest my afterthoughts, I was sidetracked by—once again—the sound of laughter preceding the visible presence of Comedy-Mascot.

"Well, it's the joker. Or is it the flying circus?"

"I am better than that, my good conversationalist. I am here to entertain from the ground, up—to lift your spirits high above the fray—so that all that shit happening down below is far removed, a thing of the past," he pronounced as though being an old circus or magic act.

"So you're going to dazzle me, are you," I said, purposely making it sound as though he was bluffing and I was bored.

"Don't you get it yet man—that's what I do," he said, raising his voice. "I am here to *lighten the load* after the others have drained the life out of you," he continued, reinstating his mission. "They can do that—especially that maverick brother of mine, Problem-Rebel."

"So you want to talk about them, do you?"

"They are usually the brunt of my jokes---depending on the audience of course," he replied. "They need the laughter, bless their hearts," he continued, with the first sign of cynicism.

"So you're a cynic as well as comedian then," I cut-in.

"Life—the way it really is—is a battle **not** between good and bad, but between bad and worse.' ⁹⁶ How can I it survive in that, how was it put, 'Boom, smoke and Hell'? But you already know that, don't you?"

"Yes, I do. So while laughter is your best medicine—coming and going—it's hardly a cure. But you already know that, don't you?"

"I guess; but it's sure as Hell a good way to survive!"

He was right about that...against the boom, smoke and Hell. This could go from bad to worse, from cynicism to apathy, I thought as the laughter left me a little less easy if not sober to the bone.

⁹⁶ Joseph Brodsky: a Russian poet and essayist.

Looking Back, Long Ago

I was happy to see them again; to spend time, if just an hour, hearing what they had to say life from the ground up.

Good-Hero is afraid to fly; as an ironic condition, it seems, he might have climbed into the cabin only to exit before the flight departs. Given his nature to lead, the cockpit is the only place that he'll take—if he every takes to the air—but to do that would be mean more than a passive flight, obviously. As it is, this leader refuses to even show-up at the terminal, let alone board the plane. Why does he refuse so; what is it that he fears—or protects. Maybe he had a bad experience in the air and considers himself the cause of the mishap—a voluntary grounding.

Problem-Rebel is up to his usual position of taking friendly-fire so to speak. He is more courageous than he probably realizes, but is so determined to dominate the skies that he doesn't realize all the risks. But then again, maybe he just doesn't care—since he has been flying for a while now with battle-damage to show for it. His siblings despise his style altogether—not because he is reckless, but because he is an easy target (as he's intended it so). If you're frequently looking up than you don't necessarily notice the Hell all around you. How long can he sustain such a flight is something to think about.

Lost-Silence is neither lost nor silent. Something that I considered from the first day was that she has been the most observant—a real student of operations in the flight tower, hangar spaces and beyond, she had logged many a mile in the navigations of her family. Her disposition is not so much about lying low—to avoid the flak so to speak—but to gather intelligence. And with extensive flight records and her accomplishments elsewhere, she has quietly but effectively amassed enough information and knowledge to understand understanding—to acquire a level of expertise to accurately assess the problems if not a plot for solutions.

Comedy-Mascot is up to his usual maneuvers. Still, he seems to have kept his radar locked on ground zero (judging from his affirmation and awareness of the terrain). But as with all clowns, there is darkness behind the make-up and expressions of cynicism, maybe more.

Him Who Cares Till When

As with apathy, cynicism is a telltale of what lies beyond—whether behind the clouds or on some distant planet. It is (or can be) a problem:

Maybe it's not explicitly on your radar, but you're sure to have felt its force. Cynicism is that sneering bitterness toward all things true and deep. It's the subtle contempt trying to contaminate the cheeriest of moments—that slow, thick smoke of pessimism [poisoning] the oxygen in the lungs of our hope, suffocating any glad-hearted embrace that God did something meaningful in our lives and strangling our childlike faith to opt for “another angle” on why things happen the way they do.⁹⁷

But before going further (with cynicism as a telltale), I imagine myself as this “flying circus” looking back over the shoulder to see if there's anyone on my tale. The skies are clear however; nothing of concern on the radar while the instruments indicate a *smooth* and enjoyable flight. I'm glad, happy even, to be the air—high above all that shit that I left behind.

Thank God for a sense of humor and, more so, for the good sense to use it—if just to fly away without leaving the ground. And when I do fly—why, the stunts can be literally breathtaking. I don't know what I would do if I was unable to whip out my wings. I would likely have *crashed and burned* after incurring so much battle damage make it flight impossible, on or above the field.

The tricks work for now, but I don't know how much longer he can keep this up. Pray Dear God that the tank does not runs empty---that the figurative glass be half full—for as it seems, “the glass is completely full...of shit.”⁹⁸ But it cannot stay as it is; sooner or later the tank will run-out—the glass will overflow—and the operation will stink so bad as to leave nothing or no one to gaze admirably at Good-Hero, to detest the daring of Problem-Rebel, to get lost in the listening of Lost-Silence, or to laugh in the stench of the vacuous, vile, suffocating and poisoning history and heritage replete with deceit and disparity.

⁹⁷ “The Sin in Our Cynicism”, Jonathan Parnell; desiringgod.org/blog/posts/the-sin-in-our-cynicism.

⁹⁸ Brian Spellman, Cartoonist's Book Camp.

Beginning Then, Not Now

But before gasping the last breadth, before the music stops or the laughter ceases, the moment comes to reflect on better times. Beginning Then, Not Now, I will look this cynicism and apathy squarely in the face rather than sidestep the disease, soothing the symptoms. For:

Apathy and cynicism usually take root early in life. If unchecked by middle age, they lead to bitterness, lack of energy, health problems, depression, and related difficulties.... The Noble Prize winning French philosopher, physician, and musician, Albert Schweitzer, fervently believed "The tragedy of life is what dies inside a person while they live." ⁹⁹

This is why we should prefer to remain young, like children, potentially with imagination and idealism as a sure cure against such disease. Again, as while comic-relief still works, "I finally decided what I want to be when I grow up—late." ¹⁰⁰

For I don't have to tell you that things are bad right now—and everybody knows it—with many out of work and still more afraid they will be. Even so, we know the air is unfit to breathe, as it is, that:

Everywhere, [it] is going crazy, so we don't go out anymore. We sit in the house, and slowly the world we are living in is getting smaller, and all we say is, 'Please, at least leave us alone in our...rooms.' ¹⁰¹

Surely there is way beyond this vacuous, vile, suffocating and poisoning history and heritage. We can't stay in our rooms, *safe within our womb*, forever. We can't expect to:

- Cure the disease with symptomatic tricks or treats
- Fix things, even if we *understand understanding*
- Avoid the real problem by diverting attention, even with rebellion
- Overcome past mistakes with current ambitions

No, we can't expect any or all of this to yield a solution.

⁹⁹ "Apathy and Cynicism Zap Our Spirit," The Clemmer Group; clemmergroup.com/articles/apathy-cynicism-zap-spirit/.

¹⁰⁰ Brian Spellman, Cartoonist's Book Camp.

¹⁰¹ Paddy Chayefsky, *Network* [Screenplay], 1976.

Him Who Cares Till When

Is there any cure for cynicism, the consequences?

So I return to the statement and consideration that hate is not necessarily a bad force if it pushes-off apathy. And what is hate without anger—without the association of being mad? Can we love someone and be mad about them at the same time? Personally, I like to see someone mad about something or someone—for at least they care, right?



The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved....¹⁰²

But what kind of mad am I describing here? Is it the kind that suggests insanity as in the expression, “He’s gone mad”? Or is it more the kind of anger? Does it really make sense to say: “Don’t get mad, get even”? Or if you get *mad as a hornet*, do you buzz folks with relentless, raw rage? What is anger anyway?

Anger is a force of energy that we project in order to push away or combat a threat.¹⁰³

But if anger ceases to be a form of protecting your life—and becomes a means of destroying your life and relationships (when the threat isn’t real)—then being mad ceases to be healthy, even natural.

It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish a real threat from an imagined threat because they can happen at the same time.

Still, the natural fight-or-flight reaction to your emotions can produce real fear and anger—regardless of the reality of the threat. Central to the whole reaction to, and perception of, threat is awareness. Sure, you will react natural to a perceived threat but, in the process, may confirm that it was more the imagination than reality. Awareness involves the process

¹⁰² Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, 1957.

¹⁰³ “Understanding Anger”, *Pathway to Happiness*;
pathwaytohappiness.com/anger/understanding-anger.htm

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of validating the threat—of coming to terms with the both the perceived threat and your own perception and reaction.

You may discover that you (or someone else) over-reacted in a situation or ordeal, getting angry for no real reason or threat. What you learn from this episode and all such experiences is crucial in your own emotional intelligence and maturity.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.¹⁰⁴

If you fail to take stock in such instances or conditions (of anger) then you potentially lose not only the opportunity but, as well, the ability to manage anger in future occurrences. So in other words, you continue to repeat such reactions, threat or no threat, without any depth or determination for maturity.

Age has much to do with this process, the application. Children or young persons can be more irrational because they do not yet understand their feelings let alone any process of reflection and application. For example, they may be feeling anxiety yet not know what anxiety actually is and therefore, how to get real help and understanding. *Beginning Then* (as a child or young person) is ideal—when parents can help to model as well as guide them toward maturity. But this is not always the case; that is, some children do not receive such care or, for other reasons, are delayed. Complex causes or conditions may also lend to this delay, even delinquency, directly involving children, parents, history and heritage as it pertains to health and family dynamics.

I offer this brief on anger only to suggest that that hate and anger is not necessarily a good force either. Getting mad or anger has it's time and place but, like all emotions, cannot persist alone—or without the tempering of love. But when a real threat arises—to include apathy and cynicism—anger and its hate may be the preferred counterforce.

¹⁰⁴ Emotional intelligence; Wikipedia.

Him Who Cares Till When

But cynicism and apathy flourish as a force; threats that stand to undermine more than *marriage and its associations* (referring to the much earlier description of the state's effect on marriage). But do we even recognize cynicism's presence, predominance?

Cynicism is so undetectable because it is so justifiable. It wears a mask of insight and godliness, but it conceals festering wounds of harbored bitterness against God and neighbor.¹⁰⁵

So it has the appearance or impression and that aimed to hide something as “festering wounds of harbored bitterness.” Why hide the real you; why go so far to conceal something that is so deep and dull—and it usually seems? Is it because that which the person is so desperate to hide or to harbor is something that took place first *Beginning Then, Not Now*? And thus, to return to it is most difficult; digging-up the distant such that the root of the disease—as though a tumor—at least can be confirmed if not cured? But then the courage (necessary) is probably more than person can muster in their fears of reliving the past—now a person capable of, responsible for, carrying-out the process (validating the threat...) toward emotional maturity. As the threat(s) languish, the fear lingers and the child, now adult, protects the periodic pain while otherwise pretending that it does not exist. The ill-effects however are most present in the cynic: an emotional disposition of distrust or rejection toward a particular idea, person, or group as a result of negative experiences (either directly or indirectly). Can these ill-effects manifest in other relations to other persons, groups, etc? Most definitely as the root grows or metastasizes, the ill-effects increasing appears in such behavior as the cynic; or, as the author of this article so aptly puts it: “Whether we like it or not, this stuff seeps into our being.”¹⁰⁶ And as with any such illness, contagion can happen; yes, the ill-effects that have taken root, now grow not only in the carrier but, in connection, become a

¹⁰⁵ “Putting off Cynicism”, Paul Maxwell; desiringgod.org/blog/posts/putting-off-cynicism.

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Parnell.

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part of the lives of those whom he closely relates as toxic relationships. See Author's Notes for more on cynicism and toxic relationships.

So while the cure (for cynicism) may potentially lie on a much larger plane—a contagion of the current age—there is still the possibility of prevention or protection from the *associations or components*. But understand that such a cure, as a continuing process or program, is not simply the result of individual will or virtue, but begins with understanding cynicism is “negative emotions or perceptions we have toward ourselves [that then move] outward onto those around us.”¹⁰⁷

It is part of a defensive posture we take to protect ourselves. It's typically triggered when we feel hurt by or angry at something, and instead of dealing with those emotions directly, we allow them to fester and skew our outlook. When we grow cynical toward one thing in our lives, we may slowly start to turn on everything.

Cynicism, left unchecked, is destructive as it emanates and evolves from within—eviscerating the soul of any capacity for compassion toward ourselves and others too. Thus, it robs us (and others) of the things that matter most—of what I repeatedly refer to as hope, life and love. And it reduces us to a recurring and redundant state of childhood, in a sense, compelled to remain safe(r) or secure—*safe within our womb*.¹⁰⁸

I can think of no better description of the consequences of the contagion than in the words of the 1965 folk-pop hit, “I am a Rock”, and one interpretation of the message and meaning:

Paul Simon said that the person or people in his poem were sick of society, and wanted to be isolated away from society...

He also says that it is a lonely December in the second line where he says 'I am alone gazing from my window to the street below' he feels left out, and now wants to be left alone....¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ “Compassion Matters”, Lisa Firestone., Psychology Today; psychology today.com /blog/compassion-matters/201212/is-cynicism-ruining-your-life.

¹⁰⁸ The repeated phrase, “room...safe within our womb” is taken from Paul Simon’s “I am a Rock”—which was described by his music partner, Art Garfunkel, as his “most neurotic song.” Columbia Records, 1965.

¹⁰⁹ “The meaning of Paul Simon’s poem”; studymode.com/essays/Am-Rock-Meaning-Paul-Simon-s-Poem-64883263.html.

Him Who Cares Till When

Isolation however is not only literal, as locked in a room, but also social or emotional; it is a willful but seemingly necessary action—whether forced from within, a personal will, and/or from public institutions as means of control. Either or both ways, isolation (or atomization) is a growing condition of our culture:

The comprehensive new study (a comprehensive 2004 evaluation of the decline of social ties) paints a sobering picture of an increasingly fragmented America, where intimate social ties -- once seen as an integral part of daily life and associated with a host of psychological and civic benefits -- are shrinking or nonexistent ...

Compared with 1985, nearly 50 percent more people in 2004 reported that their spouse is the only person they can confide in. But if people face trouble in that relationship, or if a spouse falls sick, that means these people have no one to turn to for help....¹¹⁰

An important term, “fragmented” could very well be the title of a fable about a dying culture or society (the cycles of nations); that as the society shifts toward apathy, it is on the cusp of dependence (on the state)—just short of death. But as to reasons for the fragmented society, the focus will reside here with the individual (or “forced from within”) and not institutions in particular.

It was Rudyard Kipling who said: “We’re all islands shouting lies to each other across seas of misunderstanding.”¹¹¹ And with the idea of each being an island in dispute (that is, we are not each islands), the second half—of shouting at each other—is easily accepted from my personal experience and observation. As long as we insist on *conflict and contention*, atop all other forces at work, we most assuredly destroy each other and our selves—what’s left of the fabric beyond the present unraveling measured in more areas described thus far. More will follow later on isolation and the individual.

¹¹⁰ “Social Isolation Growing in U.S., Study Says”, Shankar Vedantam, Washington Post; washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/22/AR2006062201763.html.

¹¹¹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Light That Failed*, 1890.

Beginning Then, Not Now

Some time lapsed between our conversations, as before; and though I prefer more frequency as a matter of keeping some continuity, I accept what or who is available—and what has been accomplished so far. “What have I (or we) accomplished,” you might want to ask. Well, to review my comments from the last (or second) set of conferences. Starting from the most favorable results, *Lost-Silence* has been the most open or forthright—a trove of information evidently logged away during her many years of lying low, keeping a keen eye on things. *Comedy-Mascot* has intentionally kept his stage appearance, with or without an audience, and has (had) the perspective of seeing the others act in the roles, the tricks and treats aside. *Problem-Rebel* may be the most courageous of the lot—as he has evidently taken the heat—but I worry that his wounds may be over-medicated as he copes with rejection from all sides. *Good-Hero* is the stalwart of the family secrets; always and arduously faithful to the code of silence—that what happened in the past stays in the past. How long can he keep-up this bastion is beyond me; but, I will not stop at trying to breach the wall knowing that much is maintained inside.

As we embark on this third of encounters, I remind myself that what has been is capable of change as the:

- Lost is now beginning to be recovered and restored
- Wonder is now taking shape and substance
- Ships passing silently in the night are now signaling

It is this change that I celebrate, regardless of what happens in the future; for without a chance, I would have died in sorrow.

Conversation, what is it? A Mystery! It's the art of never seeming bored, of touching everything with interest, of pleasing with trifles, of being fascinating with nothing at all.¹¹²

¹¹² Guy de Maupassant: a popular 19th-century French writer, his stories denote the futility of war and the innocent civilians who get crushed in it - many are set during the Franco-Prussian War of the 1870s.

Him Who Cares Till When

"We meet again," I said, greeting Good-Hero at the door. "Evidently, you found the time for this conference," I added.

"Yes, it was tough, but I did it," he replied before taking a seat.

"I would like to look back again," I began, "to your childhood—when you and your dad were connected or had contact." And unsurprising, he took on a posture of defense, crossing his legs and arms, facially alert but anxious.

"Not much to say," he responded without a prompt. "He was there for a few years and then, almost over night, gone—for good."

"And do you missed his presence, the relationship," I asked.

"Of course I did, but the facts remains that we had to part ways—in the wake of the divorce," he explained, seeing the separations as certain.

"So the separation as certain—as you see it—how did you feel about that? Were your hurt or upset, or did you just take on the chin?"

"I guess I was hurt at the moment. We had life and now it was over—never to be the same again," he began. "It should be understood that I was only ten at the time—and what I could not understand at that age was only further convoluted by limited conversation between us."

For the first time, I began to see Good-Hero discuss the details openly; and while he expressible took the separation with stride, it was now clear that he was constrained to discover the details—to the degree that such conversation was off limits. "So then," I continued, "You could not ask raise questions about your dad—am I right?"

"Right; but as to why I can only say that we kept the matter quiet—as a sort of secret that never shared with our friends, family or anyone."

"A code of silence was it?"

"I guess you could call it that; for every once in while, one of us would find something about him, a picture perhaps, only to be stifled."

"So likes his memory was all you had, then?"

"Maybe a dying memory," he added, "since we couldn't discuss the subject openly, around her, without stirring-up something."

"Stirring-up what?"

"Haven't they told you," he replied, "about the Hell and all?"

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“Yes, the ‘Hell’ has been mentioned from the last conversations,” I confirmed, “but not in the consequence of such questions or inquiry.”

“That didn’t happen often and, over time, it really faded,” he continued to explain. “It just wasn’t worth it—as much as I imagined the past and wondered of his whereabouts.”

“Sounds like your dad was a ghost before his actual death,” I added, verbally acknowledging what I already was aware of.

“A ghost—or maybe a phantom¹¹³—is an accurate description of the dilemma,” he replied, suggesting the personal association to the spirit.

“I appreciate the clarification—the phantom,” I said with understanding. “It suggests a determined presence—more than a fly by night, random manifestation.”

“It was menacing for her,” he explained, “with all the effort and energy she spent trying to ward it off.”

“So she really didn’t separate you two, after all?”

“She tried—most definitely—going to extremes, for which I can’t imagine the reasons or understand the rationale.”

“Sounds like she was (or is) afraid, fearful for some reason,” I added, while knowing that such “extremes” could only be driven by fear.

“I suppose fear was behind it,” he agreed

“Fear of him, of his family—or what do you think,” but before I could finish my question, Good-Hero stood up, characteristically looking at his watch as a signal that he was *done for the day*.

“Times-up,” he said tersely, as he began his exit.

“Thanks for you time; this has been a great conversation,” I remarked as the door closed between us. *Amazing*, I thought, *the code of silence has been breached, the hero shockingly laying down his sword and shield—exposing his heart for the sacrifice of his own*.

He’s never quite got the trick of conversation [until now], tending to hear in dissenting views, however mild, a kind of affront, an invitation to mortal combat.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ A more serious or well-known ghost of personal account, even relation.

¹¹⁴ Ian McEwan, *Saturday*, 2003.

Him Who Cares Till When

"I just saw your brother, Problem-Rebel. We had a good conversation, I think."

And after some pause, he replied: "We really don't talk, him and me—as is the case for the others too."

"So you don't talk to anyone of your immediate family?"

"We keep our distance—or at least they do," he began. "It wasn't always so silent, but better times have become bitter ones, I think."

"Bitter ones; between you and them, you mean?"

"I believe the bitterness began long ago," he began, "and has been passed so to speak—a bitter pill, as it's so aptly applied here."

"So you think the divorce *got the ball rolling* on bitterness?"

"No, I believe the bitterness began before divorce—possibly before the marriage," he continued. "Bitterness began long ago, I believe."

"How did come-up with this concept," I had to ask—seeing it as an unexpected, surprising claim. "You must have—"

"Therapy," he replied. "Mom forced me to therapy—to deal with my drugs and defiance, notably," he explained. "It was more the outcome than the process—a revelation if you like," he said without any apparent reservations or regrets.

"So your mom was bitter, you think, from long ago, perhaps as a youth herself?"

"Yes, but she still is," he responded promptly. "Bitterness is the best way to explain her behavior," he continued. "She is bitter."

"And what about you," I interrupted, "are you bitter too?"

"No, I refused to *swallow the pill*—but I am angry as you have probably figured-out," he clarified. "Bitterness is like drinking rat poison and waiting for the rat to die." ¹¹⁵ "I just didn't refuse the cool-aid, but I threw it back in her face," he continued, "...and all Hell broke loose."

"So her anger is about you," I asked, though knowing the answer.

"She definitely uses me to express her anger, but to your question, her anger is much more deeply rooted in bitterness."

¹¹⁵ John Ortberg Jr., *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them.*, 2003.

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“And you’re sure of this,” I ask, internally rejoicing in his dead-on assessment.

“As sure as I like weed,” he said without any sense of sacrifice or shame. “And it’s not a recent revelation closely-held either.”

“What do you mean by that,” I asked, thinking of what a rebel is.

“I called her on it, I told her that she was a bitter—”

“Wow, no wonder you’re who you are,” I remarked.

“Yeah, it was one of those moments; a euphoric high just before reality returns,” he went on, “but I don’t regret it—telling her was she most assuredly knows.”

“So she knows she is bitter,” I asked, repeating his statement.

“I believe so—or at least she did—”

“So she doesn’t anymore?”

“Yeah, she has long since done such medicating of her own—a way of obviously coping with her own regrets. Now that’s hypocrisy for you: sending me to drug-intervention while she continues in her habit.”

Problem-Rebel had *come far* for a young person—a kind of insight or awareness that many fail to achieve in lifetime, I think. But his punishment was much—more than he realized evidently, as something was needed to momentarily escape the emotional pain—to stave-off that bitter pill with a better pill. But a better pill is still a pill—a drug still a drug—that often if not always delays or deters something else for good or bad. But by whatever influence, he was most determined that, expressing his intentions, might say:

If one day I could get out of here, I would allow myself to be crazy. Everyone is indeed crazy, but the craziest are the ones who don’t know they’re crazy; they just keep repeating what others tell them to...[And] I want to continue being crazy; living my life the way I dream it, and not the way the other people want it to be... If only everyone could know and live with their inner craziness. Would the world be a worse place for it? No, people would be fairer and happier.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Paulo Coelho, *Veronika Decides to Die*, 2006.

Him Who Cares Till When

First fear, now bitterness—what they describe in the first two conversations—were present at the beginning. Then, for them who suffer either in their own sickness or that they spread to the relations, the isolation of one sort or another, where:

Certain people, in their eagerness to construct a world no external threat can penetrate build exaggeratedly high defense against the outside world, against new people, new places, and different experiences and leave their own world stripped bare. It is there that bitterness begins irrevocable work.¹¹⁷

And so the pill is taken, more and more, not just for the:

- “Certain people”, but also, the uncertain
- Fearful folks, but also, the confused and conflicted
- Bitter hearts, but also, the better

“Sometimes we take actions, sometimes we take pills.”¹¹⁸

Lost-Silence made her usual, unannounced entrance, as she so skillfully had developed. It was only in my own movements that I even noticed her there, as though my shadow or one of those phantoms described by her brother. Startled, I stepped back to gain my balance while momentarily dealing with my ire over this tendency.

“It might help us both if you at least knocked,” I said, realizing that my request, while reasonable, would not register—even repeated. “Why do you this,” I asked, not really expecting an explanation.

“Force,” was her first word. “I do it because it gives me power and control,” she continued. “My oldest is good, my second is a rebel, and the last is a joker, but I am silent.”

“Silent maybe, but definitely not lost—you seem to know the score when it comes to role-playing,” I retorted. “You seem like a student—”

“Yes, I study the show social sciences.”

¹¹⁷ Paulo Coelho.

¹¹⁸ Fall-Out Boy: an American Grammy-nominated rock band from Wilmette, Illinois, formed in 2001.

Beginning Then, Not Now

“Interesting,” I began, “and why this,” I followed, almost sure of the answer before even asking the question.

“I wanted to know, not just observe, what it was about,” she said

“Know ‘it’,” I ask, presuming she meant her family.

“My family—all that I can do to ‘understand understanding’,” she said, purposely using my phrase to emphasize her own quest not just for knowledge’s sake, but for benefits that could serve amiable relations.

“That’s commendable,” I told her, connecting her past to the present endeavor—from silence and exclusion to a decided problem-solver. And for the balance of our conversation, she shared her ambitions on that score, referring to her learning thus far—the combination of independent and formal studies.

“Wow, you’ve really been at this,” I said, as all I that I could momentarily express; but in thought, my impression was that *Lost-Silence* had matured to the level at which she not only desired, but was determined, to help her siblings making a concentrated effort while accepting that her parents had failed on that score. Her intentions were stated, when finally, she said:

We’ve pretended too much in our family...and hidden far too much. I think we’re all going to pay a high price for our inability to face the truth.¹¹⁹

Of all conversations thus far, this was the one most promising of healing.

Finally, *Comedy-Mascot* arrived, though not with the usual, lead-in of laughter.

“What’s wrong,” I began, noting his mood.

“Nothing,” he remarked, snubbing the question.

“I have recently seen your brothers and sister,” I continued aside from his apparent withdraw. “And you—have you spoke to them?”

“No, not recently,” he said bluntly, coldly.

“What about your mom,” I asked as a logical follow-on.

¹¹⁹ Pat Conroy, *The Prince of Tides*, 1986.

Him Who Cares Till When

"Now and then, when the mood is right," he responded with at least a word to go on.

"What do you mean, 'mood'," I asked with some determination of my own.

"You know Who-Cares, when it suits her."

"And how often does this happen," I continued.

"Where have you been," he blurted-out as though I had not been listening—understanding the "operations" (as described previously as a metaphor). How could I answer him, but possibly with the something lighter?

"I guess I was too busy laughing to listen," I answered, attempting to tap into his better self.

"Right," he said in a tone of disbelief, rebuffing my effort.

"So what are you thinking, Comedy-Mascot?"

"I am thinking that sometimes laughter is not enough; it doesn't work when you don't have an audience," he began, "when the show is over and they leave."

"Do you mean your siblings?"

"I mean anyone who will listen and laugh; anyone who will find me funny and fun—and though they leave, they come back for more," he explained. "I miss my family—whatever you might think of them."

"What about your dad and other family," I said, again a logical follow-on. "Do you have any feelings there?"

"I don't know," he began, "they are not really family," he continued.

"If not family, what are they?"

"You know; they're not us—not even close—but worse, they're against us."

"So you believe that this extended family is an enemy, is that right?"

"Yes, that is what I believe," he said without reluctance, reservation.

"I don't think you've listened either," I replied, referring to his previous remark in connection with mother's "mood".

"What do you mean," he asked, showing the first sign of sobriety when it comes to serious sentiments.

Beginning Then, Not Now

“Excuse me; you have listened and learned—but it’s the source that’s the problem, the predicament,” I clarified. “Your mom has described for you a relationship that is not real—but is that contrived with the same imagination that you might exert toward your comedy. The difference is that your intentions are to humor and thereby distract, while her intentions are to isolate and thereby control. It’s one thing to be casually distracted, but another to be seriously deceived.”

After a moment to digest my description, he commented: “She is the dramatist—that I know—but a deceiver?”

“I am sensitive to the fact that she is your mother, Comedy-Mascot, but I think that my intentions here are good—as with yours.

“Why would she do that,” he said somewhat defensively. “I don’t understand why she would want to deceive us?”

“I think you do...understand. But I believe that you’ve tried to ignore the signs—preferring to laugh it off and, of course, to enjoin the others as often as doable,” I began. “And now, with the others away, what is left but you and her—or maybe others outside the family not yet designated as strange or “against us”. Meanwhile, you have a life to live and to ideally find some satisfaction beyond the sarcasm but, ideally, before cynicism comes your way.”

“What are saying,” he asks evidently unsure of my words, “that I am just supposed to believe you and then things will be better?”

“I don’t think that it’s that simple. But what I am saying is that your comic-relief, while appreciated and admirable, is not the solution to negative feelings or behavior. You can’t continue to laugh way around or through this—as the others have (or will) not buy it.”

“She still laughs, you know—my mom. She says that I make her day—that I’m ‘the light at the end of the tunnel’.”

“I believe you,” I said earnestly, “but that’s because you don’t require much of anything positive from her; or in other words, she is not challenged by you.”

“So you’re saying that I’m just a clown, not a contender?”

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“That’s one way of putting it. Just remove the make-up and costume, and see how the naked faces fare,” I said, using his caricature with an abstract. “With the humor aside, honesty may arise however delayed.”

Without laughter in the conversation, Comedy-Mascot was left with the least reason to distract (or be distracted)—to remove the mask, the make-believe, and to see the drama (as he describes it) without the counted-on, comic relief. Humor (laughter) is a great help, a great relief from the *drama* of life and living. But this third conversation came (and went) as something between the fine line of humor and hurt. Sometimes laughter is not the best medicine; it may reduce the suffering but the condition goes uncured. “[But], I know why we laugh. We laugh because it hurts, and it’s the only thing to make it stop hurting.”¹²⁰

Lost-Silence has emerged; she has gained much in her desire and determination to understand her family, but she is also passionately committed to keep her understanding to herself, presumably to protect them—especially her mother. Some sensitivity is understood, even necessary, as she treads that thin line that develops when the blinded begin to see and, in turn, attempt to help others, blind or blinded. Only time and place will determine the depth, beyond the present desire and determination, which is tolerable for her and each of them.

Problem-Rebel has been fighting the fight all alone and all along, more or less. As the scapegoat, he has taken the brunt or backlash—the sacrifices of some misdirected and misunderstood causes. In the consequences, he has sought comfort and consolation in the company of persons and places that may be affirming or accepting (though it is difficult to know due to his purposed privacy, even secrecy, in his choices). The risk (of his choices) is what concerns me as part of the hurt that he has endured over much of his young life.

Good-Hero is the supreme holdout in his narrow thread of conversation; a wall for which I cannot penetrate except perhaps indirectly through a subject of interest that might help him accept that admission of weakness is not weakness—but strength instead.

¹²⁰ Robert A. Heinlein.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

I now turn to related matters (beyond apathy and cynicism); a time and place that From Beginning Then, Moving Ahead ideally toward identifying the problems. Not to say that “problems” have not already been identified (in limited conversation with the siblings), but what I mean is what’s at the root or core—that have produced the problems or concerns described or suggested thus far.

There are symptoms and there are problems. Solving problems begins with the process of understanding the difference, proceeding toward identifying one from the other, often by asking the basic question “Why?” repeatedly until finally attaining the cause, root-core problem.¹²¹ But this method or technique—with origins in business (rather than social science)—may have its limitations when attempting to solve interrelation problems of this kind or nature (behavior and such). Thus, I proceed cautiously into a field of science for which I am not really familiar (though always willing to try at some level, given my own cause).

In either and all applications, problem-solving goes nowhere when the problems (or peripheral) are **not** discussed or considered. Then there is the saying that “*letting go* is the best solution”; but in that, the issue of whether the matter is actually *water under the bridge*. So has the problem been found, figured-out and forgotten in three easy steps, or is such a “saying” that is too simple to be worth the words or taken seriously? A saying may sound good but that’s about it.

And to state (or restate) and obvious by universal truth, “You cannot fix a problem that you refuse to acknowledge.”¹²² And with this “truth” then comes the possible, painstaking predicament of confronting persons about confronting (their) problems—with the potential of *setting them off* and killing the chance of any substantive relationship Moving Ahead. As it is, I have very little in the way of relationships—so what have I got to lose except for losing the chance, relationship or not?

¹²¹ 5-Whys: an iterative question-asking technique used to explore the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem. The primary goal of the technique is to determine the root cause of a defect or problem; Wikipedia.

¹²² Margaret Heffernan, *Willful Blindness: Why We Ignore the Obvious at Our Peril*; 2011.

Him Who Cares Till When

What has been cooking in the chance of a confrontation?

A confrontation is unavoidable, I think, as this approach to problem-solving is about confronting those matters that have been potentially *put on the backburner*—that have been deferred, disregarded or denied by cook and, in turn, by those fed a steady diet of deception. But what does this really mean; the cook, the deceived, and the figurative cooking?

Cooking is used here as another analogy (as done previously with first diving followed by flying); and it conjures-up the basic, essential needs for life and living, health and nutrition. Cooking is a process that we all can understand at some level and, thus, can apply to the primary question at the top of the page. There is actual cooking (such as “cooking-out”) and then the figurative “cooking-up” that connotes scheming or conspiring. I begin here with an item (or matter) that has been put on the backburner, or in other words, has been forgotten at the moment.

Imagine this item (or matter); over-cooking though without much attention or awareness to check on it, taste it or do much of anything other than let it simmer. What are the possibilities but some stench, smoke and an enduringly-blackened pot—if not a fire!



And still the potential (for a fire) in the neglect of such an energy and force—and especially as the energy has been building for many years. Yes, neglect over a time span of years (rather than hours), in a place that serves a steady diet of a *half-backed, cooked-up* concoctions. Is it any wonder why the item (or matter) is neglected—or left *on the backburner*? There is not any delight in a diet of deception except for that of the cook—or the one who determines the diet.¹²³ Sure, there are good things to eat but still, that *concoction* left to simmer; and indeed, “A lie that is a half-truth is the darkest of lies.”¹²⁴

¹²³ The use of “cooked-up” and “half-baked” idiomatic of poorly-planned invention that, here, is describes: deception, disregard and denial.

¹²⁴ Alfred Tennyson.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

But why stop with deception? Why not carry this analogy further, to that of denial? If expressed in words, the cook might say: “I never concocted what you call “*half-backed* and *cooked-up*.” And the more this statement might be made, if made at all, the more it would be believed—especially by those who depend on the diet, good things along with the concoction, of course. “Never attempt to win by force what can be won [first] by deception” ¹²⁵ and for those less deceived, by denial.

Denial is not excluded to the cook; that just as the others have been deceived so too are they denied and in denial. Yes, they are self-deceived: “There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true (deceived); the other is to refuse to believe what is true (denial).” ¹²⁶ Surely they saw the simmering concoction and, all the while, tasted it too. They know what the stuff is (and is not) but better to let it burn than to get *burned*—if that is possible.

“Of all the greatest liars in the world, sometimes the worst are our own fears.” ¹²⁷ And in their fears comes for each a role to play—and act to perform—on the stage of a so-called life, the characters:

- Protagonist as regretfully Good-Hero
- Antagonist as allegedly Problem-Rebel
- Advisor as anonymously Lost-Silence
- Jester as cynically Comedy-Mascot

But for how long must the show go on? I think that it will play for as long as each and all play their roles or dance to the tune of deception. “All the [family is] a stage...and all the[m] merely players” ¹²⁸

But then there is the director too (i.e. “the cook”) who must keep the act (or action) going—the concoction simmering. And while they play or partake, the *backburner* blazes and “delay is the deadliest form of denial.” ¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1532.

¹²⁶ Søren Kierkegaard.

¹²⁷ Rudyard Kipling.

¹²⁸ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 1623.

¹²⁹ C. Northcote Parkinson.

Him Who Cares Till When

So how does the player stop playing, the dancer stop dancing? For one or the other is not a game. “There’s a difference between playing and playing games. The former is an act of joy, the latter — an act.”¹³⁰ But to the answer the question is to try to understand why they play—what they would say (to the extent that they understand the matter); and to each, I suggest:

- Good-Hero – “Rocks in my path? I keep them all. With them I shall build my castle.”¹³¹
- Problem-Rebel – “I have actual acting scars.”¹³²
- Lost-Silence – “I have only one rule in acting—trust the director, and give [them] heart and soul.”¹³³
- Comedy-Mascot – “Life is a comedy to those who think; a tragedy to those who feel.”¹³⁴

But then this is only what I suggest and is hardly what has been, is or could be. Maybe I will suggest again later, with other script, but now, I turn to doubt, depression and fear.

Of these actors, these young people, two were prescribed with a regular regimen of medication early on (between the ages of 7 and 17) possibly for up to ten years—and this too is the consequence of the director’s decision(s). But first, the larger context:¹³⁵

Overall, the number of Americans on medications used to treat psychological and behavioral disorders has substantially increased since 2001; more than one-in-five adults was on at least one of these medications in 2010, up 22 percent from ten years earlier. Women are far more likely to take a drug to treat a mental health condition than men, with more than a quarter of the adult female population on these drugs in 2010 as compared to 15 percent of men.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*, 2010.

¹³¹ Nemo Nox.

¹³² Benedict Cumberbatch.

¹³³ Ava Gardner.

¹³⁴ Jean Racine.

¹³⁵ “Larger context” to mean the nation’s use of such medications.

¹³⁶ “America’s State of Mind, Medco”; [apps.who.int/medicinedocs/ documents/s19032en/s19032en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/documents/s19032en/s19032en.pdf).

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Of course, the complications of this trend (of psychological and behavioral disorders) must consider not only medical but economic influences (such as the profits gained by the pharmaceutical companies). Here however, attention is turned to young people and the direct concerns and risks incurred in the prevalent prescription of such psychotropic medicine. Again, from the report:

In the United States, an estimated 5.4 million children ages 4 to 17 have been diagnosed with ADHD and the percentage of children with a parent—reported ADHD diagnosis increased by 22 percent between 2003 and 2007 according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

So at least three conclusions from these excerpts, the report:

1. Use of these types of medications have grown in some proportion to the determined or diagnosed mental health
2. Children are included in this trend, boys being most prevalent
3. ADHD diagnosis is a growing health concern

I do not know of the details of these young people's diagnosis and, unfortunately, can not expect them to know and/or to try to explain in the forum of our conversations. They were young with this began and, being so, had little if any say in the director's decision; and in the vein of playing their roles, were merely moving as a puppet on a string.

Depression is part of ADHD; from World of Psychology, "Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and depression commonly occur together."¹³⁷

ADHD makes people's lives harder, so it makes sense that they have more to be depressed about. This is especially true because ADHD difficulties usually persist—it's not like going through a bad break-up where things get better with time.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Psych Central-World of Psychology, "ADHD and Depression: Common Bedfellows"; psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/05/19/adhd-and-depression-common-bedfellows/.

¹³⁸ Ari Tuckman, PsyD, a clinical psychologist who specializes in ADHD and wrote the book, *More Attention, Less Deficit: Successful Strategies for Adults with ADHD*, 2009.

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But as I present these links, from drugs to depression, I will try to once again tread that dangerous line between tacit knowledge and actual experience—between a passion to understand at some level against the constraints of my absence from their lives (during that period) and the otherwise, inability to gain firsthand, personal and professional knowledge.

What is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?

This commonly applied diagnosis, ADHD, “makes it difficult to pay attention, stay focused, or control behavior—your lives can change: Your child will need medication, regular doctor visits, and therapy. You may also need to learn different parenting techniques to help your child.”¹³⁹

The link to depression has already been touched-on; that the difficulties brought-on by ADHD result in episodes depression; and while ADHD persists, the depression tends to cycle or vary. The association and distinction of these two conditions (and other learning difficulties) seems to require testing or diagnosis coupled with medications of sort and/or another. Again, from the article:

Because it's so common, new guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that physicians who evaluate children for ADHD should also look for conditions that commonly co-exist with the disorder. But it's often difficult for doctors to diagnose a second condition in ADHD patients; particularly among those who aren't old enough to describe their thoughts or feelings well.

And for the children under consideration:

It becomes more challenging to try to determine what the internalizing conditions in the younger children are. They're not going to be able to tell you much about what they're feeling.

¹³⁹ WebMD Feature by Lisa Fields, reviewed by Hansa D. Bhargava, MD; webmd.com/add-adhd/childhood-adhd/features/not-just-adhd.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

To the earlier conclusions, I add another:

4. Because these patients are children, they cannot convey their feelings or symptom thus, must depend on the parent, educator and other adults for such assistance-intervention

So with these conclusions from the least of information, what remains are more questions; and in general, why the trend has continued toward increased diagnosis of ADHD and the cycle of depression in young people.

Coincident to this general trend is the concern-condition that young people are being misdiagnosed or over-diagnosed (if there is such a designation or dilemma; and intended or not, that children are sedated—subjected to drugs that make them more malleable—in the course or consequence of such diagnosis and drug use. From an article in *Esquire Magazine*, “The Drugging of the American Boy,” the following:

The number of children who have been diagnosed with ADHD—overwhelmingly boys—in the United States has climbed at an astonishing rate over a relatively short period of time. The Centers for Disease Control first attempted to tally ADHD cases in 1997 and found that about 3 percent of American schoolchildren had received the diagnosis, a number that seemed roughly in line with past estimates. But after that year, the number of diagnosed cases began to increase by at least 3 percent every year. Then, between 2003 and 2007, cases increased at a rate of 5.5 percent each year. In 2013, the CDC released data revealing that 11 percent of American schoolchildren had been diagnosed with ADHD, which amounts to 6.4 million children between the ages of four and seventeen—a 16 percent increase since 2007 and a 42 percent increase since 2003.¹⁴⁰

For someone like me, **Who-Cares**, the impulse is to ask: “What’s going on here; why are so many children (and adults) drugged for depression and related conditions or disorders?”

¹⁴⁰ “The Drugging of the American Boy”, *Esquire*, May 27, 2014.

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But to arrive at an answer—the root cause(s)—is not only beyond my capacity or the content of this book but, potentially, the entire medical community. As it is, every age group seems to be reeling from the growth of depression and its drugs—this from Psychology Today:

Our society is in the throes of a virtual epidemic of depression... More than twenty percent of the American population will experience at least one episode of what we refer to as clinical depression.

We need to look deeper into this phenomenon to understand it and overcome it. My contention is, firstly, that our cultural values and memes induce us to live in ways that are, indeed, depressing. Secondly, much of what we refer to as clinical depression is inaccurate. Most depression is situational. The symptoms of depression are often due to depressing circumstances, not disease. In other words, under certain circumstances, it makes sense to be depressed.¹⁴¹

The article-author identifies several possible, potential reasons (phrased as questions) for the described “throes of a virtual epidemic of depression”.

- ? “Have We Lost Our Way?” – to suggest that culture is the problem
- ? “Are People Dysfunctional?” – to suggest a societal dysfunction—more than that assigned individuals
- ? “Is Our Society Manufacturing Depressed People?” – again, a cultural or societal expectation that each and all must be happy and, if your not, something is wrong with you

And then finally, the confusion of “situational depression”; that often, depression comes as a normal, natural response to particular events where the pain should be worked-through rather than suppressed, medicated. Also in this article is the description or reference to what is called “manufacturing depression”; noting the skyrocketing of diagnosis following the introduction of the selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors SSRI's.

¹⁴¹ “A Shift of Mind”, Psychology Today, Rethinking the way we live, Mel Schwartz, L.C.S.W.; psychologytoday.com/blog/shift-mind/201203/is-our-society-manufacturing-depressed-people.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

More on ADHD and depression among young people is available in Author's Notes. But for now, I take a step back, at least in the sequence of the intended order, turning to the reaction or response, "doubt", posed as a question and topic.

What about doubt(s)?

The mention of the word "doubt" renders so many possibilities....

For instance, and on topic of the growing trend of depression and ADHD, I admit that I have my doubts regarding this medical concern; that is; I believe that depression and ADHD are being *manufactured* in part for the financial interests of "Big Pharma" among others.

But to narrow the word, "doubt", to connect "doubt" with "depression", the following from *Prozac Nation*:

Some friends don't understand this. They don't understand how desperate I am to have someone say, I love you and I support you just the way you are because you're wonderful just the way you are. They don't understand that I can't remember anyone ever saying that to me. I am so demanding and difficult for my friends because I want to crumble and fall apart before them so that they will love me even though I am no fun, lying in bed, crying all the time, not moving. Depression is all about "If you loved me you would".¹⁴²

And in a personal, painful account, this author describes the author's experiences with major depression, her own character failings and how she managed to live through particularly difficult periods while completing college and working as a writer.

From a much later article on the book, the author is quoted: "In a strange way, I had fallen in love with my depression. I thought so little of [me, and] felt that I had such scant offerings to give the world, that the one thing that justified my existence at all was my agony."¹⁴³ So not only my doubt about the ethics in the diagnosis of mental disorders but

¹⁴² Elizabeth Wurtzel, *Prozac Nation*, 1994.

¹⁴³ "Thank You, Elizabeth Wurtzel: 'Prozac Nation' Turns 20", *The Daily Beast*, July 13, 2014.

Him Who Cares Till When

also the efficacy of the medications and mediations—of how earnest are each and all the *players* in this arrangement.

But on the funny side (but still dark or in *the darkness*) is the recent book/film, *Silver Lining Playbook*, as Pat (a mental patient and main character) says in his expression and elation over new found love and acceptance:

In my arms...who knows all my secrets, a woman who knows just how messed up my mind is, how many pills I'm on, and yet she allows me to hold her anyway. There's something honest about all this, and I cannot imagine any other woman lying in the middle of a frozen soccer field with me....¹⁴⁴

For there is this wonder and magic of love that seems to hold from one generation to the next—transcending the technology of the modern world that, while potentially beneficial, results in no real substitute, whether promoted as the next panacea or pushed as a placebo. In plain language, I am sick of those who (or that which) continue to profit—financially or otherwise—from the real, realized or ruse-rendered sickness of others.

Doubt, self-doubt, can be all too often a sickness too; one that is **not** entirely of one's self but, with the right words and working, can be wrought upon persons from other persons—one individual from allegedly another one or more. And yet again, the possibilities are numerous—while my education in such areas (of the social sciences) limited—but once more I tread that thin line with random and rudimentary thoughts expressed in my writing and that of others well chosen.

There is no doubt, "Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will." But, from the same source, it's also true that "Being truthful is the new beautiful."¹⁴⁵ So without any doubt on doubt and with intended truth on truth, I continue on topic from "depression" to "doubt" and from "doubt" to "fear" (as first proposed a few prior pages ago).

¹⁴⁴ *Silver Lining Playbook*, The Weinstein Company-Mirage Enterprises, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Suzy Kassem.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Doubt is less than being certain or confident; it is what Shakespeare described as a “traitor” in that it causes “us [to] lose the good we oft might win.” ¹⁴⁶ But is doubt always a bad thing; does it always cause death (of dreams and such) or cause loss (and lead to it)?

Maybe “doubt” is not the word here; maybe I should say “I am unsure that every case of depression needs medication/mediation”. Doubt or by any similar word or expression, the profits from these medical trends are enough reason to raise questions and take action—enough to generally and desperately express, “What’s going on here?”

My doubt is **not** without doubt (if that makes sense), but my doubt has some certainty too. My doubt takes into consideration:

- Continuing trends and staggering statistics against other societies
- For-profit medical industry including insurance, and Big Pharma
- Testing/experiments involving populations with or without their knowledge or consent—rationalized for reasoned beyond the common good, but for other nefarious objectives
- Basic realizations of the media, propaganda, and public relations
- State-sourced programs that undermine societal strength
- The incapacity for facts, and unaccountability, of institutions

In short, my doubt is legitimate not only for children who are powerless in this pill-indulged, drug-inundated society, but also the scores of others over-prescribed with medications in the *manufacturing* of depression from related symptoms. Because I am not trained or educated in such areas (medicine, mental disorders, etc.), my doubt is still with doubt; but because I have the ability and accessibility to draw comparisons and review criticisms, my doubt has some certainty too. After all, doubt begins with certainty, belief or a basis. ¹⁴⁷ Am I certain about certainty? Yes, as well as certain about my doubt too. But basically, I am among the many parents who want to protect our population from predators

¹⁴⁶ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1604.

¹⁴⁷ This reasoning is inspired from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*: “If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty.”

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that are eerily similar to the roving, snake-oil merchants or the illegal drug-industry with all its gateways, garble and greed.

In a film by the same name, “Doubt”, the story begins with a sermon on gossip, how it travels (like feathers in the wind) and finally ends-up in places we cannot find—even if we wanted to. From this introduction, a small cast of characters; some staff of a parochial school and a mother whose son, as the only black child as a student, is seemingly at center of the *conflict and contention*. Here is a brief of the characters:

- The principal – a nun whose past includes the pain of her spouse’s death and, from this, her own limited choices of the nunnery for acceptance with her attributes and ambitions yet to be realized if even achievable in or beyond this life—the career limitations of women in the 1960s
- The priest – as the senior staff member, he desires that the parish be the center of some positive qualities
- Sister James – at first convinced of the Father’s intentions, she is swayed by the superiority and suspicions of Sister Aloysius (The principal) to the dubious position—his apparently partiality toward the black boy
- The mother – whose chief interest is her son, his opportunity to get a quality education in this rare and tenuous role as the only black student to date in this parochial school, parish

For the audience, there is the larger context; the very real implications of the *institutionalized* church pertaining to pedophile—which is at the core of “doubt”, the suspension, inquiry and eventual capitulation of the priest. But beneath this theme is the controversy of inter-racial education or socialization and, in more detailed, the potential for (and practice of) power and fear in any and all annals and avenues of society.

A power struggle ensues between the priest and the principal, with the James and the mother as merely supporters, one way or another. The priest eventually fears what could happen in the suspension and persistence of the principal: that a scandal could result and, consequently, dismissal from the diocese.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Are (were) these doubts warranted? Should the sister principal have so persistent—beyond a personalized but professional inquiry—to suggest that her actions possibly went beyond doubt to that of confirmed guilt—even without the inquiry, his direct involvement, interview? And in these questions or considerations is the very theme and title of the play and film. Needless to say, each of the audience may draw their own considerations and conclusion, including criticisms, based on their own understanding—or willingness to understand understanding in the first place. Here are some in the form of questions:

- ? Was the priest innocent of the allegations?
- ? Were the allegations warranted or justified in the first place?
- ? Was the principal well intended (to protect the child)?
- ? Was one or the other abusing their authority?

And this is the start considerations, without conclusions or criticisms, derived personally but expressed on your behalf, the reader.

Of all the recollection of the film, the script, what I most appreciate is the following statement from the priest to the principal, Sister Aloysius:

How much worse is it (doubt) when a lone man or woman is stricken with a private calamity...Imagine the isolation as you see the world through a window: on one side, troubled unhappy people, and on the other side, you.¹⁴⁸

What become clear however is that the principal acts beyond protocol—seeking out information or some consensus by conferring with other sisters of the priest's past parish—circumventing or breaching the standard procedures that require initial inquiry and permission of the resident or senior priests. At the least, the principal has abused authority—breaching protocol and procedure—in her self-directed aim of confirming her suspension or doubt. And as the two go head-to-head, he says: "You have no proof", for which she replies, "I have my certainty!" But does she...?

¹⁴⁸ From the film, *Doubt*, the priest, Father Flynn, played by Phillip Seymour Hoffman, 2008.

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With some additional banter, he shouts: “You have no right to act on your own,” and continues:

You have taken vows, obedience [being] one. You answer to us. You have no right to step outside the church.

For which she screams with equal conviction, “I will step outside the church—if that’s what needs to be done though the doors should shut behind me.” And with clenched fist in his face, she continues:

I will do what needs to be done—though I’m damned to Hell! You should understand that, or you will mistake me.

From there, she asks him point-blank if he gave the boy Eucharist wine to drink; for which the priest begins to question her past; as to whether she has every committed a “mortal sin”. She responds immediately and conclusively, “Yes,” leaving no doubt that she has *a past* that is anything but righteous. And in the conclusion, from Wikipedia:

Following his final sermon, Father Flynn steps down from the pulpit and shakes hands with the members of the congregation.

Some time later, Sisters Aloysius and James are sitting together in the church garden. Sister Aloysius tells Sister James that although Father Flynn resigned, the bishop has appointed him to pastor at a larger church and its parochial school, in essence promoting him to a more prestigious position and perpetuating the same issue with Father Flynn. She then admits she lied about speaking to a nun at Father Flynn's former church, and thus drove him out with no more than her suspicions; her justification is that if Father Flynn truly were innocent of wrongdoing, he would not have given in. Repeating a line from earlier in the film, Sister Aloysius says that "in the pursuit of wrongdoing, one steps away from God."

The “wrongdoing” to be that of her—by her own admission or testimony (in lying to the priest about her conversation with another sister of another, previous parish)—in rationalizing that he would not have resigned had he not been guilty is some way. Thus, the end justifies the means, or expedience is excused in her mind if not her actions; past, present and possibly the future too.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Still yet to discuss the topic of “fear” (beyond the mention as a motivating force for the priest’s final decision to step-down or transfer), I will defer it for now, but not before I give the topic of “doubt” a little more time and consideration as to the positives or pluses:

And your doubt can become a good quality if you train it.

It must become knowing, it must become criticism.

Ask it, whenever it wants to spoil something for you, why something is ugly, demand proofs from it, test it, and you will find it perhaps bewildered and embarrassed, perhaps also protesting.

But don’t give in, [but] insist on arguments, and act in this way, attentive and persistent, every single time, and the day will come when, instead of being a destroyer, it will become one of your best workers—perhaps the most intelligent of all the ones that are building your life.¹⁴⁹

Doubt (having doubts) is not always a bad thing—as it motivates us to inquiry and investigation, thinking and action, toward resolution and redemption. As such sage advice comes from Rainer Maria Rilke, doubt “must become knowing, it must become criticism...” and “instead of being a destroyer (or something negative), it will become one of your best workers.”

Or consider the alternative; that is, to have no doubt(s) or to ignore the doubts we have (whether ignoring it at the inception or dismissing along the way, as the least desired of pursuits). If we are able to go beyond the moment that cast all doubts away like feathers in the wind, we can begin to see that doubt is not so much about being uncertain or unsure as it is about being certain and sure—not only of what we believe but what we have come to accept and adopt as basis or base.

It is moral, natural and normal, to intercede in the lives of those whom we love and care about, doubts or not. But when doubt becomes the driving force or motivation *in pursuit of wrongdoing*, it has evidently gone bad—potentially leading to death (of something or someone), loss and no good for all who are (or become) involved, even implicated.

¹⁴⁹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, 1929.

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"It is good to see you again, Good-Hero. What's in been, a year or so," I began, as the uniformed man came through the door. "I see that you are fulfilling your military service," I continued, not surprised by his choice of pursuits. "What do they call it; 'doing your duty for—"

"That's right; it's my duty—my efforts to give back what others have sacrificed," he said, cutting-in on the conversation.

"Sounds like a real challenge," I added, fully aware that he was (and is) convinced in his choice(s).

"Yes, it is a 'real challenge'—but a welcomed one too."

"I see," I replied. "And what does your family think of your enlistment," I continued in the shifting of subjects.

"They're okay," he said, "At first my mom was not on board," he added in a lower voice. "But she's come around, I think."

"And what about your dad; what does he think?"

"He seems to like it; several of his family has served too—so it's more the norm, I think."

"You mean your family; 'his family' is your family, right?"

"I guess so," he said tersely, followed by an awkward silence.

"Then he has left no doubt," I spoke-up, "as to your choices, maybe more," attempting to end the awkwardness—to move the conversation forward to more on his family, immediate or estranged.

"I don't know; what I mean is that I am not sure," he began. "You know that we've been separated for much of my life, after the divorce."

"Yes, I know that much; but the question is really about now—or since you have been able to communicate and possibly renew your relationship in some respect."

"I am not sure about that," he replied with some visible reserve. "I don't know if renewal is possible or probable given all that has happened."

"A lot has happened," I asked, repeating his words as a question. "You mean the *conflict and contention* between them, your parents?"

"Yes, that's one way of putting it; '*conflict and contention*'."

"Too much loss...to expect any gains—is that it," I said in summary.

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"It's just too much work, I think; too much to expect from both sides, right now," he clarified. "It's not that I don't want it—understand—but that it is just too much given everything, then and now."

"Now; you mean *the war* isn't over," I quipped without really thinking.

"War—that's a fair substitute for *conflict and contention*," he replied with similar impulse. "I am not sure if *the war* will ever end. I just know that I am sorry it ever started—and that it has gone on all this time."

As war takes its toll, endless war takes much more. "For what can war, but endless war, still breed." ¹⁵⁰

"Back to your choices," I said, leaving the matter of the family feud alone for the moment—if that was possible. "You dad is okay with it."

"Yes, he is, I think; though at times, it's all I talk about."

"And what's wrong with that," I asked him.

"I think he would like to talk about other things; personal things beyond 'the job'—things that might allow for some of that renewal."

"That's good," I said, seeing some light in the darkness of war. "He evidently has hoped that you two can renew your relationship."

"Maybe, but I can't say that I share any such hope. I don't have the time and energy—too many other things to deal with now," he said, more or less dismissing any possibility as pointless.

Will the war ever end, I thought—as he had wondered many times, no doubt. "Do you think anything good or positive can come between you and him, his family," I asked as a way of expanding on this possibility.

"I have wondered myself," he began. "But each time, my wonder only leads to a return of frustrations and fear," he said. "It would be a wonder to see it beyond my wonder—but that depends on what each and all are willing to do. Even if one desires of some peace, the other may refuse while continuing to wage war in some way," he said as evidently having arrived at his own conclusion some time ago. "I would like renewal but the costs—the consequences of this *conflict and contention*, this war—seem more than we each and all can bear now and perhaps ever," he

¹⁵⁰ John Milton.

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continued. “It is a tragedy for which we, but the most hardened, have come to know and to recognize the real consequences, the costs.”

Good-Hero had said more in this single paragraph than I accepted as his being aware let alone could articulate. He knew the problem well—but it was the answer that was arduous, an aberration haunting him with what could have been or might be if only persons acted in *the best interest of the children*. “Perhaps then, some day far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.”

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Problem-Rebel came back too; in fact, he returned much more often than the others did or perhaps cared to. Maybe he realized that the conversations were good medicine and maybe, that he had much to say in his life completely removed from that of his family.

“Yeah, we don’t speak,” he explained once again, suggesting that his efforts and intentions had been rebuffed. “I’ve tried to contact him, but he doesn’t respond,” he went on, suggesting that he was still trying in spite of their described indifference.

And I believed him, at least his intentions, but had to come to accept that a rebel is a hated figure in more ways than one; besides the obvious rebellion is the envy—the desire to be so, but the fear that holds you back, merely dreaming of what it must be like. “Fearlessness in those without power is maddening to those who have it.”¹⁵² This rebel, though seemingly powerless as a child, was fearless in the basic instinct to survive amid many obstacles or problems:

- ❶ Health problems from infancy
- ❷ Academic or learning problems through most of his life
- ❸ Relational problems predominately with his mother and, by association and by addling, his brothers and sister
- ❹ Legal problems—as his mother invited the law to intercede in their relationship, his rebelliousness, and to resolve what she recognize as his own doing, his fault(s)

¹⁵¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, 1929

¹⁵² Tobias Wolff, *This Boy's Life*. 1989.

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To understand these difficulties begins by realizing that his problems have not been their problems; that is, that his siblings did not consider these matters—as often true of young persons—as beyond his own doing; but worse, that they were purposely confused (“addling”) as to the causes and, specifically, their mother’s culpability in this progression of problems.

I know that Problem-Rebel would not have been nearly as riddled in problems had he continued to be a part of his father’s, family life. Sure, I speculate here—but my doubts regarding her deficiencies in his life are not based on what is uncertain or unsure, but rather, on what is certain and sure as it pertains to her behavior and lifestyle. From what I have learned through these conversations and from other related sources in this course, my doubts are not demented—mere desires *to throw stones*—but are consequence of much determination to see some light in the darkness of *conflict and contention*.

He did not become a rebel on his own; but as rebels are made, he was made from opposing, oppressive forces—not so much as overt, obvious or offensive, but rather, as inverted—that manipulate and control as a figurative velvet glove over an iron fist. These *opposing, oppressive forces* are not observed as overt, as though with a dynamic dictator or despot, but as inverted; an apparent softening of power that purports to be right and just while, in truth, is deeply in doubt to the extent of wrongdoing in any and all ways.¹⁵³

So deeply is this wrongdoing that it, if observed by a mature or neutral party, is eventually, inevitably exposed (if not experienced). Lies beget lies, and finally—after *the mature* have had enough—they *throw in the towel* in despair of the differences between what is purported and what is practiced (from their own perusal). They have reached their limit of love—no longer able to be used in the worse sense—or to tolerate what they recognize as unrepresentative of responsibility in the best

¹⁵³ To assist the reader, the application here is the similarity between institutional abuses of power and that of individuals; both purported as generally good and righteous, yet in practice, having other, opposite outcomes if not intentions.

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sense. And while a dilemma for *the mature*, this inverted power creates opportunity for the mother to do as she pleases—regardless of the consequences and costs—with that *practiced* as the standard still.

There are (or have been) two basic means and methods *practiced* as a part of *inverted power*, described as:

1. Discretely (without immediate or intentional awareness of a “mature party”) and often through legal channels—where she is the presumed victim or single-parent and is, therefore, justified as more a protector (rather than a purveyor or perpetrator of *wrongdoing in any and all ways*)
2. Deceivingly (by lying and limiting details) such that those who have a sincere interest, or that believe her (or *in her*) are duped for some time before the *dilemma* arises ¹⁵⁴

This *softening* (the soft glove over the iron fist) makes such power (abuses) more difficult to detect; thus, it is no wonder that sincere interests, even love, will engage and endure her mindset, even methods, until finally acknowledging and accepting the truth in their better judgment, basis or base. ¹⁵⁵ The only thing left to do, short of shouting, is to *get the Hell out of Dodge*—and to try to retreat and recover from that for which they have been *exposed (if not experienced)*.

“So how have you been working through these obstacles and problems,” I continued, seeking to separate the healthy choices from the unhealthy ones.

“I have good drugs,” he said bluntly.

“And that’s it,” I asked, though knowing there was much more to such madness—anger long arrested in an adversary called “[shame](#)”.

“What about love,” I asked, with some doubt pending. “Have you found love?”

“I don’t know,” he said sincerely, “what does it look like?”

¹⁵⁴ These described methods are adaptations from “TOTALITARIAN CONTROL” Frank W. Elwell: an essay based on “Totalitarian Nightmares” in *The Evolution of the Future*. 1991.

¹⁵⁵ The terms “basis, base”; a moral base endemic in (or endowed to) individuals.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Lost-Silence has made great strides to *understand understanding*; and in particular, to seek after answers in the social sciences—far from *the frontlines* that silence the least in fear of power, overt or inverted.

Having chosen her position *behind the lines*, she is able to stay *the Hell out of Dodge* seemingly long enough to gain some semblance of a new life while seeking to solve her lesser, but lingering, *obstacles and problems* of the last one. Here, in this relative safe haven, she can speak her mind and act with authority that, heretofore, would have made her more rebellious than the much maligned, Problem-Rebel.

But as it was—and still is—returning to the home-front is always met by that ridiculous role that turns a blind eye or lauds the *methods* and *mindset* as that which is generally acceptable if not admirable in the context of *conflict and contention*, even war. It's really about having the right attitude for:

Those who fail to exhibit positive attitudes, no matter the external reality, are seen as maladjusted and in need of assistance. Their attitudes need correction.

So embrace *the role*—not just of silence, but complete acceptance, even admiration, for:

Once we adopt [it], positive things will happen.¹⁵⁶

"You see, it's just about getting along and trying to be happy," she tells me. "That is the best way to make our family work," she says without reservation. "Better to say nothing than to say something that might light the fuse. Why confront her just to spark more *conflict and contention*."

Where's there's smoke there is fire, I thought, giving her the benefit of her own doubts as to the efficacy of her education applied here, on *the frontlines* and home-front. "So your continued role is more the actively-passive rather than just silent and remote—is that right," I said, or asked, sharply, realizing that she too had more or less surrendered too.

¹⁵⁶ Chris Hedges, *War is a Force that gives us Meaning*, 2003.

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“Actively accepting,” she said, “but with the advantage that I don’t have to put-up with the shit all the time,” she said sharply, sarcastically, but otherwise, admitting surrender—acquiescing.

She has endured many years of this conflict and contention, I realized in my afterthoughts. Passively and dutifully, she patiently waited while wars and rumors of wars persisted in plain sight.

In the beginning war looks and feels like love. But unlike love it gives nothing in return but an ever-deepening dependence, like all narcotics, on the road to self-destruction. It does not affirm but places upon us greater and greater demands. It destroys the outside world until it is hard to live outside war’s grip. It takes a higher and higher dose to achieve any thrill. Finally, one ingests war only to remain numb [if that is possible].¹⁵⁷

And this domestic *dilemma* has many similarities to war. The home-front is the *front-line* as what feels like:

- ☀ Faith (or belief) is devalued *on the road to self-destruction*
- ☀ Hope (or promise) is diminished by *greater and greater demands*
- ☀ Love (as seen) is defaced by *opposing, oppressive forces*
- ☀ Life (and living) is degraded, surrendered from within

“And it is survivable—as long as you don’t fight,” she explained. “Once you raise a standard against her *standards*, the fuse is lit and the sparks start flying like feathers in the wind—to places you don’t want to go, if you can even imagine. But take it as it is...and it.”

...gives us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict [and contention] does the shallowness [the doubts] become apparent.

...and *my role*—active or passive—becomes ridiculous. Which is why it is better to obey—or appear to—than to sacrifice *the shallowness*, her own doubts,” Lost-Silence explained. “When she wins, positive things happen, and when she loses—the realities can be very negative.”

¹⁵⁷ Chris Hedges.

Moving Ahead from Beginning Then

Comedy-Mascot returned with some reluctance, it seemed; as though he would rather be anywhere else, audience or not.

"Why the look, the body-language," I asked. "You look glum."

"This whole conversation thing is becoming a drag," he began. "I mean, what's happened has happened—and nothing can change that."

"You're right about that, of course; nothing can change what has happened," I agreed. "But that's not what the conversations are about," I continued. "This conferencing is aimed at resolving problems that stem from the past—attempts at finding answers to questions and working through the struggles to get there—that sort of thing."

"So you're seeing some progress—from the others...."

"I believe so," I replied, 'at least from what I am able to assess given *the aim* and all," I continued. "My expectations are not firm or solid—but at the least is the desire to ease your struggle and sorrow."

"As though I need your help; and besides, I am fine—thank you very much," he remarked with a sneer. "Why don't you just leave us alone?"

Because I can't do that, I thought—as I had thought many times. And now, when seemingly Moving Ahead, progress seems barely a possibility for him, for them—and how quickly *what I am able to assess* seems a struggle unto itself. *What can I say at this moment except something simple and seductive for the child in us?*

Come away, O human child!

To the waters and the wild

With a fairy, hand in hand

*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*¹⁵⁸

"So you want to call it quits; the conferences?"

"I can't see a reason to go on. As it is, I hate coming---as the others," he replied, raising his voice for emphasis.

"So you've talked to them about it—discussed the matter among yourselves," I asked to try to draw him out of his diatribe.

¹⁵⁸ W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems*, 1889.

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“No, not exactly; but I know my family and know that they aren’t happy when others pry into their lives, the divorce and all that shit.”

“So your unhappiness comes as the result of these conversations—prying as you described it,” I asked, probing for some concrete information (as opposed to innuendo).

“I don’t know if that’s everything—gnawing at my gut right now—but it’s eating away at any happiness in me, in us.”

“Are you saying that it hurts,” I asked, again probing....

“I am saying that hurts to hurt—and that I want to laugh again. I want to laugh about laughing and be a silly and carefree kid that I once was and wish I would always be,” he explained with raised emotion. “You have stopped the show when I want it to go on and on.”

“So you’re saying that I have caused the hurt—is that it?”

“No, the hurt has been there for many years,” he replied, “behind the mask of my own doing—where it should have stayed,” he continued. “Yes, it should have stayed there, leaving me to laugh as before,” he whispered tearfully. “Maybe it would have shown its face eventually—all the hurt and sorrow, but now I see it in my reflections, past and present, and all I want is for the show to start, them to be there.”

There was no much said except to encourage Comedy-Mascot to return. *He was right and he was forthright*, I thought. He was beginning to understand understanding and, in that, to indentify the sorrow held at bay. “I went inside my heart to see how it was. Something there makes me hear the whole world weeping...”¹⁵⁹

[And] it is the heart that has been pierced that feels the most... [This piercing], this wound, is the place where the Light enters you.

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing...there is a field. I’ll meet you there. For what you seek is seeking you.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Jocelyn Murray.

¹⁶⁰ Rumi: a 13th century Persian poet, Islamic jurist, and theologian. “Rumi” is a descriptive name meaning “the Roman” since he lived most parts of his life in Anatolia which had been part of the Roman Empire until the Seljuq conquest two centuries earlier.

Stopping and Starting, Coming and Going

While Moving Ahead is the preferred direction (you know, progress, *the next level* and by any other description), the reality is that sometimes you have to settle for Stopping and Starting...Coming and Going. You may even have to *take a step backwards* just to retrace your steps and figure-out if you're on the right path (whatever you think the "right path" may be at the time and place). But before continuing with the conversations or conferences, I will address several open topics such as isolation and fear among others.

We live in an atomized society; one where society is disassociated and distilled to the individual, arguably with self-determination but most assuredly devoid of social connections and community. As the atomistic family¹⁶¹ has come of age—as predicted—so too has the breakdown of the family, its members, as well as a decline in the participation of other societal and communicable groups or connections.¹⁶²

Why is isolation/atomization a concern for a relatively-free society?

Notwithstanding technology and social networking, this trend (of societal decline) continues at such a pace as to leave society weak and vulnerable—and this is a problem since:

A vibrant political culture needs community groups...to provide ways for citizens to meet, communicate, and interact with their fellow citizens.¹⁶³

I have already introduced at least one general concern; as social strength wanes, state power rises.¹⁶⁴ But with this transfer of power comes proportional change in the general attributes of a society—increasingly shifting from a democracy to totalitarianism. Some have

¹⁶¹ The atomistic family is the weakest form of family; *Family and Civilization*, Carle Zimmerman.

¹⁶² Examples include: churches, social clubs, non-profit or volunteer organizations, labor unions.

¹⁶³ "Noam Chomsky and the Struggle against Neo-Liberalism", Robert W. McChesney, April 1, 1999.

¹⁶⁴ Refer to Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy the State*.

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suggested that, even now, we live an inverted totalitarian society.¹⁶⁵ But whatever the state of the state or the current trend,

The net result is an atomized society of disengaged individuals who feel demoralized and socially powerless.¹⁶⁶

Isolation or atomization is (and has been) a very big concern.

There is much emphasis and expectation on individualism (as already described in some detail); expressions such as “self-determination” and “choice” have a definite appeal and attraction. But where the possibilities begin to falter is in the loss of strength—the transfer of power (previously described as well). As long as the state (power) continues to rise—through the shifting (or seizure) of societal strength—all social forms (collective or individual) will subside—or have subsided. And to draw a connection to *marriage and its associations* is to hold that “As the family goes so goes society.”¹⁶⁷

...and there is little doubt these trends in family life are tearing apart the greater fabric of our society. The future for our young people depends on how we address these realities.

And to draw a connection to war (*conflict and contention*) is to hold that as actual wars avail the state with power so too does social wars (or crisis).

If an authority desires more *power and possession*, one tactic is to *divide and conquer*; that is, to increasingly divide the relations—one against the other—so that they becomes enemies of each other and, through this isolation, are made *weak and vulnerable*.

If however this *tactic* fails, and the folks’ bonds are maintained or reconciled, the overall effect is good—rendering more happiness and

¹⁶⁵ Inverted Totalitarianism: a term coined by political philosopher Sheldon Wolin in 2003 to describe the emerging form of government of the United States; Wikipedia.

¹⁶⁶ Robert W. McChesney.

¹⁶⁷ “As the Family Goes, So Goes Society”; Steve Gottwalt, Oct. 11, 2012; americanexperiment.org/issues/culture-religion/as-the-family-goes-so-goes-society.

Stopping and Starting, Coming and Going

peace than before or even thought possible (given a history of increasing isolation).

Family ties are what I'm talking about here; that strong ties are a key to social strength, first beginning with the family and then extending to the larger community and society. But if family ties are broken—the ties completely severed—the consequences can be (or have been) more than a concern, but the condition by which community and society falters. I want to hope that these young people still have ties (with each other) in spite of the fact that such ties have deliberately and decisively made *weak and vulnerable*. Maybe I should hold that:

There is no such thing as a "broken family." Family is family, and is not determined by marriage certificates, divorce papers, and adoption documents. Families are made in the heart.

But then there is the matter of the heart.

The only time family becomes null is when those ties in the heart are cut. If you cut those ties, those people are not your family.

And if the heart can be renewed or saved that, even with hate, there is hope for a renewed and saved love and life.

And if you hate those ties, those people will still be your family because whatever you hate will always be with you.¹⁶⁸

"Family Ties" is more than a sitcom from the 1980's, of course. Here, in these words, it is described as central to the *aim of at reaching some progress on the matter*—on what matters—in marriage and its associations (family, children, community, society, etc.). And evidently crucial to the viability of these *ties* is the condition of the heart, the capacity of the heart, to love—and to love again and again. Yes, I will urge these young folks to:

Believe in a love that is preserved for you like a heritage, and trust that in this love there is strength and a blessing which you are not bound to leave behind you though you may travel far.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ C. JoyBell C.

¹⁶⁹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Though love, these *ties*, has been greatly damaged through/from divorce, and even now as I write these words; still, the heart lives to love and be loved, to forgive and to be forgiven. The mind will try to convince the heart that love is gone, the *ties* irreparable; yet “the heart has its reasons which reason knows not.”¹⁷⁰ “When the heart speaks (again) the mind finds it indecent to object.”¹⁷¹

Choosing to love (and be loved) in the backdrop or history of isolation is perhaps *the road less traveled*. To the mind, such behavior can be confusing and controversial. To other minds, it will seem foolish at the least, self-destructive at the most. To the individual heart however, it is the only way to stave-off bitterness as a result of continued isolation. Love is the lifeline that connects one heart to the next—thus *the ties that bind*.

Institutions do not have love—or the capacity to love—but are dispassionate (except when it comes to its own interests). Institutions see real love as *weak and vulnerable*—antithetical to the forces that it respects and replicates. Institutions may speak of love, in relation to its passions, to construct a persona suitable for public relations; but in truth, institutions are incapable of these heart-generated, individual attributes. Where love can be found in institutions is sourced from individuals—not the collective. Some institutions might just well eat the heart than see it healthy and heavenward, vibrant and virtuous, loving and lively.

In the desert, I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held [their hearts] in his hands, and ate [them].

I said, “Is it good, friend?”

“It is bitter—bitter,” he answered; “But I like it because it is bitter.”

“And because it is my heart [now].”¹⁷²

Had the heart(s) been better, rather than bitter, the beast creature would have it found it most unsatisfying to see, let alone stomach.

¹⁷⁰ Blaise Pascal.

¹⁷¹ Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, 1984.

¹⁷² Stephen Crane, *The Black Riders and Other Lines*, 1895.

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Does absence make the heart grow fonder? I guess that depends on whether the heart grows better or bitter; whether the heart is irreparably sad and without any capacity to love (or love again) or is incurably glad that it was experience some semblance of love in the first place. But for the better heart, “ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.” ¹⁷³ And especially then (in absence but not isolation) is the health of the heart really tested as to its depth or capacity.

Do not let absence make the worse of you, and do not let isolation—and those that promote it—overtake you. Though your heart might be sad, as a natural condition, do not stop loving and being loved. Do not emotional retreat indefinitely to an *island* of isolation.

The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart withers if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration. ¹⁷⁴

And being sad (as opposed to happy) is not a bad thing either; indeed, the sad or disappointed heart is a symptom of a better heart.

Alone or not, are you happy yet?

Consider the alternative; a bitter heart that has been seared shut from any sadness or disappointment—reduced to chasing after some satisfaction at any costs, without constraint, through every conceivable and inconceivable means or methods aimed at pleasure perverted, punitive and even painful in the end. This *satisfaction* is sometimes mistaken for happiness—though it is not.

Happiness is well-being; it comes from an internal and external well-being. ¹⁷⁵ Happiness is **not** satisfaction seized through the subordination and subversion of the soul to isolation or atomization—seduction and

¹⁷³ Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*, 1923.

¹⁷⁴ Pearl S. Buck.

¹⁷⁵ Description of happiness comes from *The New Leviathan*, R. G. Collingworth.

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subjection to forces that *sear* the heart, *flat-line* the conscience, and destroy the desire for love.

“The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves—say rather, loved in spite of ourselves.”¹⁷⁶ Happiness cannot be counted-on through the efforts of others alone, but happiness depends on our *internal well-being* too. If we hold others responsible for our happiness, we do them a disservice—imposing on them a job that cannot be completed—a responsibility that produces resentment rather than satisfaction. “As soon as you stop making everyone else responsible for your happiness, the happier you’ll be.”¹⁷⁷

But like other terms *twisted*, happiness has been treated as something less than what it truly is—as a commodity that is bought and sold.

I’ll have a cup full of happiness and a pocket full of rainbows to go.¹⁷⁸

Rather than treat happiness as defined previously, internal as well as external, some folks relate to it like children that vacillate at great frequency between emotions; first smiling and laughing, but next—for reasons that are not always evident—flaring temper, crying and screaming. How do measure happiness for a child but with stop watch. Hence, this *defined* happiness does not necessarily apply to children or to those behave like them as a rule, and nor does it apply to those who prepare it *half-baked* or *cooked-up* as a cornucopia of commodities.

Happiness is that butterfly which comes and sits in your garden.... [But] the moment we try to grab it, it flies off—so never try to grab it, [but] just let it go, because it will come back again for search of honey and to give you happiness again.¹⁷⁹

The only way to be happy is to be free; and the only way to be free (or break free) is to love and to be loved, to forgive and be forgiven.

¹⁷⁶ Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, 1862.

¹⁷⁷ Nina Guilbeau.

¹⁷⁸ Stanley Victor Paskavich.

¹⁷⁹ Debolina Bhawal.

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This present, *twisted* happiness must be dealt with; it must be *put to bed* preferably *six feet under*. For as it is, such so-called happiness is a daunting, though undeniable, force; a drug with an “-ism” suffix such as consumerism, materialism, and capitalism (of the “crony” kind aptly referred to as “Bank-ism”¹⁸⁰). This hedonistic happiness is pandemic—a condition clothed as a cure when in fact it is a contagion composed of inconceivable graft and greed—of what Adam Smith called *the vile maxim of the masters of mankind*.¹⁸¹

But this contagion is not just economic or financial. This hedonistic happiness it is also deeply woven into our self-determined and exceptional (-ism) status and state. We have the right to at least to pursue happiness—if not seize it as though earned...at the expense of others. And in this context (status and state), happiness is more than a misapplication—it is a malpractice; a malady that begins as some maladjustment and, if not treated, metastasizes into something more medically-diagnosed as a disorder.¹⁸² This behavior may have similarity to the child-like behavior (previously described) but is dangerous—coupled with a power that is pernicious (*perverted, punitive and even painful in the end*) and not simply the result of prepubescent emotions. For the observer or the object, happiness of such form is painful to eye and even more painful to endure. In this status and state, “Happiness is the most tired [and tiring] word in any language—”¹⁸³ more than dissatisfying, it is dreaded as both a word and as a way—that lends only to heart’s despair and death to finally end the pain.

¹⁸⁰ As described by Gerald Celente, publisher of Trends Journal, during an interview by Greg Hunter, “Very Serious Economic & Geopolitical Game-changer coming in 2015”; [youtube.com/watch?v=UDGGLPjdP2s&feature=em-subst_digest](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDGGLPjdP2s&feature=em-subst_digest).

¹⁸¹ This phrase comes from Adam Smith’s statement: “All for ourselves, and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind”, Chapter 4/ p. 448, Book III, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759.

¹⁸² Behavioral disorders described as sociopathic, narcissistic, and similar.

¹⁸³ Erol Ozan.

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Then there is the opposite, unhappiness. And to put this to some application (or misapplication): *if mommas not happy than nobodies happy.*

Unhappiness is a negative idea; not an actual experience nor the name for what we desire to obtain, but the name for what we desire to get rid of [nevertheless]. We can never wholly get rid of it, but we are never wholly possessed by it [either].¹⁸⁴

To the individual, unhappiness is considered as something bad; where the person's passions dominate his thoughts, even actions, preventing him from doing what he ought to do (or really wants to do). Beyond that, unhappiness (the individual) is viewed as *weak and vulnerable*. In the combination of this internal and external treatment, unhappiness becomes grounds for misery. If unhappiness is measurable or quantifiable, the best gauge could be the Misery Index.¹⁸⁵ But economics is not the only indicators of misery, right?

Unhappiness has a spiritual aspect; that unhappiness is a sin—assuming that it is first accurately identified or determined—because it signifies or symbolizes a soul **not** in good standing with the true Lord. This condition might be described as:

- “Out of (or not in) *The Lord's Will*”
- Un-repented or unredeemed
- Unresponsive (running from *God's Call*, lacking faith and fervor)

Collingworth (*The New Leviathan*) explains that both Saint Paul and Saint Augustine spoke of their past unhappiness.

It is only in retrospect that a St. Paul or a St. Augustine can tell us how unhappy he is. What he tells us is how unhappy he was (he did not know it at the time but [in contrast to the present] or before the hand of God stretched out to save him from his sins.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *The New Leviathan*, p.86.

¹⁸⁵ Misery Index: initiated by economist Arthur Okun, an adviser to President Lyndon Johnson in the 1960's, it is simply the unemployment rate added to the inflation rate; U.S. Misery Index; miseryindex.us.

¹⁸⁶ *The New Leviathan*, p.87-88.

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Last but not least (in this topic of unhappiness), *power for possession*. Yes, “our age has built itself vast reservoirs of power formless as the straining energy that it wrests from the earth.”¹⁸⁷ It has established both financial finagling and military might as forces to occupy and to colonize the *vast reservoirs* both within and beyond national sovereignty borders, domestic and international law. When necessary to explain, our age has simply lied (or accepted lies) about the intentions; that is, of economic or military terrorism cleverly clothed as peace-keeping, freedom-building, or something similar to at least placate if not please those who may or may not give a care. And somewhere in the clouds of this storm of the century is this *pursuit of happiness*.

For those at the top—the *movers and shakers*—unhappiness is described as **not** having more...and more...and more; and for the masses, it is about having less than their neighbor, colleague, or as that publicized and perceived. In every echelon and enclave of the economy is that unhappiness could be a “negative identity” as well as idea.

Negative identity is a phenomenon whereby you define yourself by what you are not. This has enormous advantages, especially in terms of the hardening of psychological boundaries and the fortification of the ego: one can mobilize a great deal of energy on this basis and the new nation [the US] certainly did....

But the prospect for happiness (against unhappiness) does have its downside too.

The downside...is that this way of generating an identity for yourself can never tell you who you actually are, in the affirmative sense. It leaves, in short, emptiness *at the center*, such that you always have to be in opposition to something, or even at war with someone or something, in order to feel real.¹⁸⁸

It is one thing to have a *negative idea*; but it is another matter when you have a *negative identify-ideology*—because, in the end, it has you.

¹⁸⁷ Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*.

¹⁸⁸ Morris Berman, *A Question of Values*, 2010.

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As it is, happiness (or unhappiness) is *way over the top*—to the point that, as with any ideology, it is very dangerous.

...we're also extremely sensitive to the difference between literacy and ideology. It is our belief that the first helps to thwart intolerance, challenge dogma, and reinforce our common humanity. The second does the opposite.¹⁸⁹

Ideology is described in a multitude of ways suggestive of danger, as:

- ❶ *A great enemy of the gospel*¹⁹⁰
- ❷ *A lie*¹⁹¹
- ❸ *That which paves the way toward atrocity*¹⁹²
- ❹ *For people who don't trust their own experiences and perceptions of the world*¹⁹³
- ❺ *A prior prejudice that seeks out an echo-chamber of reaffirming information*¹⁹⁴
- ❻ *The product of a kind of mad logic*¹⁹⁵
- ❼ *The impossibility for freedom of thought*¹⁹⁶
- ❽ *The light that creates darkness*¹⁹⁷
- ❾ *Mental prisons that produce blindness*¹⁹⁸

From one who deeply knows of ideology, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn:

Thanks to ideology, the twentieth century was fated to experience evildoing on a scale calculated in the millions. This cannot be denied, nor passed over, nor suppressed. How, then, do we dare insist that evildoers do not exist? And why was it that destroyed these millions? Without evildoers there would have been no Archipelago.¹⁹⁹

¹⁸⁹ Greg Mortenson, *Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace With Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan*.

¹⁹⁰ Chuck Colson.

¹⁹¹ James W. Sire.

¹⁹² Terence McKenna.

¹⁹³ Douglas Coupland.

¹⁹⁴ Stefan Molyneux.

¹⁹⁵ Marty Rubin.

¹⁹⁶ Salman Rushdie.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Boswell, *Century's Son: A Novel*, 2003.

¹⁹⁸ Fernando Araya.

¹⁹⁹ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1973.

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Happiness (or its counterpart) is a negative idea, identity, and ideology; it is a lot of hype, and possibly hypocrisy, in its *perversion*. On the one hand, the pursuit of happiness is a means...but on the other hand, happiness is an end with no end—unhappiness a perpetual status or state when/where there is less or more—but never enough.

In the contemporary, happiness can be described as sort of right; such as with: “He/she deserves happiness.” Nothing is necessarily mentioned about effort or earning (it); but only that happiness is deserved as though an entitlement or endowment.

From an article, “The Dangerous Pursuit of Happiness”, the following dangers that occur once we are in charge of making happiness happen:

- ❶ The first is the extremely seductive maneuver of making happiness a feel good experience by defining it as pleasure, joy or excitement.
- ❷ The pursuit of happiness under the pleasure principle can easily distract us from living life on life's term. Life's terms include everything out of our control such as the arduous tasks of dealing with loss, coping with pain and suffering and the choices of others.
- ❸ Attempting to live life mostly on our terms tends to arrest our emotional development, placing us in an adolescent holding pattern as we avoid life's larger issues....²⁰⁰

And there are other dangers (from this article) provided in the Author's Notes under the article's title.

I am not against happiness (in its traditional concepts) but I do find the contemporary version (idea, identify or ideology) as a recipe for eventual and enviable ruining in the form of a most ironic and moronic theme, *I can't get no (da-da-da) dissatisfaction*. And until such a Rolling Stone's remix, happiness will continue to be pursued with increasing intensity and therefore increasing dangers as the cause for private, public, and even pronounced, wrongdoing.

In this perilous pursuit, happiness is indeed an ideology and therefore provides both the individual and institution alike with:

²⁰⁰ Huffpost Healthy Living, “The Dangerous Pursuit of Happiness”, Paul Dunion, Ed.D., LPC, 09/05/2014.

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...a satisfying narrative that explains chaotic events and collective misfortunes in a way that flatters the virtue and competence of believers [others, observers], while being vague or conspiratorial enough to withstand skeptical scrutiny.²⁰¹

“They just wanted to be happy, you know, so they...and then they...and still, they...until they got what they deserved.”

“And what about the others—were they happy too?”

“I don’t know, but if not...than they must have **not** deserved it.”

“Yeah, that makes sense.”

Happiness is not so much about being happy—not really—but about avoiding unhappiness, the fear of sadness. The paradox is that the more we pursue happiness, the more we encounter the prospect for sadness—forming some sort of *Catch-22*. On this “paradox”, Hugh Mackay (*The Good Life*) writes:

I actually attack the concept of happiness. The idea that—I don’t mind people being happy—but the idea that everything we do is part of the pursuit of happiness seems to me a really dangerous idea and has led to a contemporary disease in Western society, which is fear of sadness.

Do you have a fear of sadness, unhappiness?

Or, are you one of the folks that suggest “No Fear” as an open-policy on life or something like it? With violence in retreat (as described in Steven Pinker’s book), there may never have been a better time to be fearless— or faultless in *getting along* as we each and all pursue our happiness.

In responding to the question (fear of sadness), the first thought (or second question) is whether each word (fear, sadness) shares in unhappiness’ description as *negative idea*, *identity* or even *ideology*. Previously, I stated that sadness (or being sad) is not a bad thing—but what about fear?

²⁰¹ Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, 2011.

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The Bible instructs the believer(s) that they should fear only God and, in this fear, will (or should) have no other fears; that by fearing (or honoring) God alone, all other fears are (or should be) eliminated.

When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.²⁰²

In a time where the U.S. is engaged in multiple wars—with the conceivable threat of a World War on the horizon, believers should not be afraid of news, initiation and/or engagement.²⁰³ For such events or times must occur, as the scriptures described in the abstract, prior to *the end*. And if adhered to—or at least pursued—such priory or objective on fear might well alleviate, or at least mitigate, the tendency to fear.

A past U.S. president has been credited with the inaugural-related expression or statement that *the only fear we have is fear itself*.²⁰⁴

So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is...fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. And I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

So is it fear that we potentially fear the most—in the final analysis? For in the same address, FDR describes other apparent concerns:

- ❶ Economic crisis and its moral dimensions...placing blame on the greed and shortsightedness of bankers and businessmen
- ❷ Unemployment which had reached a staggering 25 percent
- ❸ Foreign relations...the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others"

Do these “apparent concerns” sound familiar; and if so, should one or another be an object of our fears? Whether and *object of our fears*, do

²⁰² Luke 21:9, NIV.

²⁰³ Multiple wars include both economic and covert/overt military activity.

²⁰⁴ The first inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt as the 32nd President of the United States was held on Saturday, March 4, 1933; Wikipedia.

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one or another of these concerns ever make you sad or sadder? For if one or another has this effect (of fear and/or sadness) then you seemingly have good reason or justification for pursuing happiness.

In or to these additional questions, I turn to Rainer Maria Rilke once again:

So you must not be frightened if sadness rises up before you larger than any you have ever seen; if restiveness, like light and cloud-shadows, passes over your hands and over all you do. You must think that something is happening with you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand; it will not let you fall. Why do you want to shut out of your life any uneasiness, any miseries, or any depressions? For after all, you do not know what work these conditions are doing inside you.

Could it be that fear and sadness—and the fear of sadness—is better than bad? Could it be that we should **not** fear:

- 🔴 *Fear itself*
- 🔴 *Wars and rumors of wars*
- 🔴 Economic crisis...and corruption in *high places*
- 🔴 Unemployment (and the consequences)
- 🔴 Foreign entanglements (and the consequences)

But by some supernatural means or methods, are we freed from the full measure, intentions, or purpose of such *apparent concerns*? That sadness, while a state or status of being sad, is seemingly enough (to fear); yet, for reasons not clear or even understood, we are free to love and be loved no matter the consequences to us, to them or to all.

Children have some qualities and traits in this way; they have some remarkable attributes (inherent or otherwise) that often propel them above (or beneath) adult-like thoughts and responses to *apparent concerns*. “Children see magic because they look for it.”²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Christopher Moore, *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal*, 2002.

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Grown-ups however are “are complicated creatures, full of quirks and secrets.”²⁰⁶ Then there are the young folks, the transitional players, who “don’t always do what they’re told, but if they can pull-it-off and do something wonderful, sometimes they escape punishment.”²⁰⁷

But as to children, most children; they are usually different in matters of fear or love—which is the direction I am taking in dealing with our adult-like behaviors, *quirks and secrets*. For when you take time to:

...actually listen, with humility, to what people have to say, it’s amazing what you can learn; especially if the people who are doing the talking also happen to be children.²⁰⁸

To actually listen is to first determine what benefit(s) it serves; that is, what children are able to teach (or remind) you...of fear, love and things in between. “I don’t remember who said this, but there really are places in the heart you don’t even know exist until you love a child.”²⁰⁹

W.C. Fields had his own sentiment toward children, having said: ““I like children...if they’re properly cooked.” But of course, my interest is not about food or that kind of sustenance, but is about *edibles* that come from children, short of flesh and blood. These *edibles* are nourishing and rich for our mind and hearts, but may be often overlooked; for:

Grown-ups do not know that a child can give exceedingly good advice even in the most difficult case(s).²¹⁰

And thesis *edibles* are, at first or even after seconds, are not always appetizing—but can be annoying beyond all else. But like other things taken for granted, they are most appreciated at the absence.

There is no sound more annoying than the chatter of a child, and none [sadder] than the silence they leave when they are gone.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Roald Dahl.

²⁰⁷ Rick Riordan.

²⁰⁸ Greg Mortenson, *Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace With Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan*.

²⁰⁹ Anne Lamott, *Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son's First Year*, 2005.

²¹⁰ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, 1868-69.

²¹¹ Mark Lawrence, *King of Thorns*, 2011.

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And this source, Mark Lawrence, would know; he has four children of his own.

Children usually have a real big appetite for these *edibles*. They have that caliber and curiosity that begins and ends with the all-inclusive question, “Why?” And with this open-mindedness and open-heartedness, they are at their prime to *understand understanding*—before the fears become too encumbering or endless. If Frank Kafka was right, “A first sign of the beginning of understanding is the wish to die”; though children may have yet to see it, for their identity is ideally or idealistically swept-up in happy endings where beasts become better.

How should we be able to forget those ancient myths that are at the beginning of all peoples, the myths about dragons that at the last moment turn into princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave. Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something helpless that wants help from us.²¹²

They sometimes believe (or want to believe) in such fantasies—a faith that is greater—and see these beasts beyond the *apparent concerns*. And another reason, here, for marriage is that “marriage is not that adults produce children, but that children produce adults.”²¹³ Let it be possible that when (or if) children come, one way or another, the pursuit of happiness flies away like feathers in the wind.

In the U.S. today, there is a pervasive tendency to treat children as adults, and adults as children. The options of children are thus steadily expanded, while those of adults are progressively constricted. The result is unruly children and childish adults.²¹⁴

Which reminds me of the faithful father whose children played hard in the yard; and, in response to a neighborly remark on the effect, responded with something as, *we are growing children—not grass*.

²¹² Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*.

²¹³ Peter De Vries.

²¹⁴ Thomas Stephen Szasz.

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And for the faithful fathers, as though like them, are the same fantasies that sometimes resurface from long ago; especially in the company of children with their *edibles*; and:

For a moment, or moments, it was as it had been in the beginning, before fear, before evil, before death, at the time of the creation, when the earth was new and living things flourished therein, where the earth was fair and all living things dwelt together as kindred. For a moment, or moments, beasts and children were friends, there in the sweetness and silence of the night, there in the calm and lovely fields of the Lord.²¹⁵

And I've seen beasts, at least a few, in my lifetime; and they appear every bit as how nobly described and illustrated—symbolic of virgin and vast (lands) in the far west of *The West*. But they are only one form of beasts—that can be identified in idea and ideology as the kind *that at the last moment turn into princesses*.

But then, the other beasts; those that are not really nobly-symbolic, but—as FDR described in the context of fearing fear, they are;

- ❶ Rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods
- ❷ Unscrupulous money changers
- ❸ In the temple of our civilization
- ❹ Nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror

What Thomas Hobbes²¹⁶ and Robert Higgs²¹⁷ described as “Leviathan”; these beasts have emerged as Adam Smith's worst fear, *the vile maxim of the masters of mankind*. They have the wherewithal to commit war on any level, from financial and economic to the open-season bloodletting. And to their ideology, the means and methods to *explain chaotic events and collective misfortunes in a way that flatters the virtue and competence of believers while being vague or conspiratorial enough to withstand skeptical scrutiny*.

²¹⁵ *Bless the Beasts and Children*, Glendon Swarthout, 1970.

²¹⁶ *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes, 1651.

²¹⁷ *Against Leviathan: Government Power and a Free Society*, Robert Higgs, 2004.

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"I see you've made rank, Good-Hero. What else is new?"

"It's all good," he fired-back with expected regimen, optimism and generalities.

"Excuse me for a moment, while I look at my notes," I said, not being prepared for his visit. "You caught me by surprise. I wasn't aware that we had an appointment." *But he knows this—since he had not kept his....* "I had you scheduled two prior times, but each time you evidently had to cancel."

"Yes; and I am sorry that I didn't call—the brutal schedule I keep."

"Right... 'brutal schedule'," I repeated with emphasis.

"Well then, my first question: 'Why are you here today?'"

"I have received orders and, in route, just happened to passing through," he explained.

"So it's really an issue of convenience, then?"

"Maybe, but there have been other reasons too," he continued, "I have hearing from Problem-Rebel," he said with a tone of resentment. "He's is some sort of trouble—again—and is *hitting-me-up* for some cash, I think."

"You 'think'.... You mean he hasn't said?"

"No; but I know him, his reasons...."

"Really; so you don't believe it could be something else—other than for cash?"

"Maybe, I suppose; but he has a way."

"And what way is that?"

"He is pain in the ass—that's for sure—and specializes in making life Hell for all of us," he explained. "If wasn't for him, I'd—"

"So he's always been the way you describe him?"

"No; he was not always like this—there were better times, I suppose," he continued. "But then things changed and times got crazy."

"And there were no crazy times before things changed?"

"Well, yeah; but we were younger—too young to really know or to say anything about it, I suppose. "It was really my senior year, when—"

"When you weren't around very much, right?"

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“That’s right—about the time that I left for good.”

“And you left ‘for good’—you didn’t come back, home?”

“Only when I had to—only when she insisted or persuaded me,” he explained. “I really began to hate it—his problems and all.”

“His problems—not their problems,” I asked. “Seems to me that if problems existed before ‘his problems’ then the problems could not or cannot be his, alone, but had to include others, like her.”

“Okay, there problems then—but if my brother had just got along and played the game, her problems would have been enough.”

“Enough—enough of what,” I asked, as the he elaborated.

“We had to put up with her—it wasn’t a choice—but if that wasn’t bad enough, we had to experience his on top of that,” he explained. “Is it any wonder that I hate him?”

“Do you really,” he asked, really knowing the answer. “And is that why you want me to get him stop trying to contact you?”

“How did you know that—I haven’t said anything about it?”

“You didn’t have to...I knew it shortly after you arrived and more or less disclosed your cause...for being here, today,” I explained. “Just think; if it wasn’t for your brother’s hassling, you may have missed some beneficial advice.”

“And what is that?”

“That you—and possibly the others—have blamed Problem-Rebel for all the problems to the point that he is the problem,” I replied. “But your holding him entirely responsible is just plain wrong; this “problem” as you might think of him, is the product of a history that began long before that ‘change’. You already admitted that problems existed as far back as you remember—when you all were young children and hardly responsible; so your claims are a self-contradiction.”

“Yeah, I know that; but I guess I have been in trenches too long and, honestly, see him as the primary cause—and I’m not alone!”

“I wouldn’t think you would be; selecting a scapegoat is hardly monolithic—at least not in the end.”

“Don’t give me that bullshit. You sound just like him!”

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"Maybe that's because understood the reality of 'the game'."

"What do you mean—he didn't play, remember?"

"Yes, I remember—but that's because he knew that the cards were stacked against him—against all of you," I began. "He knew that he couldn't win—or even break even—so he—"

"Quit, gave-up," Good-Hero interrupted.

"Not exactly; you see, had he given-up, he would have given-way and played the game—like you suggested he should. It's because that he refused—that is when 'things changed', got crazy."

"What about the drugs, *conflict and contention*?"

"Oh, then you have been listening," I said with some sarcasm in effort to release some stress. "You mean *the war*, right?"

"Yeah, yeah; *the war*—the damn divorce and all that bullshit."

"You just said it kid. *The war* was started when your brother was but a child—even before. He is not the enemy—but is more a causality like you, like the others too."

"Well he sure acts like one."

"Yes, I agree. He told me: 'I've never had anyone's approval, so I've learned to live without it.' ²¹⁸"

"I guess in his own way he tried to tell me that," he confessed. "But I wasn't there enough—so I just shut him off or up."

"You call 'situational awareness', right?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Well just so you have your bearing rights—and can relate, now—when they war commenced, the only prisoners were you children and it seems that, at last, your dad had not a one and your mom had everyone," I told him. "Do you copy?"

"Yes, I copy."

"And do you think you can be a future commitment to our conversations?"

"I will do my duty."

²¹⁸ *The Prince of Tides.*

Stopping and Starting, Coming and Going

I had heard from Problem-Rebel more than the others; and on some occasions, we had met in person. He was in trouble—as he had been before—and really needed me, I thought. When he came, I offered him my time and more; and when he contacted me, I made myself readily available and more. When I did not hear from him regularly, I would call him. In some way, I felt like the father he barely knew—and had missed for many years.

The others had seemed to adjust more easily to the divorce and afterward; seemingly accepting the consequence with few complaints and even less conflict, if any. Maybe they each tried in their own way and, either directly or through observation quit or gave-up. I don't really know yet.

But what I do know is that they were confused in a number ways—including their admitted or apparent exclusion of “the problem” being their brother alone. If anything, his behavior was (or had been) a symptom of the problem—the problems stemming from *conflict and contention*, a war to destroy *marriage and its associations*.

It's too easy to criticize a man when he's out of favor, and to make him shoulder the blame for everybody else's mistakes.²¹⁹

It's tactics; if you can distract them from the real problem—or deceive them—that you can go about wielding your schemes, conducting affairs—business as usual. For the selected sacrifice, the sentiment is:

Nobody will read what I say here, no one will come to help me; even if all the people were commanded to help me, every door and window would remain shut.... And there is sense in that, for nobody knows of me, and if anyone knew he would not know where I could be found, and if he knew where I could be found, he would not know how to deal with me, he would not know how to help me.²²⁰

And the beat goes on, the problems continue, and the sacrifice is sacrificed again and again.

²¹⁹ Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*

²²⁰ Franz Kafka.

Him Who Cares Till When

“So what kind of trouble are we talking about,” I began.

“The trouble that comes from trouble,” he said. “First one thing and then another—a chasing of problems with sordid and salacious solutions, all of which count for nothing but more trouble,” he mused.

“You sound like a poet,” I told him, trying to add to the otherwise dire and distressing situation. “Have you considered a journal—something to do that might help your work-through these matters?” But Problem-Rebel was not visibly interested in recording his experiences and episodes—each and all too painful to approach and articulate—but more so evasive, looking for an escape or exit.

He explained his trouble as some level; nothing that surprised me, not really, but more a continuation of status quo—of how the damaged and disillusioned deal with their distress and further, some disownment.

His drug use really began at around seven; the beginning of almost of decade of psychotropic drugs presumably aimed at helping him through a learning disability. I don’t understand these drugs—the many names and progressions of the pill and its prescriptions—but realize still that his young life was seen through the lens of a drug-enhanced mind.

Finally, he had was able to end this deliberate and dubious drugging, choosing his drugs among those long available, yet still prosecutable, in the country’s longest and most costly war. Of course his mother was concerned—since these now self-selected drugs were illegal—not to mention a gateway to something worse, if that was possible.

And so came the next phase of *the war*—the one on drugs or, more accurately, the one on drugs, permissible and forbidden. Of course, he saw through the hypocrisy of it all and, like anyone who still has his sanity, could not disassociate one vice from another. And still, there were differences between *the legal* and the alternatives:

- ❶ Legal, forced-variety were shameful in the pretense of academic performance and the prescribed dullness purposely produced
- ❷ Alternative, selected-varieties were *cool*, creating a community of comrades, a festive atmosphere far from *the war*’s frontlines that considered academic performance as, well, less important

Stopping and Starting, Coming and Going

He was (or is) right in the larger context; the drug wars are more than a debacle—but an absolute failure by design—not to mention an industry too complex to distinguish one force from another, so-called prevention from promotion and the probable results already long played-out.

The drug war is a total scam, prescription drugs kill 300K a year, while marijuana kills no one, but they spend billions/year 'fighting' it, because pot heads make for good little slaves to put into private prisons, owned by the banks who launder the drug money, and it's all documented.²²¹

But he more-pointedly was (or is) the smaller context, where the problems were (and are) rooted; the divorce wars are more than a dissolution (of marriage)—but an absolute assault on marriage and its associations—not to mention an industry too complex to distinguish one force from another, so-called laws of progress and liberation from isolation and individualism and the probable results already played-out.

Divorce, almost by definition, destroys this basis or effective paternity. Indeed, in most cases, divorce does not simply end the parental alliance. Divorce inverts the alliance, turning mutualism into adverseness. For after divorce, according to Robert Weiss, “most custodial parents find noncustodial parents more nearly a burden than a resource.” The visiting father becomes “someone to worry about, an obligation that limits what can be done on a weekend, a source of distraction and disturbance to the children. The second debilitating feature of the visiting relationship is the absence of co-residency with children. To be a good enough father—to sustain the daily effective parenting—a man needs to live with his children. When he does not, he literally becomes an outsider.”²²²

So war abounds, whether local or widespread—and in the consequence, everyone loses something. For Problem-Rebel, the losses (or losing) were contrived and convoluted as an illegal drug use; but again, this choice or vice has been merely a symptom and not at the root of it all.

²²¹ Alex E. Jones.

²²² *Fatherless America*.

Him Who Cares Till When

And as I encroached on the profession of therapist or counselor, who should show-up by the more qualified one, Lost-Silence.

Like her brother, Good-Hero, she had missed a few appointments but, to some credit, had at least called to cancel.

“Well, we meet again, at last,” I began, somewhat surprised by the belated return. “What brings you here today,” I continued, earnestly seeking something to suggest her seriousness on solving family problems. “I am interested in your progress, your findings,” but as I expressed these words, she took-on uneasiness—an unusual response for someone that has been very self-confident and assured.

“I’ve been talking to the others,” she began, “about these conferences—there feelings and all,” she added. “As I am sure you know, they view your effort—while earnest—as lacking erudition and any positive effect. They think you spend too much time with Problem-Rebel and, on that alone, you err.”

“To understand, by ‘others’ you mean, other than Problem-Rebel,” I ask, already realizing the direction this discussion was going.

“Have we not explained,” she replied. “He is a hopeless case.”

“Yes, you’ve done more,” I reassured her. “But I don’t agree with that—as I don’t agree with other opinions that you and the others have developed or drawn,” I explained. “I think you’re wrong about him and, in turn, about you ‘others’ too,” I said with some predicted provocation.

“You see; this is why I’ve cancelled, **Who-Cares**,” she fired back, “it just lacks credibility all the way around.”

“If that’s true, then why are you here today,” I asked politely.

“Of course it’s true—what do you think I’ve been doing now for several years—the social sciences?”

“So your education gives you the credibility to discredit my effort, is that it,” I began, “so that you can defend, rather than address, the family-problems—for which you are personally and painfully aware and, in that, have pursued these sciences?” And with that, what had been some uneasiness was noticeably escalating into a struggle between professionalism and protectionism, objectivity and obligations.

Stopping and Starting, Coming and Going

“Stories are like children. They [each do] grow in their own way.” ²²³
And sometimes “they” grow together, like two threads that intertwine to make fabrications, even fantasy. Not that fantasy is a bad thing; but here, in the conflict of professionalism and protectionism, objectivity and obligations, it is more than the:

- ① Awe of a child, as positivism
- ① Awesomeness of the true beast, as bison of the west
- ① Awfulness of the faux beast, as Leviathan

“[But only] when one realizes one is asleep, at that moment one is already half-awake.” ²²⁴ So then,

Sleep...sleep until you waken

When you wake you'll see the world..., [without] mistaken...

Face your life, its pain, its pleasure, leave no path untaken. ²²⁵

So she was faced with the compromise versus credibility; that if she just got along, she could *get along*, the fabrications left tightly woven—the fantasy to live-on tirelessly.

But as long as she continued to learn and train (in her chosen social sciences), she would have to contend with the paradox of:

- ? Acting out of love versus fear
- ? Attention to problems versus symptoms
- ? Application of objectivity versus onerous obligations (to *get along*)

Let us hope that she *sleeps*; and after that, her

...soul awakens, the search begins and [she never goes] back. From then on, [she will be] inflamed with a special longing that will never again let her linger in the lowlands of complacency and partial fulfillment. The eternal [will make her] urgent; [and she will] loath to let compromise or [fear] hold [here] back from striving.... ²²⁶

²²³ Madeleine L'Engle, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*.

²²⁴ Pyotr Uspensky.

²²⁵ Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*.

²²⁶ John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Comedy-Mascot was a no-show, once again; and like his brother, had not bothered to call or give notice. But then, mascots are known for their loyalty, and clearly, the “others” had collaborated in the common cause of compromise over credibility—of just *getting along*.

As for them, save Problem-Rebel, my efforts to plead my case are for not—as the opposing forces seem far too great, galvanizing such resistance—complacency in facing their fears—through years of deception, fear and shame.

I hurt for them; each and all, and those like them—casualties of this war called divorce.

My objectives are not been wrong—I know it—but yet it seems so in the present state and status of my efforts that seem now an epitaph. But before I quit or give-up, this I must say again:

So don't be frightened...if sadness confronts you larger than any you have ever known, casting its shadow over all you do. You must think that something is happening within you, and remember that life has not forgotten you; it holds you in its hand and will not let you fall. Why would you want to exclude from your life any uneasiness, any pain, any depression, since you don't know what work they are accomplishing within you?”

I know sadness; believe me, when I say that it has been my companion however much I wanted solitude or happiness, relief from the difficult. But still, I say:

Be of good courage.... Time passed in the difficult is never lost...What is required of us is that we live the difficult and learn to deal with it. In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands that work on us [and for us].²²⁷

²²⁷ Rainer Maria Rilke.

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

Still with no word or indication from the rest of them, I continue my contact with Problem-Rebel. And while the company is good and the conversations welcomed, the symptoms of self-medicating remain an area in need of the courage to acknowledge and address. Meanwhile, he says repeatedly that he tries to contact the others without a response—except for his mother. She has offered him a place to stay should he decide to return to his hometown. Still, there is much reason to doubt that her behavior (from before) will be any different; that the same conditions and consequences (and symptoms) that caused his being legally removed from his home, while still in high school, prevail. As it is, either side of this relationship is seemingly unchanged as described:

- ☀ Family history of injustices (insensitivity, inattentiveness, isolation)
- ☀ Individual resistance to the *resistance* (of *getting along*) with the *symptoms* as part of it

Problem-Rebel did **not** agree to the imposed isolation or the deception (that has been a fundamental part of this family); but instead, he broke-out and slipped-away—beyond her convenience and his constraints. He was troubled, in-trouble and troubling—an incompatibility for the parent preoccupied with her own interests.

But in the larger context are the implications of social strength (as previously presented) that are coincidently-shared between this single-parent family and this nation-state. And here, on the similarity, is where I elaborate on the injustices in (or involving) *inverted*-forms of power or authority (also, previously presented), the struggle between individualism and institutionalization.

Having presented the topics of social strength and *inverted*-forms previously, I continue with *institutionalization*, and specifically, the means and methods that contribute to *the struggle*.

To begin, the reader must understand that “the government has *institutionalized* lying.”²²⁸ Inherently, the state lies on every level.

²²⁸ Judge Napolitano, Reason TV, posted on YouTube 06/11/10.

Him Who Cares Till When

Yes, the first of several *coincidentally-shared* means and methods is routine or repeated lying—of such depth and degree that to measure it would be difficult, even indeterminable. But still,

To accuse someone of lying presupposes that they have the capacity to tell the truth.²²⁹

And routine or repeated lying, while bad enough, is more a symptom of the core problem expressed as one or more of the following:

- ❶ Incapacity for truth
- ❷ Incapacity to tell the truth
- ❸ Incapacitated

This *inverted-form* of power or authority is *incapacitated*—with or without necessarily defining or determining the depth or degree of deception—as *the nature of the beast*.

And where ever an institution has been given full sway, it has devoured individuals at an incredible rate....²³⁰

I cannot conceive how to measure whether an individual is *incapacitated* or is *institutionalized*.²³¹ But what is suggested is that individuals can be (or are) consumed or *devoured* and, thus, take-on this *incapacity*.²³²

It was one of our own, Edward Bernays, that first pioneered public-relations—or propaganda—in the 1920s; referring to the public as “the herd” or “masses”.

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.... Men (people) are rarely aware of the real reasons which motivate their actions.²³³

²²⁹ Noam Chomsky.

²³⁰ David Simon, writer/producer of *The Wire*.

²³¹ This statement implies that individuals have a moral responsibility or accountability—unlike institutions or the institutionalized.

²³² Use of “institutionalized” should be understood as negative except in regard to marriage, as used in the Author’s Notes.

²³³ Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda*.

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

Public relations—or propaganda—produces a *double-effect*; contrasting conditions and consequences described as:

- ① Loyalty to (or love of) the source...and/or the institution(s)
- ② Fear of the projected opposition, the designated enemy...

These conditions and consequences are collaborated and codified in the continuing concentration of *main-stream* media.²³⁴

The uniformity of the US media has become much more complete since the days of the cold war. During the 1990s, the US government permitted an unconscionable concentration of print and broadcast media that terminated the independence of the media.²³⁵

And not just with current news, but with history as well; an approved and accepted narrative for students and scholars alike:

The historian's distortion is more than technical, it is ideological; it is released into a world of contending interests, where any chosen emphasis supports (whether the historian means to or not) some kind of interest, whether economic or political or racial or national or sexual.²³⁶

In the extremes of historical or *historian's distortions* is an ideology that acts in "the most effective way to destroy people; [that is], to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history."²³⁷

Propaganda is a different kind of force: attractive and alluring, with all the affirming attributes—fact and fiction—with actions to follow.

If such things were not so dangerous one would laugh. But one recognizes the technique. Such propaganda always begins with words, but soon it proceeds to deeds. When there are no facts to support lies, facts must be made.²³⁸

²³⁴ Major news sources have been reduced from more than 50 to only 5 in the last 50 years.

²³⁵ Paul Craig Roberts; Wikipedia.

²³⁶ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*.

²³⁷ George Orwell.

²³⁸ Eric Ambler, *A Coffin for Dimitrios*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Propaganda is manipulation and control on a mass, systemic scale—with or without necessarily defining or determining the depth or degree.

Manipulating the media is akin to poisoning a nation's water supply—it affects all of our lives in unimaginable ways.²³⁹

But then it's not so much about *the numbers* as it is about *the nature of the beast*....that seizes *power and possession* with ravenous appetite.

All over the place, from the popular culture to the propaganda system, there is constant pressure to make people feel that they are helpless, that the only role they can have is to ratify decisions and to consume.

The beast with means and methods:

The more you can increase fear of drugs, crime, welfare mothers, immigrants and aliens, the more you control all of the people.²⁴⁰

These *means and methods* will produce contrasting conditions and consequences, another *double-effect*, described as:

- ❶ Crisis that demands attention and action motivated by private- public, perceived, promoted and projected fear
- ❷ Opportunity that demands a plan, motivated by the same forces that fostered or fomented a crisis

The beast fosters and foments fear—crisis—as a means or opportunity for *power and possession*.

The principle that the end justifies the means is in individualist ethics regarded as the denial of all morals. In collectivist ethics it becomes necessarily the supreme rule.²⁴¹

A depth and degree of deception for which the perpetrator—even as a predator—is a self-acclaimed and accepted victim, the veritable *wolf in sheep's clothing*.

²³⁹ Lance Morcan, *The Orphan Conspiracies: 29 Conspiracy Theories from The Orphan Trilogy*.

²⁴⁰ Noam Chomsky.

²⁴¹ Friedrich von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*.

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

Consider preemptive war (*conflict and contention*) as a context for *crisis-opportunity*: the promoted and propagated premise (for war) is, at best, secondary to the real underlying cause; the enemy is perhaps the real victim— assuming it exists at all—with *power and possession* as the purposed end or objective.

In times of war or crisis, power is easily stolen from the many by the few on a promise of security. The more elusive or imaginary the foe, the better for manufacturing consent.²⁴²



And through such *crisis-opportunity*, power is easily stolen, while private and public life continues down a road to serfdom. A road where, as H. L. Mencken famously said that “every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under.” But Mencken continues:

I am no longer ashamed, because I do not identify with the government under which I live. Rather, I view it as a criminal organization that without provocation has chosen to make war on my just rights—not only mine, of course, but everyone's. Although this vile enterprise is my problem, because it robs and bullies me relentlessly and without mercy, it is **not** my responsibility: the nail is **not** the hammer.²⁴³

Beyond war, *means and methods* are economic: materialism, consumerism and similar “-isms”—each and all acting to satiate and satisfy. *Give them bread and circus* (or keep them fat and happy).

All things considered, perhaps our new national motto should be: When in America, do as the Roman Empire would do. Eat to your fill of food and violence, cheer on *the war*, and dismiss expressions of doubt or dismay about military interventions and drone killings as “feminine” and “weak.”²⁴⁴

²⁴² Ronald Wright, *A Short History of Progress*.

²⁴³ Robert Higgs, *Neither Liberty nor Safety: Fear, Ideology, and the Growth of Government*.

²⁴⁴ “Bread and Circuses in Rome and America”, William Astore, 06/13/13.

Him Who Cares Till When

In the combination of economic with militant strategies are first the *means and methods*, then conditions and consequences, of two international programs: Neo-Liberalism and Neo-Conservatism.

Neo-Liberalism purports *laissez-faire*, or free-trade, but purposes to manipulate and control with covert and clandestine action and activities. ...the idea that all economic growth benefits humankind and that the greater the growth, the more widespread the benefits...that those people who excel at stoking the fires of economic growth should be exalted and rewarded, while those born at the fringes are available for exploitation.²⁴⁵

Neo-Conservatism purports to democracy, or a relatively free society, but purposes to manipulate and control with covert and clandestine action and activities—as well as direct military occupation and offensives—per the *Project of the New American Century*.²⁴⁶

Social conservatism and neo-conservatism have revived authoritarian conservatism, and not for the better of conservatism or American democracy. True conservatism is cautious and prudent. Authoritarianism is rash and radical. American democracy has benefited from true conservatism, but authoritarianism offers potentially serious trouble for any democracy.²⁴⁷

Combine media with economic and military and what you have is a *tour de force* of empirical proportions.

This lack of understanding, combined with myriad secret US government actions that never make it into the pages of the mainstream media (MSM) render average Americans bewildered and dumbstruck by world events.... Of course the world seems like a dangerous place for America, because we generally only get half of the story.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*.

²⁴⁶ *Project of the New American Century* (PNAC): a Washington-based think tank created in 1997; it desires and demands one thing: The establishment of a global American empire to bend the will of all nations.

²⁴⁷ John W. Dean, *Conservatives without Conscience*.

²⁴⁸ Michael Nystrom, "Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic", April 6, 2007.

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

The voice of the beast, mainstream media (MSM), offers several varieties of news; *attractive and alluring, with all the affirming attributes—fact or fiction* that possible fit one or more of the following types:

- ① Happy – trivial, local events of the *warm and fuzzy* variety
- ① Hollywood – celebrity, sports and similar glamour and games
- ① Healthy – may or may not be helpful...
- ① Half-baked – a catch-all for opinion... posing as *fair and balanced*; prescribed and pre-scripted for nefarious purposes
- ① Hegemonic – economic, military and all other forces that support world-domination under cloak of darkness

To apply this voice to the *soft-gloved, iron-handed* requires no imagination, but rather, the mere observance of the daily recipe and regimen of such claims or myths as:

- A two-party congress—rather than two factions of a one-party
- A democracy, republic or relatively-free society—rather than an oligarchy, plutocracy or some other lesser form to include a *shadow government* composed of non-elected elitist
- A war on ____ that, whether effective or not, is justified on merits manufactured from *methods and means* already described—rather than on facts aimed to inform and empower

And these are just a few.....

Can you think of any other *claims or myths*?

For as it seems (or as it is):

The areas of life that remain outside the government's participation, taxation, subsidization, regulation, surveillance, and other intrusion or control have become so few and so trivial that they scarcely merit mention.

We verge ever closer upon the condition in which everything that is **not** prohibited is required. Yet, the average American will declare loudly that he is a free man and that his country is the freest in the world. Thus, in a country where more and more is for the state, where virtually nothing is outside the State, and where, aside from pointless complaints, nothing against the State is permitted....²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Robert Higgs, "Nothing outside the State"; LewRockwell.com.

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And to repeat a tenant, a truth, with some amendment: the corporate-state seizes power from social strength and, with such incremental transfer, becomes a bureaucracy of unlimited and irreversible proportions, unaccountable spending, untenable debt of unending and indefinite public burden. And,

Where corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of this country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working on the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. ²⁵⁰

But this is **not** all my beef with the burgeoning bureaucracy.

At the core of this bureaucracy is the law (business, civil or otherwise) that, with ever increasing *power and possession*, comes more *crisis-opportunity, more circumvention or violation—more corruption—of the very laws instituted by institutions.*

Justice is what is established; and thus all our established laws will necessarily be regarded as just without examination, since they are established. ²⁵¹

This *circumvention or violation* by **not only** side-Stepping existing law but by Stomping the processes of establishing law; *means and methods, conditions and consequences*, that yield unlimited and endless *power and possession.* ²⁵² As it is,

There is no greater tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of law and in the name of justice. ²⁵³

And specific to so-called family or civil law, *there is no greater tyranny* to society *than that which* is responsible for rampant divorce and the subsequent, incremental decline of marriage and its associations.

²⁵⁰ President Abraham Lincoln.

²⁵¹ Blaise Pascal.

²⁵² "Stomping the process of establishing law" is referring to the rising use executive orders and other means of methods that circumvent existing law.

²⁵³ Political philosopher Montesquieu (1689 – 1755).

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

Civil law, combined with criminal law, produces a *double-effect* (too); a tour de force that applies similar *means and methods*, then *conditions and consequences*—economic, militant and media forces. And if the consequences (rampant divorce, fatherlessness, etc.) are not bad enough, the *conditions* were purposely created or crafted—much as in the larger context—to seize *power and possession*.

Some four decades ago, while few were paying attention, the Western world embarked on the boldest social experiment in its history. With no public discussion of the possible consequences, laws were enacted in virtually every jurisdiction that effectively ended marriage as a legal contract. Today it is not possible to form a binding agreement to create a family. The government can now, at the request of one spouse, simply dissolve a marriage over the objection of the other.²⁵⁴

And in the *consequences* has been an every declining social strength—the tearing down of marriage and its associations. Meanwhile, this cabal or combination of forces promote and propagate such *conditions* as freedom, justice and individual choice—much as with legalized abortion—cloaking the real cause behind the *consequences*.

...But a choice for whom or what?

The state offers little if any leverage to protect or preserve one's marriage; but instead, effectively subsidizes divorce by making it more convenient, conclusive—and in turn, more common. You might think that the same "mutual consent" that applies to marriage would also apply to divorce—but this kind of reasoning does not apply.

Contrary to common assumptions, divorce today seldom involves two people mutually deciding to part ways. According to Frank Furstenberg and Andrew Cherlin in *Divided Families*, 80 percent of divorces are unilateral....²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Maggie Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage*, 1996.

²⁵⁵ "Divorced from Reality. "We're from the Government, and We're Here to End Your Marriage," Stephen Baskerville.

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Divorce has been furthered by No-fault, where the moving party can file a complaint for divorce without any cause or justification. And while such law was first initiated in our nation-state in California, similar law was enacted the prior year in the former Soviet Union (USSR)—aimed to undermine social strength under concentrated, communist rule.²⁵⁶

The full implications of the “no-fault” revolution have **never been** publicly debated. “The divorce laws...were reformed by unrepresentative groups with very particular agendas of their own and which were not in step with public opinion,” writes Melanie Phillips in *The Sex-Change Society*. “Public attitudes were gradually dragged along behind laws that were generally understood at the time to mean something very different from what they subsequently came to represent.

And expedience becomes *necessarily the supreme rule on a road to serfdom*.

The consequences of skyrocketing divorce—a war on marriage—had been a *crisis-opportunity* that, in short, has produced a society under siege from an ever burgeoning bureaucracy of civil and criminal law.

- ❶ If marriage is not wholly a private affair (as today’s marriage advocates insist) involuntary divorce by its nature requires constant government supervision over family life.
- ❷ Far more than marriage, divorce mobilizes and expands government power.
- ❸ Marriage creates a private household, which may or may not necessitate signing some legal documents.
- ❹ Divorce dissolves a private household, usually against the wishes of one spouse. It inevitably involves state functionaries—including police and jails—to enforce the divorce and the post-marriage order.

It is from *the beast*—the forces of civil law, its divorce reforms.

²⁵⁶ A form of No-fault was enacted in the former Soviet Union in 1968; similar law followed in the U.S., at the state level, beginning with California in 1969. As a consequence, divorce lawyers in California grew at rate of 2000 percent over the next several decades and divorce rates skyrocketed across the U.S.

Stepping-Stomping Forward and Backward

But why stop at so-called family or civil law?

Almost invariably, the involuntarily divorced spouse will want and expect to continue enjoying the protections and prerogatives of private life: the right to live in the common home, to possess the common property, or—most vexing of all—to parent the common children. These claims must be terminated, using the penal system if necessary.

It is from *the beast*—the forces of criminal law and what Stephen Baskerville describes as “Onerous Implications” is the possibility that:

Unilateral divorce inescapably involves government agents forcibly removing legally innocent people from their homes, seizing their property, and separating them from their children. It inherently abrogates not only the inviolability of marriage but the very concept of private life.

Invariably the first action of a divorce court, once a divorce is filed, is to separate the children from one of their parents, usually the father. Until this happens, no one in *the machinery* acquires any power or earnings. The first principle and first action of divorce court therefore: **Remove the father.** [And] this happens even if the father is innocent of any legal wrongdoing and is simply sitting in his own home minding his own business.²⁵⁷

And in these *conditions and consequences* is where I now turn to this single-parent family; their history to include all the described draconian effects of family or civil law, then criminal law—the *means and methods* that destroy marriage and its associations.

October 2000 marks the beginning of the end; it is the time when the court granted my spouse her divorce on the expressed basis that “I did not make her happy”. Nearly nine years have passed and, if anything is certain, it is that she has yet to find the happiness for which the court attempted to grant her.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ “Divorced from Reality. “We’re from the Government, and We’re Here to End Your Marriage,” Stephen Baskerville.

²⁵⁸ “A Parent’s Plea; Plight of the Non-custodial”, H. Kirk Rainer, 2009.

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How is the father or parent removed?

One of the seemingly most-effective ways of separating children from parent is to criminalize the parent; a process that begins and ends with the creation of:

- ❶ Restraining Order – used in connection with a complaint for divorce, this order establishes pretense of foul play—regardless of the prior history or conduct of the parent—as suggested, sometimes insisted by the plaintiff’s counselor
- ❷ Complaint for divorce – under unilateral, no-fault or similar divorce reform, this initiating documents is approved-authorized without, and to the purposed exclusion, of the defendant
- ❸ Spurious evidence and dubious testimony – as it seems, can be entered or accepted without qualification or validation of what the court’s call the *veracity of evidence*

Each and all of these *creations* have been applied in the history of this single-parent family. Indeed, the children were directly involved; used as *pawns*, these children were not only claimed as assets of the marriage but were exploited in the developments of divorce and post-divorce criminality. They, the children, were used against their acknowledgment or approval—their awareness of the *means and methods* under way to destroy their family, their social strength.

A *double-effect*, divorce and post-divorce forces render parents penniless from the immediate expenses of divorce to the imposition of child support—whereby the non-custodial is relegated for the financial liability of the children taken from him—and in this arrangement, criminal court and debtor’s prison await delinquent payment, arrears.²⁵⁹

The mainstream media, or *the voice* of institutions, have little to offer toward criticism or condemnation of such *conditions and consequences*.

Why do we hear almost nothing about this? Aside from media that sympathize with the divorce revolution, the multi-billion-dollar divorce industry also commands a huge government-funded propaganda machine that has distorted our view of what is happening.

²⁵⁹ For more information on child support, see “Single Parent System” in the Author’s Notes.

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And there it is again; “propaganda”. Yes, the media goes about its business of *promoting and propagating* a *faux-ism*—that divorce reform is about individualism when, in fact, it is about *institutionalization*.

The growth of the divorce machinery during the 1970s and 1980s did **not** follow but preceded (in other words, it generated) a series of hysterias against parents—especially fathers—so hideous and inflammatory that no one, left or right, dared question them or defend those accused: child abuse and molestation, wife-beating, and nonpayment of “child support.”

So then the possibility, if not certainty, of a *depth and degree of deception for which the perpetrator is made the victim, the veritable wolf in sheep’s clothing—crisis-opportunity, power and possession*.

Who is the real enemy?

To the question is another question: Who is/are the institution(s); those that have driven divorce reforms—all the *conditions and consequences*—leading to the continuing decline of marriage per capita and its associations? Answer: civil and criminal law. But these institutions—these *wolves*—are not in the crosshairs of public scrutiny.

The alleged *enemy is perhaps the real victim—with power and possession* as the end.

It is not clear that these nefarious figures (alleged enemy) are other than bogeymen created by divorce interests, well aware that not only the public generally but conservatives and family advocates in particular are a soft touch when it comes to anything concerning irresponsible behavior or sexual perversion.²⁶⁰

I cannot conceive how to identify all those particular “nefarious figures”, except to believe that the largest share is an aberration—folks fabricated as the means to an end in the vein of *crisis-opportunity*.

²⁶⁰ Divorced from Reality. “We’re from the Government, and We’re Here to End Your Marriage,” Stephen Baskerville.

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But what is suggested is that individuals—*especially fathers*—can be (or are) *consumed or devoured*; they are deposed, disposed of, and destroyed as *means and methods* of the *institutionalized*.

Marriage is an institution—or at least it once was—and in this fact, might well be confused in my continuing criticism of institutions. Here, on the possibility of some confusion, the reader should understand that some institutions are **not** *institutionalized*; that is, they are **not** enemies but—on the contrary—are sources of social strength.

Nor does my criticism exclude individual behavior—that we each can (are capable of) bad things. But for the *institutionalized*, such capability is not only endemic, but systemic—a complexity of causes in larger contexts.

In such contexts, individuals are empowered through the collective and, thus, act not only on their *free-will* but more so under the authority or approval (formal or informal, legal or otherwise) of institutions; and in this hierarchy, individuals can become *institutionalized*. In the context, injustices occur with ever increasing *power and possession*, more crisis and opportunity, more circumvention or violation—more corruption. Such injustices can be observed in the divorce-related subject of abuse(s).

The multi-billion dollar abuse industry has become “an area of law mired in intellectual dishonesty and injustice” writes David Heleniak in the Rutgers Law Review. Domestic violence has become “a backwater of tautological pseudo-theory,” write Donald Dutton and Kenneth Corvo in the scholarly journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. “No other area of established social welfare, criminal justice, public health, or behavioral intervention has such weak evidence in support of mandated practice.”²⁶¹

The real enemy is civil law and its collective of *institutionalized*—a combination, a cabal, that has preyed upon the institution of marriage and its associations and finally, social strength.

²⁶¹ Stephen Baskerville.

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Where is the church, Christianity?

But then, the third of three institutions; the Biblical church that potentially promotes and propagates marriage and its associations, has a part in means and methods and, in turn, the *conditions and consequences* as Baskerville writes:

While many factors have contributed to this truly diabolical, bureaucratic onslaught against the family, we might begin by looking within. The churches' failure or refusal to intervene in the marriages they consecrated and to exert moral pressure on misbehaving spouses (perhaps out of fear of appearing "judgmental") left a vacuum that has been filled by the state. Clergy, parishioners, and extended families have been replaced by lawyers, judges, forensic psychotherapists, social workers, and plainclothes police.

As I vaguely remember, the church served as a sanctuary—even in cases involving criminal conduct—underscoring *separation of church and state*. But as it is, the state is preying upon marriage while the church, for the most part, has done little to stand in the gap—to stem back the tide of divorce and declining marriage.²⁶²

Family integrity will be restored only when families are de-politicized and protected from government invasion. This will demand morally vigorous congregations that are willing to take marriage out of the hands of the state by intervening in the marriages they are called upon to witness and consecrate and by resisting the power of the state to move in. This is the logic behind the group *Marriage Savers*, and it can restore the churches' authority even among those who previously viewed a church's role in their marriage as largely ceremonial.²⁶³

It was Michael McManus of *Marriage Savers* write: "Divorce is a far more grievous blow to marriage than today's challenge". I am **not** convinced that the church has not tried, but what I believe is that the church has fallen short of defending and protecting marriage from this predator.

²⁶² A steady per capita decline in marriage since the late 1960s.

²⁶³ Stephen Baskerville.

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There is a view or opinion that divorce, with all the *conditions and consequences*, is much deeper in its cause; that it is a matter of morality, deeply-rooted in spirituality, **not** the state.

Moral breakdown certainly does lie behind the divorce epidemic (of which more shortly).... [Yet] no greater challenge confronts the churches— or any greater opportunity to reverse the mass exodus— than to defend their own marriage ordinance against this attack from the government. Churches readily and rightly mobilize politically against moral evils like abortion and same-sex “marriage,” in which they are not required to participate. Even more are they primary stakeholders in involuntary divorce, which allows the state to desecrate and nullify their own ministry.²⁶⁴

There is also a treatment of divorce, unlike other social problems of such proportion, described as despair rather than action.

There is no social problem Americans dare not attack, except one: about marriage; and marriage alone, we despair.²⁶⁵

This social problem impacts the Christian faith as much, or more.

Of all the people you would expect to be faithful to their vows and to fight for their marriages, Christians should be at the top of the list.... And yet our marriages are failing with the same frequency and in the same ways as those in the world are failing!

The effects of this massive, church-wide failure are enormous. Christian families are disintegrating before our very eyes, often through bitter court battles that leave lifelong wounds. Thousands of Christian children are robbed of the security and unified guidance that God intended their parents to provide, and they learn at an early age that vows to God are less important than seeking personal pleasure. Many adults and children who have gone through divorce leave the church altogether. And all the while, the world is given yet another convenient excuse to label Christians as hypocrites and to laugh in our faces when we try to tell them about the redeeming grace of God.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Stephen Baskerville.

²⁶⁵ *The Abolition of Marriage, How We Destroy Lasting Love.*

²⁶⁶ “How Churches Can Preserve and Heal Marriages”, Peacemaker Ministries.

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My belief is that the church, the Christian community, has missed a real opportunity to *stand in the gap*²⁶⁷; that is, to stand between the institution of marriage and the adversarial institution, civil law. There are degrees of dissent, and in these *degrees*, to *stand* would be drastic—in proportion with the *conditions and consequences*, the trends of marriage-related social ills. To be *drastic* would be to withdraw from state-licensed marriage while reasserting the New Testament marriage. No longer would the church accept or acknowledge state-sanctioned marriage, divorce reforms, and the continuation of such pernicious and punitive activity. Such *drastic* action might produce some drastic conditions and consequences for the Christian community. But to the extent that such a cause & effect can be estimated, the choice is more a matter of the real value of marriage and its associations—and not the reaction or response of the adversary of marriage and its associations.

What is the real value of marriage and its associations?

There may be a difficult questions (without a determinable answer) as marriage means many things to many people. Rather than approach the answer directly, consider the alternatives (to marriage) on the assumption that men are generally at their best—personal and public contribution to society—in the context of marriage as Warren Farrell describes in his book, *Father and Child Reunion*.

Where marriage goes, so goes men; if marriage is devalued, so too men as husbands and fathers. Thus, and in keeping with my construction of civil law's treatment of marriage via divorce reform, an assault on all *associations* is an assault on men, their contribution to societal strength. From *Men and Marriage*; unattached, predatory males endanger our civilization—as do vandals and gang members on urban streets. Historians and anthropologists assure us that men, in every culture, have found their identity in providing for women and children.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ This phrase comes from Ezekiel 22:30.

²⁶⁸ *Men and Marriage*, George Gilder, 1992; from an Amazon book review by Gerard Reed, 2009.

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Which came first; the irresponsible man or declining marriage as an institution? I don't know except to understand that the two are inextricably linked; therefore, where marriage goes, so too men and society. Strong society depends on strong manhood as husbands and fathers. To destroy societal strength is to destroy such roles first and foremost—as has been the direction for some time now.

Coincident to this book and chapter is my growing awareness of, and attention to, a social movement or development called the *Sexodus*. And while it is not unique to modern, western culture it none the less evident or existing in some degree.

The *Sexodus* seems another of the systemic problems; the convergence of a series of causes, conditions and consequences, that have resulted in a social effect, a growing chasm between the sexes—abstinence with an attitude. This attitude reflects a complete distrust in marriage; that a tradition union is a trap whereby the eventual end will leave the man greatly debilitated, even destitute. And while there are many words and much wrangling between the sexes—assertions and allegations—the general consensus is that such conventional relationships are no longer conducive or constructive.

Young males are described as *retreating* into a life of drugs, porn, gaming and similar self-indulgences. Meanwhile, young women (or marrying age) *bemoan* that they can no longer find *real men*, or men interested in marriage and commitment. Also is the argument that: women don't know what they want and, further, that political correctness has penetrated personal life, making men more legally liable and targeted. *An entire generation is being left behind in the social engineering project know as Third Way Feminism.* A phobia has developed, predicated on the date-rape culture, where young men are simply scared of relationships, even engagement in casual conversation.

²⁶⁹ In the end, marriage per capita rate (in the U.S.) for this age group is about twenty percent or about one-third that of 1960s' figures.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ "Sexodus: Why are Young Men giving-up on Women", InfoWars.com.

²⁷⁰ Marriage rate per capita for millennial generation.

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Other factors in the movement are tied to the *deadening* of young men's (or boy's) "rambunctious behavior" through an age of ADHD (see Author's Notes, "ADHD and Depression among Young People") and what you have is a sadistic, de-testosterone-take-down of boys and men.

But then *Hip-Hop*; the music and other media that infuses criminality as a form of chivalry—violence, sexism, and basic aggression toward all things as articulated in the music and general attitudes, the audience and agents. Hip-Hip culture might give some meaning to life, though it is questionable if not contradictory to the better man, his society.

And in general, the factors contributing to declining marriage are coupled with a shifting of opinions about what marriage means (or the value of marriage to society).

Recent survey data from the Pew Research Center finds a public that is deeply divided over the role marriage plays in society. Survey respondents were asked which of the following statements came closer to their own views: Society is better off if people make marriage and having children a priority, or society is just as well off if people have priorities other than marriage and children. Some 46% of adults chose the first statement, while 50% chose the second.²⁷¹

View and statistics differ among races too.

While blacks are more likely than whites to have never been married (and less likely to be currently married), a much higher share of blacks (58%) than whites (44%) say that it's very important for a couple to marry if they plan to spend their lives together.

In outcome or result, the health of marriage and its associations is more dismal within the black race of today than of others—an ironic change from similar statistics of the early 1960's showing the black family better-off than the white family in terms of marriage and its associations.²⁷²

²⁷¹ Pew Research Center Survey, 01/23 – 03/16, 2014.

²⁷² The health in this earlier period, ending in the early 60's, was credited in part with the strong relationship of the church in black communities. Causes for the changes, or decline of family health, may be in part due to the adverse effects of *The Great Society*.

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The Alabama Family Rights Association (ALFRA) reports that an estimated 40,000 children are state-regulated as to parental visitation or family participation.²⁷³ Not all, but many of these children have been unjustifiably separated through single-parent custody.²⁷⁴ The same source has recently posted the plight of Alabama's children in general; woefully near the bottom of overall wellness (compared with other states) as measured by a set of four criteria. There is a connection between wellness and parental participation.

Compared to living with both parents, living in a single home doubles the risk that the child will suffer emotional, physical and educational neglect.²⁷⁵

These children and their alienated parents are the true victims of divorce and post-divorce. They have been victimized by civil courts that pose as a protector (of *the best interest of the children*), though in the non-custodial arrangement, is more accurately a profiteer, potentially a predator.²⁷⁶ The non-custodial is the result of *means and methods* described summarized as the:

- ❶ Incapacity for (or to tell) the truth (or *incapacitated*)
- ❷ Media as the voice of such institutions the propagates lies
- ❸ Economic and militant-type forces brought to bare on families
- ❹ Law; specifically civil or family law , that separates families

The *conditions and consequences* are dire—with or without necessarily defining or determining the depth or degree of defrauding or deceiving others—as part of the nature of the beast. I can in fact conceive these *means and methods*, the *conditions and consequences*—based on the recorded life of this single-parent's father and, in turn, my own role as Him **Who-Cares** Till When.

²⁷³ Alabama Family Rights Association (AFFRA) e-mail, 01/05/15.

²⁷⁴ For more information on child support, see "Single Parent System" in the Author's Notes.

²⁷⁵ Father Facts, 5th Edition, National Fatherhood Initiative.

²⁷⁶ "Profiteer" as described in Title IV-D; whereby states that collect child support are subsidized by the federal government.

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Child enforcement views the non-custodial as only a payee or debtor, whereas the non-custodial pleads to be a parent or dad. Effort to restore this once-held position is largely a factor of financing that, in the raw sense, is nothing less than an effort to redeem his children from the state. Without any financing, the non-custodial must either accept the charge to go away (yet pay); or risk the possibility of being condemned as a criminal in his effort to take back that which has been unjustifiably taken from him.

But as to this continued intrusion of the state, intervention and criminalization, the father has endured much as he describes:

How far will a parent [custodial parent] go to destroy the other parent...or at least destroy the parent-child relationship?

Again, the parent will go as far as the court allows. Besides the general practices already mentioned, they can or will:

- ❶ *Program* the children into believing that the other parent does not care for them or love them; they [the custodial parent] may even tell the children that the other parent has abandoned them
- ❷ Threaten the children that any contact with other parent will lead to his arrest and incarceration; and then follow through on this threat when necessary or enabled by the courts
- ❸ Compel or force the children to testify against the parent—though the children have not exchanged a word with that parent in nearly eight (8) years or since the oldest was eleven.²⁷⁷

To expound on his list (above), more in the way of pernicious behavior (as I understand of the father's plight):

- ❶ Garner/sunder legal support (established for real or true victims) or abuse of a system set-up to aid the abused; so in short, posing as a victim and thereby falsifying claims, defrauding the state
- ❷ Lying to the children, among others...
- ❸ Falsifying testimony, fabricating evidence
- ❹ Child abuse; compelling them to testify regardless of the consequences, implications or ramifications, of the history and realities of family relations

²⁷⁷ "A Parent's Plea; Plight of the Non-custodial", H. Kirk Rainer, 2009.

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And while nothing or no one can prevent such individual behavior (as described), a partial remedy would be for civil law to hold a witness to their testimony or evidence (veracity or integrity)—for anything less is promoting and propagating falsification, even fraud.²⁷⁸ And in the consequences of such poor jurisprudence is the eventual undermining of justice in general—where such conduct or behavior is routinely and repeatedly overlooked or tolerated, and consequently, counselors suggests—even demand—such conduct or behavior of their clients.

Yet patently false accusations of both child abuse and domestic violence are rampant in divorce courts, almost always for purposes of breaking up families, securing child custody, and eliminating fathers. “With child abuse and spouse abuse you don’t have to prove anything,” the leader of a legal seminar tells divorcing mothers, according to the Chicago Tribune. “You just have to accuse.”²⁷⁹

Counselors so advise or instruct their clients to *manufacture* evidence for a restraining order—a strategic move to implicate their spouse, leveraging the full measure and might of the criminal justice system as well as the psychiatric medical community.

...Sometimes however, requests for psychological evaluations are simply stall tactics intended to delay a decision. The delay cause by carrying out an order for a psychological evaluation could make things worse because it gives hope and power to the child and to the violating parent.²⁸⁰

Such strategy and tactics are **not** about truth or facts—but about pretense and perception. And in this process, the legal community stokes the fires of contention—ratcheting-up family conflict that will invariably lend to the courts and counselor’s benefit in terms of *power and possession*.

²⁷⁸ Deliberate, intentional falsification of evidence or testimony is fraud; a crime against the state.

²⁷⁹ Stephen Baskerville.

²⁸⁰ *Diffusing the High-Conflict Marriage: A Treatment Guide for Working with Angry Couples* (The Practical Therapist Series), 2006.

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And as to the children, as *conscripted agents* of this war, such parental behavior and legal conduct is absent any regard for *the best interest of the children*—but is eerily similar to the *tour de force*²⁸¹ that has *prepared the field* through propaganda prior to, and during, conquest via financial and violent *means and methods*.

As long as the co-parents use their children as innocent pawns in their battle, children feel the emotional tug of war between being faithful, helpful, children and being used by their parents to keep the fires of battle burning. Children come to resent being pawns and react with withdrawal, passive defiance, or outright hostility to their parents.

To repeat a commonly accepted condition: *the first causality of war is the truth*, and consequently:

In the absence of clear information about the divorce, children will construct their own ideas about who wants the divorce, who doesn't want the divorce, why their parents are divorcing and all of the other considerations. Usually, this will not be an accurate picture, and it will lack the balance and comfort that can be offered if parents are clear and honest with their children in sensitive, loving, and non-accusatory ways.

But when the children are swept-up in a unilateral war, the result is personal and painful guilt or shame—the conditions and consequence of being compelled in *conflict and contention* amid the very people that they should be learning about love and peace, sanctuary and security. More than tragic, the children's exposure to contempt—from both parent and the legal system—is by forces purporting their *best interests*.

Children do not want to feel responsible for their parent's unhappiness. Furthermore, they do not want to live in a home filled with anger, sadness, bitterness, silence, or abuse. They want loving, stable parents.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Combined economic, militant-type and media forces.

²⁸² *Diffusing the High-Conflict Marriage*.

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Individuals are *consumed* or *devoured*: deposed first of their own family; then disposed of, as *means and methods* to destroy social strength. On the promotion and propagation of Stepping Forward, such a consortium or cabal of institutions are Stomping the *life and living* out of parenting as an association of marriage—pushing social strength Backward and, ironically, destroying its own wellness at the same time. Call in *blowback*²⁸³ (or unintended consequences) but civil law's assault on marriage has created another *double-effect*: destroying marriage and its associations and, in the carnage and causalities of this war on society, destroying civility too.

A civilized society is a society governed by law: and in particular not by criminal law, the law that meets force by force, but by civil law, the law by which claims are adjusted between man and man.... The rule of civil law is impossible without the rule of moral law....²⁸⁴

What happens when civil law becomes criminal...?

If the content thus far has not justified this question, then I have **not** yet begun to attain my objectives. But to continue on this course is to consider now the federalized child-support system.²⁸⁵

The U.S. has one other experience trying to get people to work by force, without the fruits of their labor adding to their ability to give and receive their families' love. It was called slavery.

The non-custodial is imputed with the liability for the children seized in the divorce process. In some sense, this child-support is *taxation without*

²⁸³ *Blowback* is a term used by Chalmers Johnson; the unintended consequences of foreign (policy) entanglements; used here, to suggest similarity with interventions that destroy marriage and, in turn, diminish social strength as a vital part of society and government.

²⁸⁴ "What Civilization Means," Appendix 2, *The New Leviathan*.

²⁸⁵ The federalized child-support system, or Title IV-D of the Social Security Systems, was devised by Dr. Robert Williams. From *The Liberator*, American Coalition of Fathers and Children (ACFC), 2007: "Deemed the "father" of the current system, Williams "established himself as a chief consultant to the agency responsible for child support policy, and successfully manipulated his personal approach to the subject into nation-wide laws, and a huge personal fortune."

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representation.²⁸⁶ And to add to *the long train of abuses*, his child (or children) removed from his custody without justification, unjustified or otherwise immoral.²⁸⁷ Having potentially lost much under the rubric of family law, the non-custodial faces the *final blow* when criminalized merely on pretense—the consequence of a restraining order or something on similar order.²⁸⁸

Sometimes a dad's sense of powerlessness makes him withdraw. We call him a deadbeat. It's usually more accurate to call him deadened.

But as divorce and custody have an economic or business aspect, money is once again a means to an end—that **may** enable a non-custodial to have some semblance of parenthood. On the other hand,

A dad who is economically poor has virtually no chance of being an equally involved dad without his ex-wife's permission. So he loses without a contest.

Yes, economic and state forces at work; this time, not internationally but on the home-front—marriage and its associations.²⁸⁹

When we demand a dad give child support...then take away his children and home, we kill his soul, his reason for earning, his reason for living. When we drive him into a dead-end, he becomes a deadbeat, dead broke, or just dead. As a dad's death is forced upon him, with him dies his family's soul.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ "Taxation without representation"; this familiar phrase (or grievance) is actually used in *Father and Child Reunion* to emphasize the grievous blow that child-support produces in the context of state-ordered removal of his children for reasons illegitimate, or other than criminal conduct (or declared "unfit").

²⁸⁷ Children should **not** be removed from the care of a parent unless the parent is determined "unfit"; as it is however, the non-custodial loses his children ostensibly for the state's financial benefit—the generation of state revenue via federal subsidies, Title IV-D of Social Security.

²⁸⁸ Restraining orders and similar court-orders are used commonly in divorce to establish pretense or legal leverage for the moving party.

²⁸⁹ There is a similarity between international and domestic state-activity; both use economic, militant and media forces to seize assets and to conduct unjustified, unmitigated

²⁹⁰ *Father and Child Reunion*.

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Because child-support is tendered to the custodial parent without any accountability (as to the actual use of the income), the possibility exist for malfeasance, maliciousness financed by the non-custodial; this action, in additional other abuses of child-support, occurs in contradiction to the purpose of parenting and protections of the state.

Only as an adult have I thought how his dad (the other family) must have felt paying alimony (or child support) to support his own son's hatred of him, and therefore, his son's hatred of self.

Thus, the treatment of the non-custodial is, in turn, projected onto the child or children, one way or another; and the *conditions and consequences*, clear contradictions toward *the best interest of the child*.

Sending a father-deprived child into the world and assuming everything is okay is like sending a drunken driver onto the highway and assuming everything is okay because the gas is paid for. It doesn't mean that the drunken driver want get to his destination. It just means that the risks are enormous. And the consequences of failure are forever.

And on the *course* of my objectives is a final quote (for this chapter) that condenses the content and concerns regarding *the war* on marriage and its associations.

But the collapse of the traditional family is already well advanced—and as part of a conscious Big Government strategy. Big Daddy sings a siren's song: A kiss on the hand may be quite continental, but statism is a girl's best friend. So it is government's interest to diminish those old fashioned enough to marry women and thereby woo them away from the Big Stash of Big Daddy Statist. Big Government's bias against marriage and family isn't an unforeseen quirk of the tax code. It is a logical, strategic support of its mission—to expand government and diminish everything else.²⁹¹

And while *the war* rages on, I continue at my own costs on this *course*—with/out the others.

²⁹¹ Mark Steyn.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

After my diatribe on the state's assault on marriage (or *the war*), I believe it best to turn to the more potential and promising possibilities—the hope that remains against great odds, even at great costs to them, to everyone in our society.

My own hope is built on a vision of what could be; of a society with strength, made so by the *ties* that bind us one to the other, in or out of blood, and for the benefit of each individual and their friends, neighbors and community. That we are not the same color or



race, even religion, is **not** enough—except for the state that uses these and other distinctions to *divide and conquer*.²⁹² Even now, as I write these words,

such tactics continue; that when trouble comes, those responsible must turn attention away from them—to someone or something else to be feared, a scapegoat with horns.

Fear is a powerful force that thwarts vision; near or far, past and present, the potential and promising possibilities. Thus, I say to you now what I've said to myself many times before and still more: "That you can have vision beyond your resources if you do **not** let fear dictate your decisions."

If your vision is God-given, it will most definitely be beyond your ability and beyond your resources. The God who gives the vision is the same God who makes provision.²⁹³

Some may call this vision an "agenda", "advantage" or "angle"; that we each have our Rhymes and Reasons for doing what we do however our intentions or expectations. I believe we do serve ourselves in this way; self-nurturing, even indulgence expressed in one or more questions:

- ? How does this help me
- ? What's in it for me
- ? What must I do to win

²⁹² Strife is a crisis for society, an opportunity for the state.

²⁹³ Mark Batterson, *Draw the Circle: The 40 Day Prayer Challenge*.

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But I also believe that sometimes we can be servants; self-sacrificing, even debasing expressed in one or more questions:

- ? How does help us
- ? What's in it for us
- ? What must I do to help us win

Just asking such questions is not enough however; that, as one music artist puts it: "You're gonna have to serve somebody." ²⁹⁴

But even in such sacrifice, even debasing, is another *double-effect*, potential and promising possibilities, yes, but also contrasting *conditions and consequences*. There is strength at the core of self-sacrifice but, in the end, it may only be found in the servant and not in the served. Worse than this...is *the served* may scorn the servant, seeing them more a slave than a servant—more a zero than a hero.

There is, in the end, duty and there is the expression *above-and-beyond*: obligations and over-and above; liabilities and love. Where these ends meet is not clear or concise—especially when it applies to family and close friends. Self-sacrifice, even debasing, may go too far so as to render you useless to you; still, folks can do remarkable and redeemable acts of service—even for the inappreciative (not incapacitated)—and in *the end*, all they might muster to say is:

- They need (or needed) me
- No one (else) is (or was) there
- I owe or owed to them (on account of...)

But not everyone that makes such sacrifices makes such statements or comes to such conclusions. Not everyone who sacrifices do so out of duty or love; but instead, they react out of fear—that if they don't... they will be shamed, even shunned. They do not sacrifice to serve somebody, but rather, they sacrifice everything as a slave to somebody. They may know that fear is at the core of a commitment, yet they cannot combat the forces that compel them—even against all that says "Stop".

²⁹⁴ Bob Dylan.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

Shame (or being shamed) is a force that has several facets or forms; perhaps more than some *double-effect*, the *conditions and consequences* develop supposedly from a negative, social emotion.²⁹⁵ My commentary on this negative emotion (which is really continuation from previous attention) is concentrated to the single-parent family (again); where shame manifested in and through divorce.

Children must mourn the losses in divorce in order to move on with their lives and invest energetically in new relationships and activities. [] It is hard, though, for children to stay aware of these realities without blaming themselves or lapsing into denial. [] Unless a trusted person can empathically resonate with them and communicate that their feelings of sadness, hurt, and anger are understandable, reasonable...children tend to feel guilty, and ashamed, as though they were overreacting and creating difficulties where they need not exist.²⁹⁶

So you speak to me of sadness and the coming of the winter.

Unless such children have a *trusted person* to confront their *sadness, hurt and anger*, they evidently retain some sense or tendency of guilt and/or shame. Imagine this *sense* when the children are made *pawns*—used as leverage for assorted actions, compelling them to testify against a parent they had not had contact in years, since the oldest was ten, now eighteen. Does a parent consider what *conditions and consequences* might occur in such misconduct—if they care at all?

Winter and sadness sometimes share a bleakness; a period of melancholy, even depression, absent either figurative or literal sunshine. And “The heart can get really cold if all you've known is winter.”²⁹⁷ But if and when the sun returns, when a warm breeze takes the chill out of the air, is perhaps a changing of seasons—and a time when the dormant (but not death) of the living begins to bloom and grow—and fear and its shame is shed in the light of love.

²⁹⁵ Wikipedia.

²⁹⁶ Joshua Ehrlich, *Divorce and Loss*, 2014.

²⁹⁷ Benjamin Alire Sáenz, *Last Night I Sang to the Monster*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Fear that is within you now; it seems to never end...

Without such *seasons*, life is left as something less, maybe much less. Fears thought forgotten or forgone can surface and, like some laden illness, passed to (or in) other relationships. Even with some warmth in the winds, the chill of such deeply-rooted fear can turn even the potentially-brightest spots into a dark, dismal day.

Fear of making the wrong choice and of being rejected and betrayed is certainly **not** confined to children of divorce. But the differences between the children of divorce and those of intact marriage were striking beyond my expectations. [Those] from intact families, along with their fears, brought a confidence that they had seen it work, that they had some clear ideas about how to do it. No single adult in the divorced group spoke this way.²⁹⁸

And though the details of this comparison are not provided, the suggestion is that children from *intact families* have some degree of *confidence* that comes from their parents and/or other family—that because their parents were committed to marriage and its associations, so too will they (be)....

Confidence (or assurance) is nevertheless possible; and though without the apparent advantage of *intact families*, can be restored or renewed through realization in the aftermath of divorce and even post-divorce disparities. The reason question (for me) is not whether confidence exist or can—even in the deep hurt that comes from difficult divorce and post-divorce—but to what or whom the confidence is placed or positioned. What is the source of your *confidence*, your credibility?

Fear is both strength and weakness (another *double-effect*); made one and/or the other dependent on what or whom you fear—and for that matter—understanding the nature behind nurtured fears. A child may be programmed by one parent to fear another parent (in the post-divorce experience); but the real *understanding* of such *nurtured fears*, may be not approachable for years to come—if it ever arrives at all.

²⁹⁸ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

...dreams that have escaped you and the hope that you've forgotten.

- ? Is there a relationship between this *confidence* and hope(s)
- ? Is *confidence* like faith—trusting in something or someone without having all the answers or certainty
- ? Can *confidence* survive doubts and discouragements...perhaps from by prevailing fears; vanquished *dreams and hope* of what could have been, or was...at some time

Some relevant questions, where answers are not easy or evident, might be a good start toward discovering/re-discovering *hope* and *confidence*.

Confidence is not without *conditions and consequences*. But if you have no vision or dreams, than you have no drive or determination for the action(s)—for hope. And at the risk of sounding like that of some motivational types, my commentary is really about my own journey of life and living, and similarity to yours...in that,

Hope has a cost. Hope is **not** comfortable or easy. Hope requires personal risk; it is **not** about attitude or the right peace of mind. Hope is about action. Hope is about doing something....²⁹⁹

You cannot be an absolute or always “victim” and have *hope*. Nor can you acquire *confidence* with acrimony; abusive attitudes and actions—doing to others what others may have done to you. Attitudes-actions of this kind are **not** emotionally or spiritually mature; such behavior is deficient, even detrimental, *for drive or determination....*

Certainly we struggle as victims of other people's unkindness. We have been sinned against. But we cannot excuse our sinful responses to others on the grounds of their mistreatment of us. We are responsible for what we do. We are strugglers and sinners, victims and agents, people who hurt and people who harm.³⁰⁰

Confidence and *hope* is about honesty, being honest and sincere, so as to develop trust within your soul and among family and friends.

²⁹⁹ Chris Hedges: "Hope" Speech on Dec. 17, 2010 at a peace campaign.

³⁰⁰ Larry Crabb, *Inside Out*, 2007.

Him Who Cares Till When

You tell me that you need me now—you want to be my friend.

In the first of a series of *Rocky* films, the brother of Adrian asks Rocky why he wants to marry her, on which he describes that they each have “gaps”...that they each help fill (“gaps” to mean needs). A real relationship develops in this way; each having needs for which the other can potentially and partially meet.

Can we overlook or deny the mystery of love that enables two people to fulfill the obligation and commitment of a covenant—in view of the inability to meet all the other’s needs and desires? ³⁰¹

The emphasis on *potentially and partially* meeting needs; the fact is that one person cannot meet another’s needs in all—nor should they be expected to....

Marriage is essential to some needs, both personal and public; it a *means and method* to plant seeds of love for the nourishment of the present and future success and strength of society.

The challenge is to renew marriage as a powerful way of living...and reflects the best in us, that successfully meets important social needs and that is worthy of strong social support. ³⁰²

Institutions that fail to honor this fact do so at their own peril; those that undermine *marriage and its associations* are destroying society.

... Families have an inter-connectedness, a solidarity...that effect one generation after another.... And with the break-up of the family, we have more children reared with unmet needs, and more opportunities to meet those needs with the many addictions that are easily available. ³⁰³

That our society has been undermined—social strength seized—is no longer a possibility. Individuals have needs for which a *nanny state* and its affiliates **cannot** fulfill, now or ever. Yet today, the state grows ever stronger while society declines.

³⁰¹ H. Kirk Rainer, *A Once and Always Father*, 2010.

³⁰² *Future of Marriage*.

³⁰³ *Why Good People Do Bad Things*.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

And you wonder where we're going, where's the rhyme and reason.

I tell young folks, on the rare occasion of an opportunity, that “you are living in the most exciting time of our history.” And by this statement to underscore that “exciting” is very broad in description, but with further discussion, would (or could) be clarified in the contents of recent books:

- *Enjoy the Decline, Accepting and Living with the Death of the U.S.*
- *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*
- *Why America Failed: The Roots of Imperial Decline*

...and this is only a few of such content, books and other media that describes the decline, even death, of our society, its strength.

This is the times that they, the young folks, are confronting. Ever-rising healthcare and educational costs juxtaposed with declining wages and benefits is just the immediate needs or wants that leave little in the way of options or opportunities. And as to liberty and freedom:

The words “consent of the governed” has become an empty phrase. Our textbooks on political science and economics are obsolete. Our nation has been hijacked by oligarchs, corporations, and a narrow, selfish, political, and economic elite, a small and privileged group that governs, and often steals, on behalf of moneyed interests.³⁰⁴

Eyes wide-open,

We Americans don't realize what a strange, and indeed perverse, way that is to live, because if everyone is doing it, it just becomes normal. But Paul Fussell, in his book *Class*, has a very low opinion of this supposedly normal way of life: “In the United States,” he writes, “everything is coated with a fine layer of fraud.”³⁰⁵

And as to *you*, the individual,

Once an individual that his dreams are no longer feasible and they need the state to live, they will cease being individuals and become part of the state commune or “Borg”. They will have no future.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ *Empire of Illusion*, Chris Hedges, 2009.

³⁰⁵ *Why America Failed – An Overview*; morrisberman.blogspot.com.

³⁰⁶ *Enjoy the Decline*, Aaron Clarey, 2013.

Him Who Cares Till When

And it's you who cannot accept...it is here we must begin.

To be sure, times are (and have been) changing; and with such change, demands even more *drive or determination*—to somehow *enjoy the decline*. But this is difficult and daunting—meeting such indomitable, destructive forces—given the described *conditions and consequences*.

The decline of marriage is a disaster for fatherhood. Women have always been able to view marriage and childrearing as somewhat distinct institutions. Whatever their marital state, women bear children they generally assume responsibility for those children and continue to care for them over the course of their lives. For men this is not the case. Men tend to view marriage and childrearing as a single package. If they are not married or are divorced, their interest in and sense of responsibility toward children greatly diminish.

And to press the point,

While the enormous increase in fatherlessness over the past three decades stems mainly from the two factors of divorce and non-marital births, a single phenomenon underlies them both: a decline in the institution of marriage.³⁰⁷

Of all the *conditions and consequences* that are (or will be) brought to bear on our society, fathers or fatherhood remains the one dearest to my heart; because,

The father is to exercise leadership, authority, and honor. The influence of a father is to last for generations. And God will either reward or judge fathers on the basis of how they rear their children. We must be at peace with both fathers; the heavenly and the earthly.³⁰⁸

Yet, with the *difficult and daunting*,

Is it possible to be a father [when/if] someone or something is determined to illegalize it...[rendering] being a father a thing of the past?³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ *Life without Father.*

³⁰⁸ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

³⁰⁹ *A Father and Future Felon*, H. Kirk Rainer, 2010.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

Seek the wisdom of children; graceful ways of flowers in the wind

Grace is a wonderful action; it is something given, though not earned or even expected among or between us. And child-like is a wonderful thing too; it is often the best we do when it comes to grace. Much more then is a heavenly grace; that which is pure and perfect—though not necessarily proven when it comes to perception, past and present.

When confronted with God's grace and love, they want to turn away. If their parents didn't love them, they reason, why would God? ³¹⁰

Thus, those left absent parental love seem less trusting of such grace.

Some divorcing (or divorced) parents, caught up in bitterness, make contemptuous remarks about the other parent in front of the children. Children, for whom this sort of behavior is confusing and hurtful, are forced into stark confrontation with their parent's lapses in empathy and may come to feel disillusioned and cynical. They wonder, usually privately: How can you speak badly to me about my mother/father when you know that I love that person? ³¹¹

Continuing *conflict and contention* is opposite grace: it is *confusing* simply because truth is the first casualty; it is a *confrontation* with someone or somebody—once a father, friend and family.

Young adults in divorced families, very much in accord with my findings here, are angry at their fathers and are unlikely to be helpful to them as they grow old. ³¹²

Whether driven or decided, the disparity of parents and their children is something that individuals can in fact comprehend; hence,

We must try to feel the pain of those children whose fathers abandoned them. Even contemporary songs sometimes speak of the emptiness of knowing that the one who gave the child a name – the one who gave life – then walked away. Whether one is physically or emotional abandoned, the result is the same: a feeling of worthlessness, hopelessness, and rejection. ³¹³

³¹⁰ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

³¹¹ *Divorce and Loss.*

³¹² *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

³¹³ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

Him Who Cares Till When

Though the cities start to crumble, and the towers fall around us...

The days that lie ahead will be increasingly *difficult and daunting*; not only for fathers and their children, but for many—most, I believe.

Of course, such a declaration comes in degrees (what is *difficult* for some may be a daily routine for others); but more specific, our society has been in decline for decades—strength incrementally drawn down via a variety of forces most noted as the state’s assault on marriage and its associations. And while actual or ivory *towers* may not fall around us, pillars of social strength and stability have long in been in decline—as predicted by Carle Zimmerman in *Family and Civilization*.³¹⁴

Young people, mainly Millennials,³¹⁵ are experiencing and enduring the most evident effects of the decline as more and more return to live with parents and family, post high school or following college graduation. Ever rising healthcare and educational costs, coupled with rising unemployment and stagnant wages, have culminated in a watershed period (after decades of evidence). In short, times are changing and, for these folks in particular, with certain lessening of expected economic and social opportunity, now and for the unforeseeable future.³¹⁶

Many Millennials began their adult lives in the midst of the worst economic downturn in generations, and this survey reveals just how difficult coming of age in the midst of the Great Recession has been for this generation of Americans.³¹⁷

And approximately one in five Millennials are choosing to marry.

³¹⁴ In *Family and Civilization*, Zimmerman predicted the rise of the Atomistic Family in western culture in the 1900s and, short of the Baby-Boom following WWII, has been accurate based on measures of this societal status. See “Family and Civilization; three types of families” in Author’s Notes, for a definition.

³¹⁵ Millennials (also known as the Millennial Generation or Generation Y are the demographic cohort following Generation X. There are no precise dates when the generation starts and ends. Researchers and commentators use birth years ranging from 1980 to about 1994; Wikipedia.

³¹⁶ Some predictions suggest that recover has not and will not occur due to accrued debt amid other economic and social developments.

³¹⁷ “Millennials Face Financial Struggle”, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, April 13, 2014.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

The sun is slowly fading, and it's colder than the sea.

And in the decline, whether proven temporary or permanent, is that the best is behind rather than ahead in the cycle of civilizations.³¹⁸

The much-debated environmental decline (or changes in the environment) aside, the technology of today reaches every deeper into every aspect of our lives—no matter our choices or concerns.

The rapid revolution in technology affected our lifestyle drastically and led us to believe that our lives have changed for the better.... We [might] believe that all these changes have made our lives more comfortable than before. However, there is a critical concern that is eating up most parents from inside, i.e., whether technology is affecting their children for the good or worse? What are some of the side effects of technology? What are we to do about the tech overload happening right now to students and everyone else?

For a list of concerns (in this article) refer to “The Four Negative Side Effects of Technology” in Author’s Notes.

Then there is the continuing, leading edge variety; technology (and associated laws or executive orders) applied to tighten the grip on populations on promise of mitigating security risks, terrorist activity, among other alibis.

Tomorrow’s surveillance technology may be considerably more effective. But each uptick in protection will typically come at the cost of more intrusion into the privacy of ordinary people. For now, the public seems to find that trade-off acceptable, so scientists around the world have intensified efforts to perfect the art of surveillance, hoping to catch villains before they strike.³¹⁹

Given the date of this last article, any *concerns* might, by now, be foregone in the implementation, the exercise, of such statism.

³¹⁸ Recall the Arnold Toynbee statement: “Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state the United States is in now”. See footnotes on page 44, the cycles of civilizations.

³¹⁹ “The State of Surveillance”, Bloomberg Business Week, August 7, 2005.

Him Who Cares Till When

For the children and the flowers are my sisters and my brothers.

The Nazi Regime recognized that young folks were crucial to their objective of a fascist, National Socialism movement. "Hitler Youth" programs initiated in the 1920s were the means to not only enlist the young for militancy but, in addition, to use them agents against other institutions that evidently represented a threat or risk.³²⁰ All in all, young folks would be indoctrinated *to fight faithfully for the Third Reich*.

To bring such programs or possibilities *closer home* (versus *the fatherland*) is perhaps a stretch at best. Yet, *indoctrination*—the shaping of consciousness—is something that troubled some and evidently touched many.

Since its inception in American homes in the late 1930's, television has essentially given America its culture. Today, television watching is the most popular leisure activity as more and more people are choosing the fantasy world of TV over engaging with others in real communication and experiences....Once a vast majority is living the same reality through television, they are more predictable and easily managed.³²¹

Not just T.V. of course, but the entire entrée of media that is transmitted through the conscious and sub-conscious of the captivated and confined.

Merlo, a clinical psychologist, said she's observed a number of behaviors among smart phone users that she labels "problematic." ...some patients pretend to talk on the phone or fiddle with apps to avoid eye contact or other interactions at a bar or a party. Others are so genuinely engrossed in their phones that they ignore the people around them completely.³²²

³²⁰ The Hitler Youth were used to break up Church youth movements, and in anti-Church indoctrination, used to spy on religious classes and Bible studies and interfere with church attendance...and to adopt some aspects of the Boy Scout programs, that had sense been banned, among other purposes-practices; Wikipedia.

³²¹ "Total Indoctrination: We are Living in an Artificially Induced State of Consciousness", Nathan Janes; pupaganda.com.

³²² "Smartphone dependency: a growing obsession with gadgets," Ellen Gibson, 07/27/2011; USATODAY.com.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

Their laughter and their loveliness could clear a cloudy day.

Continuing in the vein of *concerns* (rather than positives represented in the lyrics of this song), *laughter* and *loveliness* is clouded in a society saturated with entertainment (as with technology described before). From gaming to porn, society has been reset to measure satisfaction to the instant illusion—without any apparent end or limits—altering the attention span as well as other associations of learning, life and living.

We are witnessing a major cultural revolution that is having an incredible impact on our society. Yet, despite numerous warnings, few seem to understand what is really going on or where this surging wave of social change is taking us!

And as with technology, much is at stake in the way of adverse consequences or effects; but for all intents and purposes, amusement serves as a distraction and, where particularly affective, as (a) deception.

When the human mind is constantly bombarded with images it is unable to think and reflect. The immediate availability of novelty, excitement and titillating thrills provide a pleasurable escape for people who find their existence boring, empty, lonely.....³²³

Not that some diversions or comic relief can be unhealthy, but these *concerns* are more about the voluminous and sometimes vile distractions—about the deeper affects, beyond entertainment and education, of *promoted and propagated* programs that alter minds, hearts and souls. These concerns extend from the ill-effects for all ages, as described in more details in the article, to the programs and purposes that began in the 1900s with Edward Bernays—as a strong influence and model for the Nazi’s Joseph Goebbels—to today’s surveillance systems of which they may have never conceived, even imagined possible.³²⁴

³²³ “How the Media Mold the World”, Douglas S. Winnail, 2003 Jan.– Feb.; tomorrowsworld.org.

³²⁴ Paul Joseph Goebbels was a German politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945. Bernays’ *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923) and *Propaganda* (1928) were heavily utilized by Adolf Hitler’s Nazi propaganda minister.

Him Who Cares Till When

Like the music of the mountains and the colors of the rainbow...

Shifting (again) from more the *concerns* to the *positive*, I remain hopeful that society can endure all that described as *dark, darkest, and darkness*—much as music remains with its melodies and meaning.

Words put to song, music can be meaningful from the first to the last stanza, from birth to life beyond, from the dusty covers of a book to the deep recesses of the *life and living* of community.

If there is a world here in a hundred years, one of the main reasons will be music; it can leap over barriers of politics, and leap over barriers of religion and race—and people who never thought they'd be doing the same together, will be listening and joining in the same song.³²⁵

*Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.*³²⁶

Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.³²⁷

Let the revival be revived; our minds, hearts and souls revived too. For when I die, let this be my epitaph: "The only proof he needed for the existence of God was music."³²⁸

I love the relationship that anyone has with music...because there's something in us that is beyond the reach of words, something that eludes and defies our best attempts to spit it out.... It's the best part of us probably....³²⁹

So is music everything..., the center of the universe? No, it is not *the center*, but it is nevertheless within *the center*; the core of all that is good and light, beautiful and bright from the beginning—beyond the end—here, there, everywhere.

³²⁵ Pete Seeger; interview in Greenwich Village; Music that defined a Generation, Netflix

³²⁶ Victor Hugo.

³²⁷ Plato.

³²⁸ Kurt Vonnegut.

³²⁹ Nick Hornby, *Songbook*.

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

They're a promise of the future and a blessing for today. ³³⁰

This beautiful song, "Rhymes and Reasons", was written in the shower, according to John Denver; but beyond the moment of perhaps putting it together was the unmentionable mystery behind it.

To compare *children* and *flowers* is to bring together sources of hope (promise and blessing), even when (or if) *times are changing*...for the worse (cities crumble, towers fall, etc.).

How refreshing is a field of natural flowers? How redeeming children who, in their early development, are not yet so *dark*, far from *darkest* and its *darkness*?

When spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest. The only thing that could spoil a day was people and if you could keep from making engagements, each day had no limits. People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself. ³³¹

And spring is most appreciated on enduring the forces of a hard winter as children, after enduring the forces of hardness equally as cold and cruel.

Some day, on that day, this prolonged *winter* will end; the institutions that have been so instrumental in the demise of social strength will finally self-destruct. Those that are left standing will say,

It is spring again. The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart. ³³²

But whether any lessons will be learned—about institutions—may go only as far as the last ones to remember what the winter was like. Ideally, families will be formed (again) and love will have endured beyond the last of this *cold and cruel winter*.

If people did not love one another, I really don't see what use there would be in having any spring. ³³³

³³⁰ John Denver, "Rhymes and Reasons", 1969.

³³¹ Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*.

³³² Rainer Maria Rilke.

³³³ Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*.

Him Who Cares Till When

During my own, long *winter*, all but Problem-Rebel had been silent; the others had evidently agreed to end the conferences while continuing with their lives against challenges stemming from childhood.

Not that our conversations, if continued, could have resolved all these *challenges* or problems, but I am confident that we could have—and still can—combine our wills and toward understanding, some sense of *spring* with *hope, promise and blessing*.

Problem-Rebel, still now, shows little desire for working through his own problems—his drug-use *clouding* his own *understanding*. He is unable or unwilling to be honest with me; but instead, is prone to withdraw or to be withdrawn—exerting control and avoiding contact when confronted with those things he is so determined to conceal. He has his own life, for sure, but is bent on doing more harm than good for him or for any relationship with him. I cannot doubt that this behavior is in some way associated with similar behavior by his mother.

To repeat from my previous conversations and notes: Problem-Rebel has been excluded from the rest of his family; his current status the result of years of increasing rejection by his mother—coupled with intentional and irresponsible exclusion from any contact with his father and extended family for more than a decade. Only recently has he made contact or reunification with this extended family—the consequence of being legally forced out of his mother's home on turning eighteen.

His use of psychotropic drugs began around the age of seven; prescribed under his mother's allowance for reasons unclear other than some record of unsatisfactory academic progress.³³⁴ What must be considered is that Problem-Rebel's problem with drug-abuse began at a young age—forced by his mother—thus lending in some part to his present status. Only when he began smoking Marijuana, in high school, did his mother react in a negative way; having him arrested and forced into one or more programs that combined continuing education with therapy. The history of his drug-abuse began with his mother's effort.

³³⁴ See Author's Notes, "ADHD and Depression among Young People".

Musing in Rhymes and Reasons

Problem-Rebel admits to bouts with depression, usually the result of processing bad news or events in his young life. Still, and because of my expressed limits in counseling, I cannot understand the root of depression and, moreover, embrace mild depression as a normal, natural condition or emotion.

As to how the others bode in the matter of depression, I am not sure; of what little conversation we have had, such information has not been provided except pertaining to their mother: Lost-Silence has observed her mother's frequent use of alleged anti-depressants as early as at the age of eight; that is, pills described as such by her mother. Problem-Rebel has reaffirmed her routine use of anti-depressants (more recently) although the details are yet to be determined. Raising the matter is merely aimed at possibly connecting the parent's lifestyle with the children's from ages six to the present and beyond.

Their mother's behavior has been a central matter (since they've had very little association with their father). And on this matter, I must describe what might be an anti-social behavior, *the silent treatment*, both in their mother and, consequently, in Problem-Rebel.³³⁵

While it may sound rather innocuous, this *treatment* has been sustained in some relationships for months going on years; that is, she has *cut-off* folks—even her own family—leaving them confused and unclear on the reasons. Efforts on their part to understand, to clarify the cause, have failed simply because she remains resolutely *silent*—though not without some excoriating remarks to add *fuel to the fire*.

Her position on this practice of *the silent treatment*, excommunication from family and friends, is presumed a reaction by which she holds them entirely responsible. The problem with this apparent attitude—ascertained from her remarks and their description—is that they generally do not have any idea what she means, or for that matter, what she is talking about. Nevertheless, her behavior continues, leaving a trail of seemingly once-close relationships disparate in the wake.

³³⁵ See Author's Notes, "Silent Treatment".

Him Who Cares Till When

Today I got a call from Good-Hero, much to my surprise but satisfaction.

"She's at it again," he began.

"What are you talking about," I asked, uncertain of his statement.

"She will not speak to me; apparently, I've somehow pissed her off," he explained. "Why does she do this?"

So I explained *the silent treatment*.

"My dad put up with this *treatment* too—" he added.

"And he's not the only (other) one Good-Hero," I interrupted. "So have your aunts, your maternal family, and once-close friends of hers. It's possible that your dad's family experienced it too," I elaborated.

"Why didn't you tell me this before," he asked with obvious frustration. "You could have saved me—saved us—some pain."

"I was waiting for you (the others) to bring it up," I began. "I needed you to broach the matter rather than initiate it myself."

"Why is that," he asked, a reasonable question given the problem.

"I was not sure...and didn't want to make the presumption," I replied. But what I could have said was that our conversations demand their contribution (to be of any substantive value); and unless they are each willing and able to open-up, what am I to do but wait on the possibility—the problem and predicament in this case.

"Yeah, I see your point," he said, followed by an audible sigh.

"Where do we go from here," I asked, breaking the silence.

"I think we should resume the conversations," he replied.

"What about Lost-Silence, Comedy-Mascot? Are they all-in?"

"I can talk to them but I'm not sure how much good it will do. Mom has gotten involved. She's the one that has discouraged them from these conferences," Good-Hero explained.

"And discouraged you too," I asked reluctantly.

"Yes, she did—but that is behind us," he said. "It is time to move-on and deal with matters."

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

What does that title mean, “Riding the Red Rubber Ball”? A red (hot) ball that is resilient is described in bold words and a rolling melody; the 1960s hit it is about celebration following some bad experience or relationship. In the pages that follow, I use each line for elaboration (as with Rhymes and Reasons in the last chapter); for I too am in the mood for celebration having heard that the others have each expressed an interest in restarting our conferences.

Imagine being a ball; that’s right, you’re the ball. So whether a basic rubber ball or one of the high-impact variety such as racket-ball, you are spinning and rolling while possibly enduring the smack or whack of a hand, stick or some other object. On the upside, you are part of the play, the game. But on the downside, your body may take a beating—to such extremes that you split or simply wear-out.



But from the time of your arrival until the end—whatever *the end* happens to be—you can be the center of attention, essential to the game. Without you, the ball, there would no game or sport; therefore, your presence is mandatory and performance is a must. Sure, you may come packaged in a set of two or three just like you; yet, one or more is in play at any one time.

So there you are, airborne, feeling the freedom of floating or flying as one of several sensations; but then, a hard smack against the wall, and for a moment, maybe more, you are nearly flattened, deformed on impact, your breath nearly gone. You roll to a stop but, before you can relax, a hand grabs you and starts the whole routine again, and again, and again. “Smack, crack, slam, flam,” you scream, but still the game must go on.

“Pick one of the others, please,” you want to tell them. “They are waiting to be played.” And maybe they pick another; but still, you are certain to be picked again and, as with the others, will take this described abuse for the love of the game, the sport or the play—whatever pleases him, her or them to *make their day*—until you are used-up and forgotten.

Him Who Cares Till When

I should have known you'd bid me farewell.

Broken relationships can break you; that is, if you're the one that still desires the relationship, or is committed to it (counter to the other...). As appropriately put, "it (a severed relationship) can break your heart." Yes, it can break your heart in many places and, I believe, with wounds that do not heal quickly, if at all; scares that are dull to the touch.

In fact I came to know who I am, when in love. But to my surprise, falling out of love was different. I was no more 'Me'. ...sometimes love breaks you, and that too in the finest parts. Even if you try to gather those parts and make a 'new of you', it will always be 'a new of you' not 'the same you'...I miss the person I used to be....³³⁶

So maybe that's one way of expressing it; love once lost, or being lost, you similarly lose touch with the person you were or have been. Maybe you seem a stranger to you—a person that you never knew possible or worse, that you feared might emerge, surface or return.

The drugs of today enable us to at least *soften the blow*, it seems, or to mitigate the mourning so that we don't have to endure the natural response of emotional, sometimes physical, pain—from denial through depression.³³⁷ But I still think that such pain or grief—as a natural response—is a good thing altogether.

Mourning involves tolerating painful affects over time: bearing core feelings of sorrow, regret, hurt, shame, and disappointment long enough to move through them.

And while grief applies in many areas of loss, consider marriage and its associations (or divorce) with children.

The presence of children adds additional challenges for parents who are mourning the end of the marriage. [] The lack of finality in divorce, especially with children, interferes with grieving.³³⁸

³³⁶ Broken Crockery.

³³⁷ Referring to modern medicine that, when applied, can assist with the stages of grief: denial / isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

³³⁸ *Divorce and Loss*.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

There's a lesson to be learned from this, and I learned it very well.

A hard lesson indeed, not a single lesson or even single course, but a whole curriculum that begins before divorce and ends, well, when you physically die—this is a death that keeps on dying.

Divorce does not end you, your marriage, only; it ends a relatively free society by undermining marriage and its associations. Nation-states have used divorce (law, court conduct, etc.) as an instrument for plunder; one institution has systematically assaulted another, thus disabling a vital part of a functioning society. Downgrading and diluting marriage is analogous to the politician that attempts to be all things to all people and, in the process, becomes nothing to no one. Yes, many hard lessons have been foisted upon folks; those that did not desire or determine:

- Divorce—but were forced....
- Childlessness—but were forced....
- Criminality—but were forced...

These are the folks that the state has destroyed; the one's that are made silent and forgotten—they and their children casualties of the war on marriage and its associations.

In many divorces, one of the partners does not see the breakup coming and in fact has only a minor inkling that the other person is dissatisfied with the marriage. And tragically, the abandoned partner may be deeply in love with the spouse who wants out. When this happens, a sense of shock, betrayal, and rage can last for many years, if not forever.³³⁹

And the children (of divorce) do not forget—though they try—but carry the failure along with elevated probability of other problems.

Adolescence begins early in divorced homes and, compared with that of youngsters raised in intact families, is more likely to include more early sexual experiences for girls and higher alcohol and drug use for boys and girls. Adolescence is more prolonged in divorced families and extends well into the years of early adulthood.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ *Divorce and Loss.*

³⁴⁰ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

Him Who Cares Till When

Now I know you're not the only starfish in the sea.

Who is the *only fish* in the sea? Is it a figurative Sunfish; something bright and colorful, beautiful and graceful, or is it a predator with a ferocious appetite—that lives simply for *the game or sport*?

This form of (star)-fish may appear or pose as a Sunfish or something similar—anything put a predator—so as lure its prey into its lair. Yes, it disguises its pursuits, intentions and actions; posing as one that it is truly not—even as the prey, if that is possible. In this posture, this fish is most powerful—able to conceal itself as the professional propagandist has mastered the art of deception. Appealing as a *star*, or having many stars, is most effective in the conduct of a charlatan be it an individual or an institution, a person or a predominate nation-state. But as to one of the others, in the war of divorce, there is no such stardom.

He is a shadow dad, a displaced man trying not to become an ex-father. He is a father who has left the premises. He stills stops by, but he does not stay. He is on the outside looking in. No longer the man of the house, he has been largely de-fathered. He is a father once-removed. He has becomes a visitor. As a visitor, he is part father, part stranger. Physical distance, combined estrangement from the children's mother, has radically diminished his paternity.³⁴¹

Yes, there are real victims; folks that have been truly victimized—but parading as a victim degrades real victims, their chance for protection. The question is no such as whether someone is the *only starfish* but rather are they a starfish at all? For, there are levels of controls:

- Some want to control others in personal matters
- Others want to control them to selfishly protect themselves from personal pain or to exalt themselves
- For many, controlling other people and circumstances is their only source of personal significance

Some forms of control could be labeled a nuisance; others should be labeled a sin, while some kinds must be called evil.³⁴²

³⁴¹ *Fatherless America.*

³⁴² *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

If I never hear your name again, it's all the same to me.

And leaving may be the only alternative; for the levels of control may invoke the levers of legal action—a consequence for which good folks can be destroyed in small-scaled statecraft. If a

Controller is never satisfied; for every event must continue to be controlled.... He [or they] will create a new crisis so that he will have something [or someone] to control.

Lest we forget that your crisis is their opportunity. Still, the *controller* is fundamentally fearful to such degree as to be totally removed from the capacity to love (or love again). Indeed, “they find it hard to rejoice over another’s good fortune and hard to forgive.”³⁴³ Without love, forgiveness or the ability to celebrate another’s *good fortune*, any meaningful relationship is altogether impossible; thus, the *only alternative*.

Attempting to manage or maintain such relationships is futile; the earnest individual will be upended again and again—their efforts to love rebuffed and rejected per the central need of control. Having been *lured in the lair* more than once, the passionate prey risks the possibility of being *used-up and forgotten*—short of saving themselves and others that still want for life and living.

As to why this person (or nation-state) became a controller is a complex problem; one that must be studied as systemic rather than singular but, as a warning, cannot be resolved without inexhaustible resources. With families, the strong presence of fear (and anger) undermines any opportunity for unity and resolution. As it is:

I acknowledge that a wife does (and should) exercise a degree of control in the family and home; but what I present is not a constructive form aimed at supporting a healthy relationship, but a destructive form that—whether intended or not—destroys a relationship through the invocation of fear and flight rather than love and commitment. I also propose that this method or “device” (as I have called it) was learned in part from a very young age.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

³⁴⁴ *A Once and Always Father.*

Him Who Cares Till When

And I think it's gonna be all right; yeah, the worst is over.

To think such---that *life and living* will be all right—is presumptuous to say the least; however, the *only alternative* (to leave the relationship behind) is at least a start in the right direction. It will be difficult, this departure, for the controller may as well enlist toxic shame—as one way to *lure*.... Still another; *the silent treatment* (that needs no explanation at this point); and finally, the intervention of others—used to do her bidding—on the misleading that she is somehow the victim of your decision and action.

Those of this *stardom* have many ways of parading their cause—of parroting the character of real victims—which is why they can be so successful at control within or beyond the conscience and conscious of the other *fish in the sea*. Like a pathogen (bacteria, virus) found to cause mass-death to the actual starfish population³⁴⁵, these posers grow (on you); and almost ironically, the controlled can become quite comfortable in spite of the symbolic *smack or whack of a hand, stick or some other object*. Yeah, you might need good drugs to endure, but the *only alternative* is arguably not achievable, acceptable or attainable.

Controllers act on (in addition to acting within and beyond) the conscience and conscious of others as well, using such admirable and affable attributes for the own, self-centered aims. He, she or they cannot depend solely on brute force, but may prefer

...the friendship of the dog [-like character], who, unjustly mistreated and debased, still loves and serves the [one that] wronged him.³⁴⁶

Controllers are *brutal masters*—tyrants in the making—and “those who are capable of tyranny are capable of perjury to sustain it.”³⁴⁷

This is tyranny's disease [pathogen]—to trust no friends.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ “Sea Star Wasting Syndrome”; YouTube.

“Scientists zero in on what’s causing starfish die-offs”, PBS Newshour, Ashley Ahearn, June 17, 2014.

³⁴⁶ Charles Fourier.

³⁴⁷ Lysander Spooner.

³⁴⁸ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

Now the morning sun is shining, like a red rubber ball.

So while the *sun is shining*, gather your roses while you may—and get the Hell out of Dodge like a red (hot) rubber ball in a pure vacuum of anti-gravity (beyond the dark, darkest, and darkness of that *black hole*).

Try to put all the *game or sport* behind you; accept that this is not a healthy choice for you and others who desire life and living. I am not suggesting that it is your right to be happy, but what I am suggesting—more advising with emphasis—is that *fast-flight* is your *only alternative* against such forces. “Under tyranny it is right to be a rebel.” ³⁴⁹

Problem-Rebel had it right in some regard. You can never win—let alone breakeven—against the forces of a tyrant; the more you try, the worse matters get. Short of the *only alternative* (exercised to its effect of total separation), the prey is reduced to being a *rebel*—with or without an accepted or acceptable cause—and singled-out as the source of the problem(s), *the scapegoat*.

To remind *the prey—lest we forget—that your crisis is their opportunity*. Controllers, as *tyrants in the making*, will foment a crisis for such a cause, accepted or acceptable. Someone must serve (or sacrifice) as a decoy—a distraction, the deception, from reality. This *distraction* is particularly necessary when the controller is embroiled in presumed external conflict; say for example, a *promoted and propagated* threat that demands action—protection against such perceived or pronounced predators. Consider the Roman Empire, the state, where:

The means of defense against foreign danger have been always the instruments of tyranny at home. Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war, whenever a revolt was apprehended. Throughout all Europe, the armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people. ³⁵⁰

Controllers parade as protectors, parroting *means and methods* used in the statecraft of the past and the present.

³⁴⁹ Robert Fanney.

³⁵⁰ James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*
Reported by James Madison.

Him Who Cares Till When

You never cared for secrets I'd confide....

Again, tyrants *trust no friends*—which suggest they not only disable any prospect for trust, but destroy any possibility for meaningful, mutually-trusting, relationships too. Like statecraft that has imperial aspirations or is otherwise hegemonic, the tyrant is the hammer—everyone and everything else, a nail.

Confiding with (or in) the tyrant is about as dangerous as handling vipers; you cannot trust someone or something that does not know what trust is (or could be) and, moreover, has a habit of striking at anything, threat or not.

- In the *public variety* (statecraft and similar), *striking* can come in proportion to size of the beast, Leviathan, poisoning or strangling potentially everyone and everything in its path
- In the *private variety*, *striking* obviously involves far fewer folks; still, the process is clouded not only in good intentions but in the pretext or presumption of love, thus intensifying the effect

Do not confide in the viper or serpent; such a confiding took place long ago and it changed everything for the worse!

There is a strangeness that occurs in the company and counsel of a tyrant—as like a heavy fog that suddenly appears and blankets your vision—that turn things all around or upside down; where goodness becomes bad and vice versa. And no matter what the sane or sober say, the sheer power of *the beast* wins the day—the naked king retains his beautiful clothes, the crisis is under control, and the state stands guard to protect us from all fears and fabrications.

We may indeed in counsel point to the *higher road*, but we cannot compel any free creature to walk upon it. That leads to tyranny, which disfigures good and makes it seem hateful.³⁵¹

Black is white, white is black and black & white is all variety, *public* and *private*, of *striking* as vile and voluminous as the most venomous.

³⁵¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Morgoth's Ring*.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

To you I'm just an ornament, something for your pride.

The players in the *game or sport* are more likely the *prey*—as children are used as *pawns*. At least for a season, the tyrant runs his own, grand chessboard.³⁵²

The lack of freewill, the inability to resist the pressure of emotional forces, is what makes the slave a slave and the tyrant a tyrant.³⁵³

Children dependent on such institutionalized are therefore slaves—whether the tyrant is the *private variety* or the *public*—often in the consequences of law(s) exploited, abused.

The law has placed the collective force at the disposal of the unscrupulous who wish, without risk, to exploit the person, liberty, and property of others. It has converted plunder into a right, in order to protect plunder. And it has converted lawful defense into a crime, in order to punish lawful defense....³⁵⁴

The law, as applied in divorce and custody, is a prime example; so-called “Family Court” that legally seize children—as marital assets—and award them one parent while removing them from the other, fit parent.³⁵⁵

The tyrant is a child of Pride who drinks from his sickening cup
Recklessness and vanity until from his high crest headlong
He plummets to the dust of hope³⁵⁶

Pride in the worst sense, *vanity of all vanities*—meaningless in the natural law or morality of the individual—are institutions *given full sway*. Under the shield of law, they *invariably devour individuals at an incredible rate, striking* our very souls (if that is possible).³⁵⁷

³⁵² The term “grand chessboard” taken from the book on world domain by the same title, written by Zbigniew Brzezinski, 1997.

³⁵³ *The New Léviathan*.

³⁵⁴ Frédéric Bastiat.

³⁵⁵ Covered at length, this process of single-parent custody is egregious—using the children for public profiteering via Title IV-D of the Social Security.

³⁵⁶ Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*.

³⁵⁷ From the Book of Ecclesiastes, “vanity of all vanities” is *pride in the worst sense*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Always running, never caring, that's the life you live.

The tyrant-tyranny fears any threat to *power and possession*; hence, they will always deny or disregard the reality of their doing—if the facts, exposed, are threatening.... Often but not always, *power and possession* is acquired—not necessarily seized—through pretense and persuasion.

As to the *public variety*,

In proportion as you give the state power to do things for you; [just as probable] you give it power to do things to you.³⁵⁸

Power presumed to protect (you) can ironically be used—or exploited—to punish you with or without your awareness, let alone actions. To repeat James Madison, “It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood.”

In the *private variety*, the same or similar occurs—often in the context of deep-seeded fears or anger.

An angry woman will make her husband [or ex-] jump through all kinds of hoops, and should he succeed in meeting her expectations, she will change the rules so that he will fail again.³⁵⁹

Similar treatment may befall the children; but worse yet, is an aberrance of a parent who has *won the prize*, relishing in the *spoils of war*, secure in the monarchical role sanctioned and supported by the courts, the law.

There is a worse tyranny than that of ill-treatment. It is the tyranny of tears, vapors, appeals to feelings of affection and of gratitude!”³⁶⁰

Such *power and possession* has a way of thwarting sane and sober thought-action; it can (and does) corrupt the *public* and *private variety* to such condition and conduct as to scarcely be comprehensible to those

Who-Cares.

³⁵⁸ *Our Enemy the State*, Albert Jay Nock.

³⁵⁹ *Why Good People do Bad Things*.

³⁶⁰ Georgette Heyer, *Lady Of Quality*.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

Stolen minutes of your time, were all you had to give.

The tyrant-tyranny *calls the shots*, thus you are on their time-clock. If (or as) they offer or give you their time, there are *strings attached*, whether expressed or made evident. He, she or they know what your want and,

If you are an *approval addict*, your behavior is as easy to control as that of any other junkie. All [they] need do is...give you what you crave, and then threaten to take it away.³⁶¹

And if the *threats* are not effective then they may *take it away*—at least until your succumb or surrender to their control.

Enduring such episodes is more effecting when you exemplify an attitude of humility—the opposite of their form of *pride*—coupled with an underlying self-assurance. Remaining calm and collected is the best way to react to such behavior—however internally painful it may be.

The chief means of resisting manipulation is humility—knowing who we really are and facing it.

Seldom do the *public variety* demand unconditional love, but with the *private*,

You can only serve by love. You can only love by choice. True love cannot be the result of decree, force or manipulation.³⁶²

True love may be extremely hard, but working at forgiveness is the only way to cure that *internally painful*.

Encounters may have to be curtailed to protect other meaningful relationships from their *episodes*. Needless to say, refusing the requests (even order) of the tyrant-tyranny can create much tension and turmoil. Maintaining at least a public presence of *calm and collected*—against hostile forces—is the true measure of maturity in the effort toward (or event of) such *private conflict and contention*.

³⁶¹ *Who's Pulling Your Strings? How to Break the Cycle of Manipulation and Regain Control of Your Life*, Harriet B. Braiker, 2004.

³⁶² Gayle D. Erwin, *The Jesus Style*.

Him Who Cares Till When

The roller coaster ride [you took me on] is nearly at an end.

The ups & downs, on-again/off-again, and by all other description; a precarious position for which *the prey* is never set or secure—as intended.

Sure, life has its hills and valleys, good days and bad; but the *roller coaster ride* is not about reality, but about the *game or sport* as described previously. This *ride* may be enjoyable at first, but for those that have been have visiting *the park* for a lifetime, it is merely another *episode*. Some crucial questions for *the prey* (in such extended stay)—for those who tire of *the play*:

- ? What is best for me (or us)—against the *conflict and contention*
- ? How do I escape *the park*—stop playing *the game or sport*
- ? When/where do I allow encounters—limit exposure to episodes

As with the fictional *Pinocchio* and Pleasure Island, *the park* is very alluring and attractive—at first—but as (or if) *the prey* is willing and able to consider reality, the *game or sport* takes on a whole different *condition and conduct*. *Reality* is not a fantasy that ends in perfection; but as in *Pinocchio*, is a journey of *hills and valleys, good days and bad* in the complexity and combination of internal and external relations, within and beyond our control, *condition and conduct*.

While all other Disney movies flaunt the lie that is happily-ever-after, *Pinocchio* gives it to the audience straight. Happily-ever-after is only for some people—not for everyone. And for those who do manage, it takes lies to get there. It takes pain, blood, sweat, tears and abuse before you get there and once you do, you are scarred. The rest... they are put to work like slaves and those who have even the capability to protest (the conditions they are put in) are silenced.³⁶³

Are you made of wood or are you life and living?

³⁶³ *Pinocchio* does what no Disney film has ever done and will ever do in the future, they allowed the tragedy to continue. *Pinocchio* features more than one villain and they all got away with it. Only *Pinocchio* got through the ordeal; “The Darker Corners of *Pinocchio*”, the Artifice, by Spectra-Writer, June 20, 2014.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

I bought my ticket with my tears, that's all I'm gonna spend.

And many tears have been shed: some in celebration on accomplishments, admiration and adoration; some in sorrow as heart-ache, ardent and authentic; and some in seduction as sordid, artificial and adroit. The later of these three is that of tyrant-tyranny; those that shed *tears, vapors, appeals to feelings of affection and of gratitude*—just part of the *game or sport* that attempts to impose guilt or shame because you're **not** a:

- Player—but a malcontent, ungrateful, cruel....
- Patriot—that supports continuous, costly, and incredulous war
- Patron—that consumes and competes endlessly
- Participant—because your “No” means “no”
- Person—because the state has declared it so

With *power and possession* in its most venal form, perfection is not only made imperfect, but is made the worst of all criminals. ³⁶⁴

Life and living is a journey of hills and valleys, good days and bad in the complexity and combination of internal and external relations, within and beyond our control, condition and conduct. This *journey* is not entirely ours to decide or determine but is a mystery from the next moment expanding to the furthest point, visible or not. How we act or react is similarly not ours alone to decide—but nor is it entirely ours to endure either. I believe that there is something beyond the visible or apparent that does decide and does endure, with and for each of us—even and especially against the tyrant-tyranny and those like it.

Do not assume that he who seeks to comfort you now, lives untroubled among the simple and quiet words that sometimes do you good. His life may also have much sadness and difficulty—that remains far beyond yours. Were it otherwise, he would never have been able to find these words. ³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ The process of condemning Christ was replete with corruption; in the vein of expedience, the desired *end justifies the means*.

³⁶⁵ Rainer Maria Rilke.

Him Who Cares Till When

As I the days approached for the other's appointments, I gave much thought on what we might share; how the conferences might be most effective or beneficial. In the meantime, I maintained frequent contact with Problem-Rebel as a matter of our mutual interest, his needs.

Part of the predicament is the consequences of being a rebel; of not just *going-against-the-grain* but of being a *thorn-in-the-side* of the status quo. Further in the possibilities is a young person that parrots some of the parent's own behavior; in this case, an anti-social flare for *the silent treatment* among other *means and methods*. It makes sense that the children model the parent and, in this family, a mother almost exclusively—simply because of the active isolation of the children from the other parent, paternal and maternal family. As the saying goes, *the apple falls close to the tree*.

Considering that *the silent treatment* has already been presented, the next step is to address other anti-social behavior that is present in the family; first the mother followed by the possibilities for the children. See Author's Notes, "Anti-Social Behavior", for more.

I am subject to recite (rather than review) medical science based on limited information as this families history. Again, I am not a professional or skilled therapist and therefore recognize that my words (observations, opinions, etc.) have restrictions. Anti-social behavior is described as having a broad set of symptoms or behaviors; thus, I will restrict my comments to that thought relevant to the mother, the family.³⁶⁶

My basic understanding is that children are influenced by their parents—for good or bad—and will model some of their parents' behavior. Yes, there is potential opportunity to learn and to change—for the better—but the change does not come magically. Above all, the children or child (now adult) must sometimes painfully address (or redress) the practices of their parents...³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Note that these traits are given as a guideline only and are not intended for diagnosis. People who suffer from ASPD are all unique and so each person will display a different subset of traits. Also, note that everyone displays "antisocial" behaviors from time to time; *Out of the Fog*, "Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)"; outofthefog.net.

³⁶⁷ *A Once and Always Father*.

Riding the Red Rubber Ball

Based on input from the children's father and his family, several sisters of the mother, and a few friends of the mother; here are the *traits*:

- Acting-Out – has a variety of more distinct traits or behaviors, but applies to outwardly-destructive behavior (rather than self-destructive) through one or more distinct practices.
 - Alienation – cutting-off or interfering with an individual's relationships with others (see “Parental Alienation Syndrome”)
 - Baiting – a provocative act used to solicit an angry, aggressive or emotional response from another individual
 - Blaming – the practice of identifying a person or people responsible for creating a problem, rather than identifying ways of dealing with the problem
 - Chaos-manufacturing – creating or maintaining an environment of risk, destruction, confusion or mess
 - Domestic theft – consuming or taking control of a resource or asset belonging to (or shared with) a family member, partner or spouse without first obtaining their approval
 - Emotional blackmail – a system of threats and punishments used in an attempt to control someone's behaviors
 - False Accusations – patterns of unwarranted or exaggerated criticism directed towards someone else
 - Frivolous litigation – the use of unmerited legal proceedings to hurt, harass or gain an economic advantage over an individual or organization
 - Holiday triggers – mood-swings often triggered or amplified by emotional events such as family holidays, significant anniversaries and events which trigger emotional memories
 - Imposed isolation – abuse results in a person becoming isolated from their support network, including friends and family
 - Parental Alienation Syndrome – when a separated parent convinces their child that the other parent is bad, evil or worthless
 - Pathological lying – persistent deception by an individual to serve their own interests and needs with little or no regard to the needs and concerns of others
 - Proxy recruitment – a way of controlling or abusing another person by manipulating other people into unwittingly backing (doing the dirty work) their interests, words and actions

Him Who Cares Till When

- Acting-Out (continued)
 - Push-Pull – a chronic pattern of sabotaging and re-establishing closeness in a relationship **without** appropriate cause or reason
 - Scapegoating – singling-out one child, employee or member of a group of peers for unmerited negative treatment or blame
 - Shaming – the difference between blaming and shaming is that in blaming someone tells you that **you did** something bad, in shaming someone tells you that **you are** something bad
 - Testing – repeatedly forcing another individual to demonstrate or prove their love or commitment to a relationship
 - Thought-Policing – a process of interrogation or attempt to control another individual's thoughts or feelings.
- Baiting – a provocative act used to solicit an angry, aggressive or emotional response from another individual³⁶⁸

“He has returned,” I announced, as Good-Hero stepped to the door; and after a moment of pleasantries, we began the conference.

“Yes, she still is not speaking with me,” he began (or basically continued from a prior phone conversation). “I’ve tried several times, but nothing has happened,” he continued with some evident disappointment.

“And has this silence happened before,” I asked.

“I suppose...but never like this—never for this length of time.”

“And when was the last time; otherwise, the most intense or memorable,” I continued.

“Oh that’s easy; it was when I told her I had enlisted in the military,” he said without hesitation.

“Certainly a big decision, enlisting in the service, but why do you think that she went silent—reacting in such a way,” I asked, probing for his understanding or her way, *means and methods*.

“She didn’t like,” he said spontaneously.

“And so she told you that ‘she didn’t like your choice’?”

³⁶⁸ *Baiting* is a classic military-type tactic to lure an enemy into attacking a weak-looking force in the front, while a secondary, larger, hidden force flanks the enemy to ambush them from the sides and the rear, where they are more vulnerable. In the film, *The Patriot* (Mel Gibson), *baiting* is used in the final battle to *lure* Lord Cornwallis to commit all his troops into a trap.

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"No, she didn't.... Her silence told me that," he explained.

"And did ever tell you—did she ever explain her reasons?"

"Not really; still, I had made my decision by this time," he continued.

"I see; so because the decision was final, she does not have to explain why she reacted the way she did—is that it?"

"Look, I am use to this kind of treatment," he rebutted. "We don't really share the 'reasons'; we just go-on and deal and forget about it."

"Until it happens again, right," I suggested. "You just keep incurring the same silent treatment without ever resolving your differences—her reaction or behavior."

"I see your point," he said after a moment. "It's a cycle that never gets resolved: I do something she doesn't approve of and—"

"And then nothing except silence," I finished. Being that Good-Hero was a soldier, military tactics might be a way of really relating his family life to his chosen profession; specifically, the art of war.

"You've been engaged in a war; a continuous *conflict and contention* for which your mother is your opponent," I told him with determination.

"What you do mean," he asked with an expected tone of defensiveness. "Are you saying that mother is out to get me?"

"I am saying that your mother uses military-type tactics to wield her way. As to whether she is 'out-to-get' you is irrelevant; the fact is that she wants her way and uses *the silence treatment*—among other tactics—to achieve that. Is it a means to an end," I began to explain.

"Here silence is deafening," he quipped. "I've witness this treatment to last for years with her family, dad and his family and even friends who helped and supported us along the years."

"Then you are a veteran: a battled-hardened warrior of domestic *conflict and contention*," I said with some added description.

"But I don't want to fight. I don't want to deal with this *treatment*, her behavior," he said, realizing his predicament, his plight.

As it has been, and is, Good-Hero is forced to deal with it (with her) simply because of his reliance on her, his mother. He is a life-long

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veteran of her way—only recently coming to some realization of the effect by way of his decisions, both career and marriage.

The art of war is of vital importance to the State [or the *institutionalized*]. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

But why this—why **not** love and understanding? Because *conflict and contention* is not altogether about love or understanding; it is about uncertainty, even fears, regarding *power and possession*:

? Surrender versus survival

? Secession versus succession

? Dying versus destiny

“You say that I’m a ‘warrior’ and ‘veteran’,” he said, after a moment. “Why do I hate this possibility, this position?”

“Why shouldn’t you,” I promptly asked. “This is your family; who better to experience love and understanding than with them?”

“But why; why does she choose to act this way—to wage war on his family, her family, her once-friends and us?”

“That is a central question; one that only can be uncovered or understood through professional therapy,” I told him.

“So you’re saying that I need professional help?”

“No, I am saying that she needs it; and only then, can such questions get answers.”

“And do you think she will...get answers,” he asked earnestly.

“I don’t know. It is complex and confusing to the outsider, those directly-involved—even to the individuals or institutions that make such choices. ”

“So you’re saying she doesn’t know...?”

“No, I am saying that I don’t know if ‘she doesn’t know...’,” I explained. “She’s using such means and methods because it works—so she thinks—and that may be all she thinks she knows.”

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“What about the rest of us; those that are affected, impacted, by her ‘means and method’? Doesn’t she consider—“

“No, not really,” I interrupted, “Her behavior, as you and others have described, exhibits a substantial number of anti-social traits.”

“She has ‘anti-social’ behavior—is that what you’re suggesting,” he asked some a dubious tone.

“Rather than answer that directly, I want to ask you some relevant questions. Here are a few:

- ❓ Has she ever lied to you about your extended family; your dad, his family or the others you’ve described as supportive
- ❓ Do you get the feeling that she has no remorse or sense of wrongdoing about hurting you or the others that you know about
- ❓ Does she have extraordinary difficulty maintaining friends

“Yes, to all of those.... But I still don’t see how this could be that serious. Such problems plague us all.”

“You’re right; everyone experiences some level of anti-social traits,” I replied (with what I knew of this condition). “But there are degrees; from the mild, more normal, to the extreme,” I told him. “I believe that your mother is somewhere in between—not strictly on what you’ve told but, more so, on what I’ve learned from years of observation provided by as other input from a host of family and former friends.”

“I see,” was all he said as though to surrender any further effort of protecting or defending her.

“You shouldn’t consider this ‘belief’ as a defeat or loss, but rather as a valuable piece of intelligence,” I said (with some obvious association to war). “You’ve known of such behavior for some time, but now you have a framework to understand this condition and conduct—without knowing whether the traits are purely her choice or something deeper.”

“Does she want to win—is that it?”

“You might call it that—although any short-term ‘win’ will always be at the sacrifice of other relationships. After so much of this behavior, most folks are finally fed-up, forced to *walk-away* if they haven’t been *cut-off* already,” I suggested, “but if want to know what I think—“

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“What’s your *belief*,” he asked abruptly.

“I associate your mother to institutions—public or private—when it comes to these conditions and conduct. She seems amoral and therefore incapacitated to consider the consequences of her behavior.”

“‘Institutions’, ‘amoral’, ‘incapacitated’; does this mean that her behavior is beyond her control—that she’s more machine than man?”

“Here’s a way to think about it,” I began, “with another question: Why do politicians lie?”

“I’m not certain but it’s probably because it works—it gets them what they want,” he answered.

“You could be right; but more generally, they lie because they do not have the capacity to tell the truth.”

“Sounds like an easy excuse to me,” he said.

“It’s not an excuse because institutions don’t use excuses,” I explained. “Excuses are for those who are trying to justify some action with the possibility of an apology—who possess a conscience or are conscious of their actions and the consequences.”

“So you saying that institutions don’t have a conscience, is that it?”

“Almost it, as they do have the capacity to have a conscience—but are amoral.”

“So my mom has no morals?”

“No, I didn’t say that; but what I am trying to describe is the possibility that her lack of conscience is a sign or symptom of being institutionalized, amoral.”

“So nothing she does wrong is ever within her conscious?”

“No, I didn’t say that either; but only that her lack of remorse, her sense of wrongdoing, suggest that perhaps her conscious has been seared—that she has forgotten or forfeited such.”

“So she is unaware of her wrongdoing?”

“Not quite. You can’t establish an alibi for anyone or anything that does not recognize the word or meaning of ‘excuse’. Moreover, such sensitivity cannot be measured by you—anyone or anything other than through therapy.”

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"It's sound like a conundrum; it cannot be solved or resolved," he said with some sense of frustration.

"Not by you or any of the others that have endured her behavior."

"I know...therapy," he repeated, "if it ever happens."

"It has to some degree," I told him. "She did seek therapy many years ago—at least for a year, maybe more."

"How did you know that," he asked.

"Your dad told me so. He didn't have many details—as she didn't share them with him, so he said."

"How do you know he's telling the truth?"

"Several others confirmed it; her sisters, your grand-parents—but again, no one had any details. And before you jump to conclusions, let me say that this is another piece of valuable intelligence."

"You mean to hang over her head," he replied passionately.

"No; but to understand that she potentially tried to get help, however long ago that was," I said. "She could have been concerned, once."

"What do you mean; 'potentially', 'could have...'?"

"People engage in therapy for different reasons, sometimes earnest and sometime not," I explained. "Much depends on their intentions and, even then, their actions to cooperate—to face facts."

"Courage is something I know about, he commented. "Courage doesn't happen when you have all the answers. It happens when you are ready to face the questions you have been avoiding your whole life." ³⁶⁹

"And that is why I stay on the side of caution; as it seems, she has not (since) sought any such help if she did then," I said with sensitivity. "But that doesn't mean she is not accountable for her behavior," I continued. "You mom's behavior cannot be written-off and something that beyond her control—for that would be to disown her as human."

"So what do I do if I can't help her," he asks as he got up.

"You help yourself; you help Good-Hero and the others " I suggested, before we parted ways.

³⁶⁹ Shannon L. Alder.

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A few days followed before I finally caught-up with Lost-Silence; almost a year from our last visit, she was now completing graduate studies in the social sciences.

"Wow, a graduate student! You really are motivated," I began.

"It's my profession and passion," she said, rather reserved and seemingly reluctant to share my exuberance.

"You don't seem too passionate about it at the moment," I said.

"Maybe it's more the professional side you're seeing," she fired back.

"Good. We need a 'professional' in the worst way," I said, trying to invoke that passion. "I think you're the one," I told her.

"I'll try," she said.

"I think you've been trying—for some time now," I commented. "I shared much with your brother the other day which I want to discuss with you too, but more for guidance more as advice," I continued.

"I'll try," she repeated.

"Good," I said, somewhat relieved by her apparent willingness. "To begin, tell me about your mom, your relationship."

"Our relationship is much more about her needs, or wants, and not mine; it is very one-sided," she began. "My mom has some behavior issues that keep us, my brother included, from developing a meaningful relationship," she continued uninterrupted. "But there's more," she went on. "She has and will use us each for her own devices—to satisfy the momentary wants, her fears. Any relationship that she has, or has had, begins and ends with her wants—how the other(s) may satisfy them."

"What happens if they can't," I asked, though knowing the obvious.

"Usually she *dumps* them," she replied with bluntness.

"'Dumps them'—let's them go?"

"By *several roads*, they depart from her life, as they are no longer needed," she explained with blunt force. "Really a combination of driving forces; frustration—if not exhaustion," she elaborated.

"And what about you; are you in this category?"

"Yes, I am among them; but there are degrees and, being her daughter and rather compliant, I am spared from the full fury."

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"You seem to have it down; her means and methods," I commented.

"Behaviors, means and methods, or lifestyle; she has an anti-social disorder to be more precise," she explained. "My mom is possessed with the need to control (others) and goes to great length to ensure either control or complete disassociation," she added.

"Having determined this 'disorder', how do you contend with it—with her demands and such?"

"I have adjusted through the years; especially since moving away and developing some understanding of her, our relationship and family life," she said. "It's been hard to move-on—so to speak—while still having some desire and dependence."

"So, for good reason, you want to continue relations with her," I said more so to carry the thread of this discussion.

"That's what I'm doing—what I've been advised to do."

"Do you mean from her or someone else," I asked.

"She certainly demands my time and attention, but I was speaking of my sources through my school, our department. I've come to appreciate and respect therapy as I client as well as a counselor."

"Of course," was all I could say in a sudden surge of satisfaction, "and so you know—"

"I've known in degrees for years as I watched and observed in silence," she continued. "I knew we had big problems—things that mom have done to isolate us from family and friends among her other, ah, means and methods."

"And in that you have such understanding, another tough question: What about Problem-Rebel?"

"I have given him a lot of thought. I know that he is (has been) in trouble in and beyond her. But I know that his troubles began a long time ago; they're rooted in the whole divorce and post-divorce experience."

"Can you explain," I asked, obviously seeking the deeper description.

"Problem-Rebel was close—closer—to his paternal granddad than the rest of us; that and possibly other factors made for a deep and disabling hurt when they divorced—when she isolated us from our

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people,” she explained with amazing clarity. “We all suffered—even our mom—but suffering is eased with medication along with other habits and indulgences.”

“You don’t *hold back*, do you?”

“Oh yes, I do temper my words against thoughts. But the time has come to be more assertive and confront—rather than contend—with the problem,” she said with signs of courageous conduct.

“No doubt, this pains you.”

“Oh yes, much anger and anguish—much of which could have been prevented, I think,” she added.

[But children] just cannot be sad too long, it is not in them, as children mourn in little bits here and there like patchwork in their lives.³⁷⁰

“It’s now, as adults, that the mourning manifest,” she said, describing a common occurrence for children of divorce. “But grieving is good overall, as it naturally brings us to acceptance and absolution.”

“Don’t you mean resolution,” I asked.

“Resolution would be ideal,” she said, “but that would depend on my mom’s active participation in therapy that must be her resolve—her earnest pursuit.”

“And you don’t think that’s possible?”

“Not as she is, no,” she replied confidently. “My mom will not even talk about matters—as even our own participation here as drawn some fire from her,” she continued. “She medicates to dull the pain, exerting energy toward avoiding the problems at a lot of costs.”

“So you’ve identified the consequences too?”

“Yes, not the least of which is the way that she dealt with brother,” she replied, “When she had him arrested; this was the worst thing that she could have done for him and to him,” she continued.

“And you don’t think she was—“

³⁷⁰ Nancy E. Turner, *These Is My Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine*, 1881-1901.

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"My mom responded without considering the larger context. Her decision to drug him has consequences in the long-term."

"Are you saying that she acting recklessly?"

"I am saying that my mom decided on short-term fix rather than a long-term solution—doing what she wanted to do for her, not for him or them."

"Who is 'them'?"

"All of them; all the boys were drugged," she said bluntly. "It was my mom's policy to drug them—it makes them more malleable, easier to manage for a single-parent who is very busy trying to hold-down full-time employment and raise four kids."

"Yes, I've given that some thought," I said, as a leading statement. "Your mom was the plaintiff in their divorce, right?"

"More than that—she drove the divorce from the start," she replied. "My dad had no choice, I suppose."

"She must have had her reasons."

"Not good reasons, but reasons just the same, my mom has a long-standing habit of busting-up relationships; possibly beginning with my dad, but continuing to the present—she cannot hold-down a healthy relationship," she explained. "But this is one the traits of anti-social behavior: *a chronic pattern of sabotaging and re-establishing closeness in a relationship without appropriate cause or reason.*"

"So it happens often?"

"It's routine—about as predictable as a sunrise," she emphasized.

"How then do you consider your own endurance," I asked.

"I'm her daughter and that alone lends to some latitude. *At the end-of-the-day*, she believes that she can rely on me."

"Really, and your are—"

"I am there; at least, when I can be—else I am as far away as I can be," she said as though it was a mantra.

"For her, I guess."

"Yes, for her, for the others and for me too," she said at last.

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Comedy-Mascot is the most uncertain—the least understood—yet the most present, still living with his mom. He and his dad, the paternal family, had parted ways when he was only three; so it seems that he had (or has) the least memory of him, of them, by which to weigh the costs beyond divorce and parental disparity. He has known his life as to how his mother has framed it—without much memory that could (or does) conflict or contradict both the words and silence of her story.

To add to the uncertainty is a personality that prefers *the lighter-side* of life over the *heavy*.... Only one or two visits have revealed this preference—enough to recognize his resentment for (or repulsiveness to) the more serious side, *off-stage* so to speak.

Comedy-Mascot loves the stage because it he does **not** have to be real or serious, but can circumvent—rather than confront—the realities of life and living (anxiety, pain, doubt, loss, etc.). “To escape fear, you have to go through it, not around.”³⁷¹ But he *fell-in* to this role and it seemed the best of possibilities; it made the others happy and it kept him in good standing with his mom.

Pleasing people (at these people) has been his profession practically all of his young life; but eventually, the show cannot go on or worse; the audience is no more. His acting, no matter how potentially pleasing, is an uphill climb; that with each step in the ascent, demands more from him—denying less to him in return. “If you are busy pleasing everyone, you are not being true to yourself.”³⁷²

As to the audience, the first to exit (or to be *cut*) was Problem-Rebel, of course: deemed too daring for the family’s apparent lifestyle, he had to go—as the director, mom, pursued with the backing of local law officials. But this would not be last (to exit); for in such acts or theater, the audience as well as the cast eventually see that the king is naked, the crisis (the claims) are manufactured (rather than authentic)—and the stage is mostly smoke and mirrors.

³⁷¹ Richie Norton, *Resumes Are Dead and What to Do About It*.

³⁷² Jocelyn Murray.

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"Well, we've had our conversations to be sure, but I'm glad to see you both." Unlike at any other conference, two of the others happened to be in my presence at once; and while this was not planned (by either of us), it was welcomed simply to observe how they interact. Problem-Rebel had arrived with out much notice; meanwhile, Comedy-Mascot was scheduled today via his sister.

"I didn't know he was going to be here," Comedy-Mascot immediately.

"Well, 'he' is—and if you have a problem with that, then let me know now," I said directly. "We can re-schedule for another time—"

"Forget it," he said. "I'm already here—what the Hell!"

His remarks said it all; seemingly thinking that this was a set-up—that he had been deceived beyond his discomfort with being in the presence of his brother. But on impulse and to relieve some atmospheric pressure, I said: "Mascot, you know Rebel, right?"

"Very funny," Mascot murmured.

"You're not the only one who wants for laughs," I added.

"Really; there's nothing funny about this," he continued, "This was your idea—forcing us to come together—and it sucks."

"First, it was not my idea. But as to the second; well, we'll have to see what may come of this serendipity," I replied.

"I don't think this is the beginning of something good," Mascot remark, once again in a murmur. "I think it's a mistake!"

"Would you like to sit down and see what is possible," I said, trying to establish some starting point beyond the shock.

Taking a seat, Mascot not once looked at his brother, but purposely kept his eyes directed at me or elsewhere—as though his brother was not there (even when Rebel spoke. This treatment, a kind of shunning, was most likely modeled by his mom although I was not confident enough to know at this point. Still I wondered: *Do they all treat him this way and, if so, for how long?* It was or is more of *the silent treatment*.

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Rebel was certainly aware and seemingly accepting of his brother's "behavior" (to suggest that it was the norm, though less than normal); His being disowned was more than exclusion from their individual lives, family life, as such treatment was emotional expulsion while at same time, infantile and ignorant.

"Why can you not look on your brother or acknowledge his presence," I asked pointedly.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said, batting his eyes.

"Why do you behave as though Rebel does not exist?"

"I don't have to answer that," he said, raising his voice while turning his attention toward the door.

"I think you do. I think your brother and I need to know why you are acting the way you are," I explained. "I think it's necessary for us to move beyond this evident behavior."

"He knows why," he fired-back. "He doesn't need to know...."

"What about me?"

"Oh, come on. You know all the things he did to mom—and the heartache he's caused to all of us."

"And what is that?"

"His drugs for one thing,"

"And when did his drug use begin—do you know?"

"High-school," he said, "smoking weed."

"No, his drugs began long before that; he was about six or seven when prescribed with a litany of psychotropic medications."

"Okay, but that was done to help him in school—to help him concentrate, improve."

"But it was still drugs; lot's of them—and many as a dozen different medications over a period of nine or ten years."

"Are you saying that his illegal drug use is mom's fault?"

"I am saying that his drug use began nearly a decade before weed—as a critical part a drug-use history."

"And you're a doctor or pharmacist," he asked with sarcasm.

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"No; but since you know that already, why ask...other than to discount this information." I suggested. "Believe me, this history is not imagined or exaggerated as some sort of excuse for him or some method to blame her. As it is, Rebel's pattern of drug-use began long-before high-school and his choices; indeed, he was drugged long ago, predisposed to take drugs."

"So what do you want me to do," as though *this history* was now acceptable. "Do want me to tell him that I'm sorry?"

"No, not really; but I want you to understand the relationship; the pattern that pushed him toward his present choices. We each and all behave as has been modeled, even mandated, in our young lives. Your brother was taught to use drugs as a rule and, finally, as a lifestyle."

"Okay, I get it! What's next," Mascot yelled.

Rebel was already aware of everything being presented now to Mascot. Continuing contact had produced some proved positive; still, the lifestyle was maintained to the present and unforeseeable future.

"I think a story is a good way to close this conversation," I replied.

"A story," Mascot repeated, "What can a story do for us?"

"Well for one, it could entertain; but here, my purpose is to help you understand your family life, your history."

"I thought we already did that," he said, notably impatient.

"That history pertained to your brother more specifically."

"Okay, you have thirty minutes—shoot," he carelessly replied.

"And you Rebel; are you okay with some more history," on which he just nodded.

The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to such a pass that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for self and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love, and in order to occupy and distract himself without love he gives way to passions and coarse pleasures, and sinks to bestiality in his vices, all from continual lying to other men and to himself.³⁷³

³⁷³ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

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There was a man, a governor, who was appointed (not elected) and assigned to a province of a great nation-state, an empire. His assignment was met with mixed reactions: he wanted to ascend to greatness, unlimited *power and possession*; but he despised the natives of this foreign, occupied province and region—holding them far beneath himself and his own as a sordid sub-class; narrow and singular (not open or pluralistic) in their spirituality, insipid in their lifestyle, and ineffectual in their will to sustain their own state against invasion, occupation.

“Before I continue with the story, let me emphasize that truth is not something that can be grasped altogether; but rather, it is a pursuit both between us and within us, each. ‘What is truth?’—is the central question and subject of this story,” I began.

It is true that all of us lie: we lie to ourselves and about ourselves; and we lie to others about ourselves, about them and to them about other peoples and things.

...everybody lies; it's part of living in society. Don't get me wrong-I think it's necessary. The last thing anyone wants is to live in a society where total honesty prevails. Can you imagine the conversations?

“You're short and fat,” one person might say,

And the other might answer, “I know. But you smell bad.”

It just wouldn't work. So people lie by omission all the time. People will tell you most of the story...and I've learned that the part they neglect to tell you is often the most important part. People hide the truth because they're afraid. ³⁷⁴

And as this story unfolds, so too is truth hidden or tossed aside like trash to be taken-off, buried or burned.

For in the days of this governor's rule, a man was brought-up to him on charges of treason. This man was a local; some sort of spiritual person whose ways did not comport with the established spirituality. In fact, a counsel of spiritual leaders brought this man before the governor at a time coincident with one of their spiritual events. This event was a

³⁷⁴ Nicholas Sparks, *Safe Haven*.

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critical factor: the counselors could not convict or punish this man during this event; yet, they were driven to have him destroyed because they found his ways and his words deplorable and dangerous.

More and more folks had followed him, *his ways*—which the counselors were convinced was through some dark force or power. As it was, his popularity and power were growing in spite of his having little or nothing in the way of material possession—a paradox indeed.

They had tried multiple times *to do him in*—to have him killed before his power grew too strong. “If we destroy the shepherd, the flock will disperse,” they agreed; thus, they conspired to kill him.

But each effort was somehow thwarted until, finally, the counselors brought the man before the state, the governor—after roughing-him-up and after attempting to have him convicted by their own courts. These events were another critical factor: when their own courts failed to oblige, the counselors had no other choice but to appeal to the ruling, state authority—for whom they detested, and by whom they were detested. Now, with the alleged before the governor, the counselors and worked-up crowd shouted in a fury for his condemnation.

The governor could not understand the allegation, their cause. “I see no reason to condemn him. He represents no threat to the state. Take him to your own courts,” the governor told them. But they argued that he was a direct threat to the governor’s rule and, hence, must be condemned accordingly. “We appeal to you, our leader,” they shouted.

Strange, he thought. *I detest them and they detest me; but now, they call me ‘leader’.* “What are your ways,” he asked the alleged.

“I represent truth,” was all the alleged said in response.

“**What is truth,**” the governor asked (whether as a sincere question or a sarcastic statement) yet, the alleged said nothing in response.

So to appease them, the governor took the *alleged* and had him *roughed-up* again (he had already been *roughed-up* by the counselors). After that, he brought the *alleged* once more before them with the thinking that they would be satisfied with the punishment. But still they shouted—this time with more fury—“Kill him!”

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"I have had him punished," the governor shouted after momentarily quieting the crowd. "That should be sufficient," he told them, thinking that they would disperse. But in fact, the punishment was not enough—as the governor feared—and still they shouted, "Kill him!"

At the same time, the governor was holding another who was, in fact, an enemy of the state. Thinking of a way to escape culpability in this case, the governor presented both the *alleged* and the *known* (an enemy whom he had already condemned): "I give a known enemy of the state," he told them. "You decide who is to be punished and who is to be released," he continued. But to his dismay, the crowd remained vexed: "Kill him!"

"Very well, if that is your decision," he told them. "But I am innocent of this condemnation," he shouted as a public record of his self-proclaimed immunity. Afterward, the governor ordered the *known enemy* to be released and the *alleged* to be condemned.

"Well, what do you think of the story," I asked Rebel and Mascot.

"What is truth," Rebel asked, speaking for the first time in the conference.

"Do you know, Mascot," I asked in response.

"No, not completely; truth can be many things," he replied.

"Are you two brothers, from the same family," I continued, on which they reluctantly nodded, the question ridiculous.

"So that's truth because we know it to be a fact—confirmed from your experience. But suppose I, or someone with potential credibility, told you that you are **not** brothers," I posed the question. "Would you change your response—would you question your assumed relation," I continued.

"I don't know," Rebel responded first. "I might give it some time if I thought the person's source was reliable," he explained.

"And you, Mascot; what would you do?"

"I would wait for my brother—my alleged brother—to reply," he said with a smirk.

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"It's good to see your comic side again," I remarked. "When you lose your laugh you lose your footing."³⁷⁵

"That explains why I've been slipping-up a lot lately," he said with more wit.

"I don't know about that," I said. "I think it has been more about sobering-up, giving the comedy some relief, and seeing things beyond the next line." I told him.

"How about you, **Who-Cares**," Mascot fired back, "why a story?"

"Did you like stories when you were a kid," I asked.

"Sure, I remember a few; especially the funny ones," he replied.

"A storyteller makes up things to help other people," I told them. "A liar [however] makes up things to help himself."³⁷⁶

"So the story is true," Rebel asked.

"Let's just say that it's based a true story; it is inspired by a real, historical event," I told them. "Do you believe me?"

"Do we believe that you are telling the truth about the story being based on truth—is that the question," Rebel asked.

"Something of the sort. But you get the ideal, don't you; sometimes you have to accept someone's word without knowing everything."

"So does that mean that we have to believe that we're brothers," Mascot asked, "since we don't know everything?"

"Someone said that "truth is confirmed by inspection and delay; [whereas] falsehood by haste and uncertainty."³⁷⁷

"Okay, so how should we decide the question," Mascot asked.

"Arriving at truth is a process, truth a pursuit more than an end. But as to you two; yes, you're brothers—if the baby-pictures have not been photo-shopped."

"Baby-pictures," they said, almost in unison.

"Yes, baby-pictures that your dad showed me," and with that statement, they both looked lost.

³⁷⁵ Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

³⁷⁶ Daniel Wallace, *The Kings and Queens of Roam*.

³⁷⁷ Tacitus.

Him Who Cares Till When

Pausing in the silence of their lost moment, I reached for a drawer and pulled out a picture of them and their dad. "Here, this is one a few," I said, handing the picture to Rebel.

But the truth is that no person ever understands another, from beginning to end of life, there is no truth that can be known, only the story we imagine to be true, the story they really believe to be true about themselves....³⁷⁸

"So tell me, do you remember the time and place," I asked them, referring to the picture. Mascot said nothing, but Rebel answered after a moment of reflection: "I think it was with his family; a picnic in the mountains," he said. "I was five and you were three," he continued. "It was one of our last visits," he added.

This was the most that Rebel had said during this conference; the detail of description surprised me and stumped Mascot who was either unsure or was playing-dumb about the whole experience. But what was really rewarding was that they seemed to be associating once again; not an act or mere moment, but something else—that had missing for many years, I think. There was an emphasis on truth; the story, the process and pursuit, and the basic question, "What is truth?" And then, for the first time in these conferences, the mention and then memory of their dad by which they could possibly confirm their own relations while answering the question.

You must confront your past. At some time or other you must confront your past. It doesn't flash before your eyes, I knew that, but it's always there. We are our past. There is nothing else, and none of it can be undone...³⁷⁹

...as much as we might try, and try and try.

³⁷⁸ Orson Scott Card, *Children of the Mind*.

³⁷⁹ *The Fall*.

Bending and Flowering

Through the corridors of sleep, past the shadows dark and deep...

To confront long-held (or hidden) issues is to take-on courage; to be fearless (or less afraid) in the possibility of what might be discovered or re-discovered while, at the same, raising new doubts about what is and is not, facts or truth. In the conferences to follow, the young folks would precede in that direction; as with the flowers, the buds, that blossom and face the sun and the rain with increasing indifference and resilience.

Prior to this time, life and living meant leaving such possibilities of courage stymied by the isolation and other tactics applied in the realm of anti-social behavior. Questions or concerns that came and went were most likely, never fully answered (if the questions could even be raised); but like the nation-state that is purposely *kept in the dark*, alternative and contradictory sources of information were blocked or broken-down while the established narrative escalated to that of facts or truth. Something communicated long and often enough can eventually earn such status without ever being researched and validated—but assumed to be truth—and among those raised in this setting of single-parenting,



By and large their central complaint is that no one had explained the divorce to them and that the reasons were shrouded in mystery.³⁸⁰

If their dad's proposal for extended counseling (following the divorce) had been considered by their mom, than the possibility of moving beyond the *mystery* could have been raised or realized. As it was, this extended counseling never occurred and, by all indication, the mystery remained locked away—only to be addressed in or through the singular source of a single-parent. To make the *mystery* more probable, the dad and other *alternative and contradictory sources* would have to go.

Denial of parent time is one of the deepest forms of child abuse exactly because stepping into a child's life is like stepping into the proverbial river that is never again the same.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

³⁸¹ *Father and Child Reunion.*

Him Who Cares Till When

...my mind dances and leaps in confusion.

To consider positive intervention by civil law is to presume that institutions genuinely care—or have the capacity to care—about the *conditions and conduct* in and through divorce regardless of findings, studies and the overwhelming evidence.

Again, the support organizations and allied research has long realized the ramifications of parental alienation; a dichotomy is clearly the case when the courts simply ignore such conclusions.³⁸²

But to this *dichotomy*, the parent need look no further than the marked difference between what is repeated as “the best interest of the children”, and what is actually carried-out in family law.

Where there are children involved, divorce is more complicated and confusing—not just for the children, but for those who genuinely care about the *best interest of the children*. Sons and daughters share and differ in the consequences of divorce; one may miss a mentor, the other a model.

...Having been devalued in the eyes of her father, she believes that any genuine love a man might show to her is misplaced. She wants him to treat her as she thinks she deserves to be treated, namely, abusively.³⁸³

The parents are usually divided on the divorce; as today, most divorces occur without mutual consent. And as to the children, *their best interest*, most custody decisions end in single-parent custody (as opposed to joint custody).

Parents who divorce may think of their decision to end the marriage as wise, courageous, and the best remedy for their unhappiness—indeed, it may be so—but for the child the divorce carries one meaning: the parents have failed at one of the central tasks of adulthood.³⁸⁴

³⁸² *Once and Always Father.*

³⁸³ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

³⁸⁴ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

Bending and Flowering

I don't know what is real—I can't touch what I feel...

Radical changes in relationships occur; once close-ties with a paternal family can be spontaneously severed through litigation in combination with expanded powers of one parent over another—regardless of *the best interest of the children*.

Mother-child relationships are profoundly altered by divorce, giving rise to new family forms. [] From the girl's point of view, the stickiness binds her—in a web of love and guilt—to her mother. ³⁸⁵

This may help explain why Lost-Silence is decidedly dedicated to her mom—bound in a by a *web of love and guilt*.

Status quo is upstaged giving rise to encounters with (and episodes of) emotions spawned by the tragedy of family disparity.

Children's angry reactions to divorce function as adults' do to block-out awareness of sadness and hurt.[] Being like the angry parent covers over underlying helplessness and anxiety in the face of parents' explosive behaviors. [] Similarly, identification with absent parents—often the father—seeks to undo reality of loss. By becoming like the absent parent, the child denies the parent's absence.

The relative ease at which divorce is litigated or finalized glosses-over the possible or probable implications for marriage and its associations—much like a declaration of war does with the conditions and consequences that follow, through and beyond the carnage.

Incredibly one-half of the women and one-third of the men are still intensely angry at their former spouses, despite the passage of ten years. Ten years after divorce, close to one-half of the boys, who are now between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine, are unhappy and lonely and have had few, if any, lasting relationships with women. ³⁸⁶

Divorce is the death that keeps on dying.

³⁸⁵ *Divorce and Loss.*

³⁸⁶ *Second Chances.*

Him Who Cares Till When

...and I hide behind the shield of my illusion.

And because divorce is the death that keeps on dying, those who care grieve, and still, grieve more and more.

The devastation children feel at divorce is similar to the way they feel when a parent dies suddenly, for each experience disrupts close family relationships. Each weakens the protection of the family; each begins with an acute crisis followed by disequilibrium that may last several years or longer; and each introduces a chain of long-lasting changes that are **not** predictable at the onset. But divorce may well be a more difficult tragedy for the child to master psychologically.³⁸⁷

Suppression of this *tragedy*, the grief, is another feature of *this mystery*; that by suppressing facts or truth, the single-parent is able to similarly sustain the natural process of working through (and working-out) the pain and suffering. Tolerance to/with these conditions and consequences can be considered and/or carried-out under a diagnosis deserving or demanding medication.

Children often mask their anger and hurt to manage parental expectations, and this mask hardens into a shell. They must stay behind the mask to hide their feelings, knowing that their parents cannot handle the full impact of their anger and hurt. Their playacting is a form of dishonesty that becomes the price of acceptance. But as long as the shell is maintained, they never learn how to show love or receive it.³⁸⁸

A quite possibly a policy is put in place.

"We don't talk about those things," says the one.

"What 'things'," says the second.

"You know, about our dad, his family," says the one.

"What dad, what family," says the second.

"Never mind," says the one, "I think you're safe."

"I am," asks the second.

³⁸⁷ *Second Chances.*

³⁸⁸ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

Bending and Flowering

The mirror on my wall, casts an image dark and small...

“Many children feel guilty, and some feel that it is their duty to mend the marriage.”³⁸⁹ And when, or as, they come to accept that such a task is not possible, they feel like a failure. And what’s worse, if they even exhibit some initiative to try—to mend the marriage—the conditions and consequences, beyond the carnage so carefully kept under wraps, can most assuredly end their effort after all.

I am grieved for my children—and boy’s in particular—that this modern age is emasculating men under the guise of “the best interest of the children”.

Conflict and contention, conditions and consequences—all lead invariably to the *carnage* past and present, known or kept silent and secret.

The conception of marriage that he formed as a young person and envisioned as an adult has been marred by circumstances that he believes could have been overcome without divorce. Yet, he still believes in marriage—the commitments and promises.... Coinciding with his commitments (and promises) is a very powerful force that he perceives as not only able, but is actually working to dismantle fathers, families and even faith if that were possible.³⁹⁰

The want for happiness, or just relief, discourages and dispels the courage to confront the truth or want for resolution (beyond grief)—thus the conflict and contention rages on whether through passive and/or aggressive behavior, but often from the less dutiful males.

A study by the Journal of Social Issues, reports that boys who live with their fathers (after divorce) have a higher degree of self-esteem, are more mature, and more independent than boys who live with their mothers.³⁹¹

Continuing to treat them like children is a way of controlling them.

³⁸⁹ *Second Chances.*

³⁹⁰ *Once and Always Father.*

³⁹¹ *Father and Child Reunion.*

Him Who Cares Till When

...but I'm not sure at all it's my reflection.

The costs are immeasurable and, if tallied, could only suggest what may have been avoided had one or more parents truly acted in *the best interest of the children*—short of litigation, so-called family law.

But back to the beginning; the basis for this union and the cause to consider all these costs:

On the eve of our marriage, there might have been good reason to really ask, “What is marriage?” Is it the impression and expectation that this man can make me happy—can be a savior that helps me forget the tragedy of my parents’ failed relationship as well as my own as his child? What is certain is that marriage was not to be a commitment or covenant.³⁹²

Here is a crucial difference: the state constructs marriage as a contract³⁹³ (at best), while the church has conventionally treated it as a promise, covenant with vows. Licenses give the state some aspect of authority over marriage—yet marriage was originally formed as an authority unto its own. Divorce—and especially divorce reforms—have reduced marriage to nothing more than a relationship of convenience.

No terms, no conditions, no promises, no commitment, and no institution—but only another example of what happens when law and politics attempt to regulate a religious institution.³⁹⁴

The state came to regulate more than marriage however; indeed, the state has become increasingly authoritarian over churches using tax law, exemptions enabled through obligations, essentially eliminating any expectations for/of separation of spiritual and secular law.³⁹⁵

³⁹² *Once and Always Father.*

³⁹³ Marriage is a contract when any cause for its dissolution can only occur with mutual consent and by justified cause. Thus, the removal of mutual consent (Unilateral divorce) and justified cause (No-fault divorce) removes the contract nature of marriage—resulting in nothing more than a relationship of convenience.

³⁹⁴ *Once and Always Father.*

³⁹⁵ The 501c-3 was ostensibly created as tax exemption for qualifying non-profit organizations (still, churches were **not** taxed prior to 1954). In its conception, this tax law was aimed at silencing the church (from speaking-out or activism in political issues such as war); thus, conditions of censorship coincide.

Bending and Flowering

I am blinded by the light, of God and truth and right...

Christ was/is called *the way, the truth and the light*, and to the subject of truth is the wonder and wherewithal that applies to this supernatural form against the lesser of the secular and the sinful. This chasm between the two (forms) can be viewed in the much debated and degraded debate over abortion. Both spiritual and scientific views bear the truth that life begins at conception; yet against truth, the state pronounces that life does not begin until months after conception—primarily to control the population, not to grant individual choice. There are other ways however to destroy social strength.

Similarly, the state can be integral to *the system* of dismantling the dad while appearing (and attesting) to be acting in *the best interest of the children*. Within the second of these two is the divorce industry that has benefited from the spoils of war without regard to the incomparable costs borne by our community and culture.³⁹⁶

This age of unprecedented divorce (1970s-90s) has ushered in a generation and movement of young folks that are steering clear of marriage and similar relational commitments. And while skyrocketing divorce has rocked our society, incremental decline in marriage per capita (1970s to the present) is gradually eroding social strength, the essential family bonds, even parent and child.

The focus of divorce policy and intervention has centered on the loss of the father, which is profound for many divorced children. But the loss of a mother pervades and forever changes the way a child, especially a young child, experiences the world. Young children need continuous interaction with caring parents.³⁹⁷

The connection between a child's earthly and heavenly experiences is greatly disrupted by divorce and, most often, by family court's influence and intervention in *the best interest of the children*.

³⁹⁶ *Once and Always Father.*

³⁹⁷ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

Him Who Cares Till When

...and I wander in the night without direction.

Do you ever recall being lost (or thinking so) when you were a child? The sense of relief, the drying of tears, that overwhelmed you were found or when a parent or sibling found you?

The more caught up in negative feelings from the marriage and divorce a parent is, the harder it will be for him or her to attend thoughtfully to a child's feelings about the other parent. This dynamic is most apparent in the high-conflict divorce but is evident in more subtle way in most divorces.

Parents (one or both) may be so sidetracked by/through divorce that children don't have to believe that they are lost; that like war, the battle(s) of divorce and custody ultimately makes the whole family, each and all, lost to and among their own.

Children often feel overwhelmed by parents' arguing (and even more by physical fighting) around divorce. Indeed, many young adults remain seared by memories of their parents' confrontations, the intervening years having done little to ameliorate their anguish at witnessing bitter, sometimes violent parental interactions.³⁹⁸

Just as those who profit from war promote war, so too does the legal community promote divorce.³⁹⁹ The greater the conflict and contention between pre-divorced couples, the more gains potentially waiting the counselors irrespective of the sacrifices for the children whose *best interest* is nothing more than a platitude.

It may, for some attorneys, be more comfortable to deal with a parent who is righteously angry rather than a miserable and depressed client who is struggling to cope with the many facets of loss and anxiety generated by divorce....⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ *Divorce and Loss.*

³⁹⁹ Divorce reform has been a windfall for the legal community. For every one divorce attorney in California the late 60's, there were twenty by the 80's...without considering the other ancillary services supported by the divorce industry.

⁴⁰⁰ *Defusing the High-Conflict Divorce.*

Bending and Flowering

It's no matter if you're born to play the King or pawn...

Except that the king is supreme and the pawn is cannon-fodder, the difference is simply the appearance and the fact that the king's protection (or is it the queen) is the essence of the game.

Then there are some divorced mothers who would do everything possible to keep their ex-husbands away from the children. Often the motive is a wish to punish the father by denying him access to his children. In some instances, the mother may fear for her children's safety—for example, when the father is likely to abuse or kidnap the children. But in many cases, the divorced woman's own hurt or anger clouds her assessment of her ex-husband's worth to the children.⁴⁰¹

Protection is often **not** the essence, but rather, the wrath of the protected—so as to gain a victim's status in the gaming for power and possession. By *playing* or parading as the victim, the parent gives victimization a bad name and, at the same time, abuses state resources ranging from counseling to criminal law.

As long as the co-parents use their children as innocent pawns in their battle, children feel the emotional tug of war between being faithful, helpful, children and being used by their parents to keep the fires of battle burning. Children come to resent being pawns and react with withdrawal, passive defiance, or outright hostility to their parents.⁴⁰²

The *grand chessboard*⁴⁰³ becomes mired in the consequences of a parent's pursuits to undermine the other parent—somewhat analogous to the quagmire or unintended consequences that develop in international occupation, colonization or imperialism.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ *Custody Revolution*, Stephen Baskerville, 2007.

⁴⁰² *Defusing the High-Conflict Divorce*.

⁴⁰³ The use of "grand chessboard" (related to Zbigniew Brzezinski's book by the same name, 1997) to associate statecraft with the tactics of post-divorce to include the undermining of parental participation-visitation—both sharing the "unintended consequences" that extend/expand the effects so as to thwart colonial or imperial initiatives.

⁴⁰⁴ *Defusing the High-Conflict Divorce*.

Him Who Cares Till When

...for the line is thinly drawn 'tween joy and sorrow,

Aside from the litany of legal intrusion into family affairs—but within the strategy to undermine parental involvement—is the psychological community.

...Sometimes however, requests for psychological evaluations are simply stall tactics intended to delay a decision. The delay caused by carrying out an order for a psychological evaluation could make things worse because it gives hope and power to the child and to the violating parent.⁴⁰⁵

The children's dad is a real veteran when it comes to such *tactics*; indeed, he was court-ordered to be analyzed on three occasions over a five year period: each and all times, the common conclusion was that he is a parent that misses his children.⁴⁰⁶

Imagine the elation of the parent who, at the personal costs (both financial and emotional) of enduring multiple examinations, is informed of what he distinctly already knows. But confirming his feelings was never the intent of the ordered examinations, but rather, to punish him more through the pretense—the punishment is the process.

Among the traits of anti-social behavior is the practice of making others *jump through hoops*.⁴⁰⁷ Being forced under court-order to take multiple psychological examinations has some similarity while exposing the real intent in the first place. As it is, the examinations were never intended for proof of mental or emotional health, but sadly and sadistically, abused as arms in the arsenal of attorneys. Each and all of these orders produced the same outcome: since the findings did not purport presuppositions, the reports went unreported or distorted.

⁴⁰⁵ *Defusing the High-Conflict Divorce*.

⁴⁰⁶ The *common conclusion* is greatly condensed from each and all examinations. Most beneficial to the dad was that the intention of the court-ordered examinations did not produce the desired effect: the determination of some psychotic behavior. Still, attorneys use such examinations as pretense whereby the process becomes the punishment. So in other words, the prognosis trumps the actual diagnosis—pretense over medically-approved reports.

⁴⁰⁷ See Author's Notes, "Anti-Social Traits".

Bending and Flowering

So my fantasy becomes reality...

Most marriages end (in divorce) at the desire/drive of only one; hence, the division—the war—is directed against the other who may not have seen it coming or is otherwise unprepared.

In many divorces, one of the partners does not see the breakup coming and in fact has only a minor inkling that the other person is dissatisfied with the marriage. And tragically, the abandoned partner may be deeply in love with the spouse who wants out. When this happens, a sense of shock, betrayal, and rage can last for many years, if not forever.⁴⁰⁸

Thus, and in keeping with the context of war, the other may be shell-shocked—taken completely off-guard—and prone to the usual effects.

For most divorcing couples, the marriage ends in bitterness, guilt, and pain. A small civilization has died. The children stay with the mother. The man moves out and tries to move on. When he does so, he may suffer enormously. He may have the best intentions about not divorcing his children. But despite these feelings, most of these men lose the essence of their fatherhood. They drift away from their children almost as surely as they move away from their former homes...This is sad. But it is the pattern.⁴⁰⁹

For the moving party, the divorce may produce an immediate sensation of success—a victory over the problems (and person) now passing.⁴¹⁰

Many people, adults and children alike, are in fact not better off. We have created new kinds of families in which relationships are fragile and often unreliable. Children today receive far less nurturance, protection, and parenting than was their lot a few decades ago.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Fatherlessness America.*

⁴¹⁰ Divorce results from numerous causes that result in numerous outcomes (as to the partners' individual feelings); but where divorce is driven by desires (rather than needs), the immediate sensation can be relief if not relishing for the one, ridicule and rejection for the other. Most folks want to win, but with divorce—like war—no one really wins in the end except the divorce industry.

⁴¹¹ *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce.*

Him Who Cares Till When

...and I must be what I must be and face tomorrow.

Sometimes to wonder or question, “Who am I?” For the losses of marriage and its associations coincide with the loss of identity; that though still tied to this family, the non-custodial is greatly reduced and regulated as to his relationship, role and responsibility. He may feel as a *nowhere man living in a nowhere land*.

You cannot begin to understand the failure of marriage—or the living of these ideas commitment or covenant—without considering and factoring in the devaluing of fatherhood. The two are inextricably linked and dependent.

In addition is the natural grief that occurs in the wake of such losses.

If there is such a thing as depression and despair, I experienced it during the months leading-up to and following the divorce. Insomnia, constant and uncontrollable thoughts and a deep sense of loss were among the conditions of my life. Was I depressed? Yes, I was very much so and, what’s worse, was determined to do nothing immediately for it.

And the disturbing reminders that life has changed and hope is now nowhere to be found.

In the depression, was I ever suicidal; or in other words, did I ever think about taking my life? I’m not sure if I ever pondered this act but, honestly, I did not care whether I lived or died; for to me, death had already taken place—and it seemed to be worse as disbelief gave way to shock...and then reality.⁴¹²

In spite of professional findings that *the best interest of the children* is with the participation of both parents, the non-custodial remains relegated to the margins—regulated in his/her place as parent.

Numerous authors have argued that it does **not** serve children’s best interests to establish custodial arrangements that place fathers in a marginal role.⁴¹³

⁴¹² *A Once and Always Father.*

⁴¹³ Warshak, 1992; Finley and Schwartz, 2010; *Divorce and Loss.*

Bending and Flowering

So I'll continue to continue to pretend my life will never end...

Where then does the grief go in the life of children or young persons; how do they mourn the loss the marriage?

Children fear, usual unjustifiably, that they will hurt their parents' feelings and provoke a backlash if they express their disappointment directly. Indeed, it is extremely difficult for most parents to let in awareness of their children's disappointment, even when it is warranted, because they already feel guilty about the divorce. When children express their feelings...parents are prone to rebuke them for being disrespectful or hostile; they find it hard to parlay children's disappointment and anger into meaningful dialogue, contributing to a growing gulf between them and their children.

Besides depriving the children of attention, a parent preoccupied with self may find their type of grief as unacceptable—even punishable—against a determination or desire to *move-on*.⁴¹⁴ In the drive to discourage grief, the forward-going parent may fail to understand the adversity added on...

In addition, children are unable to stay in touch with underlying hurt and sadness, become self-critical in response to "bad behavior" and lose empathy for themselves. [] For some (referring to Wallerstein's 1989 study), a failure to mourn interfered with their capacities to invest emotional energy in new endeavors, especially intimate relationships.⁴¹⁵

...that limits intimacy, emotional energy, and love in ensuing years.

⁴¹⁴ While concealing deep emotional pain, fear and loss of concentration, children are in the pressure cooker of expectations to grow emotionally and academically. They say that seeing friends with parents and parent/child school activities are daily reminders of their own loss. Children express grief in a different way than adults. They tend to move in and out of intense feelings, rather than sustaining high levels of one emotion for long periods of time. When adults see a grieving child playing or laughing, they may mistakenly believe that the child is "over it". This perception may influence how much grief support a child receives; "How Children Grieve", Children's Grief Education Association; childgrief.org/childrenandgrief.htm.

⁴¹⁵ *Divorce and Loss*.

Him Who Cares Till When

...and Flowers Never Bend With the Rainfall.

And still, is hope forever gone from their lives—and what about intimacy and love?

If there is any single experience that unites children of divorce it is our feelings of loneliness” (Elizabeth Marquardt, 2005) “I always felt like an adult, even when I was a kid. (Wallerstein, 1989).⁴¹⁶

Hope is about understanding that:

The first lesson the family teaches is a lesson of humility. Perfect is not possible in human life, and the family itself is one reason for this imperfection....

Hope is about taking holding-on:

For now, the family occupies one of the most perseverant of intermediate positions, a fulcrum on a perhaps crumbling base, balancing—sometimes failing but often succeeding—the best parts of our social and individualistic selves.⁴¹⁷

Hope is about standing in the gap:

Today the cultural sanction of male fathering behavior has diminished sharply. Gone are the omnipresent controls provided by close-knit kinship groups in pre-modern societies, groups with enormous stake in the life outcomes of the biological offspring. [] Even our laws have gone soft; instant divorce is now available to men (or women) in most states merely for the asking.⁴¹⁸

Hope is keeping the flame lit—or reigniting the fire:

A child’s relationship to his/her father is the strongest predictor of the child’s later success or failure with school and friends. According to a long-term study at Harvard University, children who grew up with a healthy relationship to their father grew up with more compassion, better social relationships, and happier marriages.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁶ *Divorce and Loss.*

⁴¹⁷ *Family and the Politics of Moderation*, Lauren K. Hall, 2014.

⁴¹⁸ *Life without Father.*

⁴¹⁹ *Why Good People Do Bad Things.*

Bending and Flowering

Following in the usual order of our conversations, Good-Hero was the first to visit; as always, he was alone—still dealing with his mom's anti-social behavior, a contention for which conflict was more about the incommunicable.

"No, it is about the same," he said in reply to my inquiry, "She refuses to speak with me and, quite frankly, I am glad."

"You're 'glad'," I asked, "Why?"

"Because it's much easier than being mad," he said spontaneously. "I have fumed about his childish behavior much too long, trying to figure-it, her, out," he continued. "I even spoke to my dad about it."

"Your dad," I said. "That's good. Ah, what I mean is that it is good that you're in contact with him," I explained.

"Yes, I think so too. It's been many years, but the opportunity came on my graduation from boot camp. You see, my grandfather was a soldier too and, still living, would want to be a part of this process," he explained. "It seemed only fitting that I should get them on board."

"So your soldiering was really the common ground for your reunion with them, is that it?"

"It has been," he replied. "Any time before then could have been impossible," he explained. "Too much conflict and the risks for my dad," he added, looking at me as though I would understand.

"What kind of 'risks'," I asked.

"My mom had him arrested several times," he replied.

"I know," I said, "he has told me all about it; indeed, he has written several books that include these events," I went-on.

"Why didn't you tell me," he asked with expectation.

"I wanted you or the others to bring this up—rather than me," I said. "Rebel and I have talked about it already but the others have not," I continued. "I am waiting for each of you to start," I told him convinced that he understood that it would best if they initiated the discussion.

"How is he, Rebel?"

"As a counselor, I can only say that he is making some effort to resolve the past; indeed, he has tried to reach-out to you."

Him Who Cares Till When

Good-Hero, on hearing my reply, said nothing in response—almost as though he did not hear me. “I said, he has tried to reach-out to you,” I repeated, awaiting his reply.

“My brother and I don’t see eye to eye; he has his life and I have mine,” he replied with ambiguity.

“I understand some of that,” I told him, “but that’s no excuse for your silence, I believe, as the least possible, but polite gesture.”

“So you suggesting that my silence is no different than my mom’s,” he asked with some tone of resentment.

“There are similarities,” I said, “but you know that already,” I told him as he sat there annoyed, even angry.

“You don’t understand,” he began, “Rebel put us through some hell,” I told me stopping short of further explanation.

“You’re right. I don’t understand...because you haven’t bothered to explain,” I replied. “All I have is what Rebel has told me.”

“Mom made me come-down on him; she would call me at college to complain about his conduct—asking me to be the go-between—when I was clearly **not** responsible,” he said after a moment of thought. “How could I play the heavy when I’m just a kid myself?”

“Is your treatment toward Rebel about his conduct or hers?”

“Both; he would not listen to me while my mom would not back-down or her insistence that I do something,” he replied. “It was a no-win.”

“And what was his problem(s)?”

“You know,” he fired-back, “about his drug-use and other problems; he just refused to obey—or to even try, it seemed.”

“Do you know that from experience or is that what she told you?”

“Some of both; she would complain and I would comply and—

“Rebel would resent the both of you,” I interrupted.

“Resent,” he yelled, “resent what?”

“Your mom’s hypocrisy, to begin, followed by your ill-informed intervention, for another,” I told outright.

“Her ‘hypocrisy’,” he asked, said, “What do you mean?”

“I think you know...all too well, that this drug-use began long ago.”

Bending and Flowering

Good-Hero was aware, for he had been subjected to a similar regiment of Ritalin and other psychotropic meds early in his boyhood.

"There is connection between his drug-use and his long-standing meds use," I began, "for which you too have experienced," I replied, "But the question is not whether you two were subjected to this regiment but to what extent it effects your life going forward into adulthood."

If a home is abusive or if the parents are addicted to alcohol or drugs, a child will grow-up in an environment with a code of silence: there is an unwritten rule that one does not talk about the family problems. Conflicts are left unresolved and all the emotions put on "autopilot".⁴²⁰

As to whether these meds should have been used is a matter that cannot be resolved at this time; still, the long-term use has to be a factor in your development, any pursuit of other drug-use among other side-effects.

"So you're saying that my mom is at fault," Good-Hero asked.

"Her decisions are a factor," I began, "that must be considered in the present. Rebel or you did not willfully begin your drug-use. Moreover, the information provided to you—feeding you her perspective—was most assuredly one-sided and, in the hypocrisy of the situation, absent from any complicity, condition and conduct, in the conflict and contention."

All warfare is based on deception.⁴²¹

"So you're saying that I was snookered?"

"I am describing what I've heard and believe to be either fact or a factor to consider in all this," I told him.

"What should I do now—about this conflict," he asked sincerely,

"Remember foremost that there is no instance of a nation benefitting from prolonged war," I reminded him, referring again to *The Art of War*. "Peace within your self and among your own, as a practice, is a force for good."

⁴²⁰ *Why Good People Do Bad Things*.

⁴²¹ *The Art of War*.

Him Who Cares Till When

Lost-Silence made arrangements to be present at the conference with her brother, Comic-Mascot. Unlike in the last joint-conversation—where he and Rebel inadvertently were present, this arranged visit came with expectations of what might transpire and take-place.

She had the knowledge and some practical experience as a therapist but was very reluctant to apply it in her limited contact with them—not unusual, I'm sure. In the dilemma—unconditional devotion to mom and a deep sense of responsibility for the rest—she was not certain how or when the chance might arrive until now. “I was reserved and resistant at first,” she explained, “until a recent visit when I was able to lower my guard and talk candidly about us,” she continued. “I have understood some things for a while but didn't want to discuss them; and especially with mom,” she continued. “So here we are,” she said.

Comic-Mascot was noticeably comfortable around his sister. At times, he treated her with a respect or regard as though she was a parent; thus, her dialogue was taken without any discussion or doubt, it seemed, by him. Neither (playing) the joker or the jilted, he sat quietly and seemed to absorb every detail as though a child listening to a story.

“Our mom has some anti-social behavior,” she began, “that seems to have impacted not only our lives but others in a very destructive way.”

“Explain anti-social behavior,” I asked for common understanding.

“It has numerous traits,” she replied before addressing those observed and understood. “She has used us on occasion to help drive our dad away,” she continued. “Our testimonies were used in court as evidence against him,” evidently having read her dad's books and confirmed this condition and conduct. “Even you have been used,” she said, looking at Comic-Mascot, “as her pet or entertainer.”

“Does she love us,” he asked evidently accepting the accusations.

“I am not sure if she is capable of love,” she said with sincerity. “Mom is absorbed in her own affairs—so much so that attention to others is not without some anticipated advantage or gain for her. As she is, there is no room for compassion in her pursuits and passions.”

“So she loves herself only—is that it?”

Bending and Flowering

"I can't say with complete confidence," she replied. "Her anti-social behavior has **not** helped; and with what I've discovered, has hurt her—relationships and family relations—as it has driven others away not only from her but from us as well." She provided some examples for which she herself had witnessed; her aunts who were isolated from them and, similarly, for which she was forbidden from contacting or having any relations.

"As to our dad, the divorce was largely the result of her doing; she drove their marriage to divorce against what may been open dissent on his part. He did not want or seek divorce, it seems, but tried desperately to discourage and disarm it," she explained.

"To 'disarm it'," Comic-Mascot asked. "What do you mean?"

"For him and others, divorce is like war. He calls it another form of 'conflict and contention' with strong similarities to war," she said. "Mom had launched a sort of war and by all indications is still engaged," she added.

"So Rebel refused to fight," he asked, with interest and understanding. "He refused to be a part of her war."

"Not entirely, I think, but he has been part of the resistance or push-back," she replied. "But in other ways, he carried the conflict to a new level and, consequently, has paid a price."

"You mean his isolation, right?"

"Yes, that's part of it; when he refused to comply or went rouge, she shut him down and out," Lost-Silence explained.

"Yeah, the arrest and—," he added.

"Yes, with the intervention of the law, Rebel was made a criminal in effect—much like our dad—and carted-off to various programs aimed at turning him around," she told him. "This decision was destructive too."

As much as I was amazed at her insight, I was equally as pleased that she was translating her intelligence into layman's terms; language that all of us could appreciate and accept both in her courage to come forth and in her sensitivity to our less-than social-science backgrounds.

Him Who Cares Till When

Lost-Silence continued...divulging the substance of her studies, the essence of her effort, and some things that had long been silenced. She seldom showed sorrow but, as though under some spell, spoke with (or in) a somber, stoic manner—evidently forcing herself to separate her personal, painful and punishing feelings. What had been hidden within her for many years was now coming forth—forever found—with fortitude and freedom.

I would not have believed it if I didn't witness it, I thought. My expectations have been exceeded.

"I think our dad loves us. His holding to being a *once and always father* is enough to consider that he is, and will be, there when we each are ready," she continued, carrying her understanding into the prospect of some future reunion or reconciliation.

"Have you seen him," Comic-Mascot asked.

"No, I have not, yet," Lost-Silence replied, "but I must try."

"And Rebel and Hero," he added.

"Yes, they maintain regular contact with him, Rebel more so than Hero, she continued.

"Why didn't they say something, Hero," he asked more or less knowing the answer by his expression, experience.

"If you were either of them, would you be sharing this with the others? We seldom communicate or congregate as a family anyway, as common in broken families, now more than ever," she briefly explained.

"Yeah, I know," he said with a sigh.

"Mom has gone to extremes to isolate us from dad, his family, and her family too," she explained (aimed as insight for me rather than Comic-Mascot, but then. I was already aware of this issue from prior conversations with both sides of the family).

But with children involved, this war called divorce...is a delicate matter that sometimes warrants placid (rather than punitive) principals, and trust that God honors our choice just as God honors marriage as a covenant.⁴²²

⁴²² *A Once and Always Father.*

Getting Younger

I was a child who ran full of laughter.

In the months that followed, we met on similar occasions and, with that, spoke of their younger years—those when the family was intact, families and old friends around—the present and the future too. As a consequence, relations between and among them was growing; moreover, they continued to reach-out to extended family that had long been distanced from them. The developments were profound.

These younger years were **not** always *full of laughter*, yet were described as having wonderful, precious moments and memories:

- ❶ Good-Hero as the oldest was more expressive of these times than the others, but he was not alone in reflecting in the likely distortions that coincide in retrospect. “Yeah, my dad liked to take us on these day-trips; all along the First Coast from Fernandina to Saint Augustine, from parks to historic plantations. He would pile-us up in this old van he had, and off we went—all four of us!”
- ❷ Lost-Silence had not always been the quiet and lone personality; she loved horses and in those younger years was given opportunities at a local stable and occasionally elsewhere. “I started this collection of plastic horses; multiple scales, colors and breeds. A book about horses was one that he would read to me; all the varieties,” she explained, adding a lot of detail to the experiences.
- ❸ Problem-Rebel was a favorite of his granddad and uncle, recalling some special moments fishing, playing checkers or watching of the many animated films. “I loved to play army-men or anything similar to soldiering,” he explained. “Our granddad would take us fishing or hiking. He loved the outdoors as did I and the others.”
- ❹ Comic-Mascot described his personality as daring; the youngest of the four, he was full of mischief—and all agreed that “he use to get away with murder.” His daring nature was combined with a rough & tumble posture that would give his brother, Rebel, was real fits---especially after dad was gone. “I was a brat and proud of it,” he told me, “and gave the others a hard time most of the time,” he continued. “It’s a wonder that they even love me.”

Him Who Cares Till When

I was a child who lived [and loved] for today.

Love was what I was beginning to see; love for self and love for the others too—as though a fresh breeze had arrived to lift the stale and stagnant air that had surrounded our conversations, their relations. Children live [and love] for the day; and oh how they are able to *take in the day* while showing love in simple terms, with few conditions. They have a way of reminding us how wonderful childhood can be... without the complications and complexities that life and living levy on adults.

When you are a child, there is joy. There is laughter. And most of all, there is trust. Trust in your fellows. When you are an adult...then comes suspicion, hatred, and fear....

Imagine if children ran the world; on one extreme, a sort of *Lord of the Flies*⁴²³ but on the other:

If children ran the world, it would be a place of eternal bliss and cheer. Adults run the world; and there is war, and enmity, and destruction unending. Adults who take charge of things muck them up, and then produce a new generation of children and say, "The children are the hope of the future."

Perhaps John Denver was right on this one; that the children, *their laughter and their loveliness*, can *clear a cloudy day*.⁴²⁴

And they are right. Children are the hope of the future. Adults are the damnation of the present, and children become adults as surely as adults become worm food. Adults are the death of hope.⁴²⁵



*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*⁴²⁶ But oh how I long for my wonder years, those yesteryears, when life and living was less complicated and complex—more simple, trusting and unconditional as a child who *lived and loved for the day*.

⁴²³ Barbarianism or survival of the fittest.

⁴²⁴ "Rhymes and Reasons".

⁴²⁵ Peter David, *Tigerheart*.

⁴²⁶ I Corinthians 13:11.

Getting Younger

My eyes full of sunshine, my heart full of smiles...

And while life and living is not all sunshine and smiles, it sure helps to be able to take some simple satisfaction in the activity of the sun and in the smiles that we see; whereas it hinders us to leave sunshine and smiles altogether behind.

Some people discard their childhood like an old hat. They forget about it like a phone number that's no longer valid. They used to be kids, then they became adults—but what are they now? Only those who grow up but continue to be children are humans.⁴²⁷

But that's not to say that the past is not less than *sunshine and smiles* too. For some folks (more than others), the *past* is a dreadful time to leave behind and a dreaded place to return.

We bury things so deep we no longer remember there was anything to bury. Our bodies remember. Our neurotic states remember. But we don't.⁴²⁸

The experience and episodes (memories) can conjure-up all adult-generated feelings of anger and animosity about matters from the most vain to the most venal, even vile—but always with the possibility that seemingly nothing good can come from it. Still, such memories can be *fuel for the fire*—a driving force in the faith and feelings that good can come out of bad (things).

You know, through pain, you learn a lot about yourself—things you thought you never knew you wanted to learn. And it's kind of like those animals that re-grow a part of their body.... You might not feel it. You might not even want to grow, but you will.⁴²⁹

And still, such memories can leave an overwhelming wonder as to *how we got this far* amid the complications and complexity of life and living from the intentional to the inexplicable conditions and conduct. But in the wonder is the way in which we should or do respond or react.

⁴²⁷ Erick Kästner.

⁴²⁸ Jeanette Winterson, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*

⁴²⁹ Kelle Hampton, *Bloom: Finding Beauty in the Unexpected--A Memoir*.

Him Who Cares Till When

(If only) I was a child for a day (again).

If only we could re-experience the best of being a child, again; not the one unable to control their emotions or to act-out in extremes, but the one with *my eyes full of sunshine, my heart full of smiles*—the best of times in an otherwise less than *times*. The *one* when:

- Girls were just different, not desired
- Games were just play, not show
- Groans were just displeasure, not pain
- Good was better, not bad
- Grades were means, not ends
- Gag was just a sarcastic remark, not a rule
- Goal was a fixed line, not a moving one
- God was just one thing, not many....
- Guns were toys, not weapons

I wonder if such times exist—if ever existed. I wonder if even a day was (or could have been) so wonderful, a wonderland.

What was wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder. It was not merely a world full of miracles; it was a miraculous world.⁴³⁰

Or is it so that the wonders of a child can only be understood by the child; that long gone, a *wonderland* cannot be re-constructed. There was that television series, *The Wonder Years*; that captured the conditions and conduct of a boy's life in suburbia during the 1960-70s. And in the final script of the finale, the narrator and main character says:

Growing up happens in a heartbeat. One day you're in diapers, the next day you're gone. But the memories of childhood stay with you for the long-haul. I remember a place, a town, a house, like a lot of houses. A yard like a lot of other yards...a street like a lot of other streets. And the thing is, after all these years, I still look back... with wonder.⁴³¹

May the wonder, a *wonderland*, stay then for a lifetime.

⁴³⁰ G. K. Chesterton.

⁴³¹ *The Wonder Years*; created by Neil Marlins and Carol Black; Wikipedia.

Getting Younger

We were the children who sang in the morning.













Singing is beautiful and singing children, more so. From the few to the many, the instructed to the self-inspired, the youngest to the young; this resonance is sincere, even sacred.

Singing with children in the schools has been the most rewarding experience of my life. ⁴³²

And why do they sing? Is it because they have to; that it is just part of another lesson, assignment or performance? Or do they sing still, even when they're **not** instructed or expected to...?

Each person whoever was or is or will be has a song. It isn't a song that anybody else wrote [but] has its own melody...its own words. Very few people get to sing their own song. Most of us fear that we cannot do it justice with our voices, or that our words are too foolish or too honest, or too odd. So people live their songs instead. ⁴³³

What is your song; for what and why do you live? It doesn't have to be perfect or even pleasing. As life itself, your song may be to:

-  Attract as in mating
-  Claim as in a battle
-  Rouse as in a banner
-  Warn as in an alarm
-  Work as with a shanty
-  Amuse as with a novelty
-  Inform as with a report
-  Praise as with a hymn
-  Denounce as with a diatribe
-  Irritate as with a heckle
-  Imagine as with a dream
-  Remember as with a memory

There are many reasons to sing, many kinds of songs, but as to life and living; it is each our song.

⁴³² Pete Seeger.

⁴³³ Neil Gaiman, *Anansi Boys*.

Him Who Cares Till When

We were the children who laughed at the sun.

While *our eyes full of sunshine*, we laughed at many things and for many reasons—or for no reason at all. We laughed because someone else snickered, or *made a face*, or passed gas one way or another. We laughed just to hear ourselves laugh or to see those steely eyes and stern expressions of disconcertment and discipline. We laughed at it, through it, and because of it—whatever “it” was or we thought “it” was, or even if we had no idea what it was—still, we laughed. And when we laughed, and because we laughed, we were younger. But:

You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.⁴³⁴

So don't stop laughing and don't stop making other's laugh either. For where would we, where will we be, if we stopped laughing? Here are a few ways to laugh:

- Howl
- Roar
- Scream
- Shriek
- Snort
- Snicker
- Whoop
- Burst (or bust) out
- Convulse
- Die (laughing)
- Roll in the aisles
- ...your head off
- ...till you're silly
- ...till in hurts⁴³⁵

Why wait? Do it now—and don't ever stop for long.

⁴³⁴ Michael Pritchard.

⁴³⁵ “20 Ways to Laugh”; dailywritingtips.com.

Getting Younger

Who listened to those who spoke with their wisdom?

But while you are laughing (or trying to), don't forget to listen too; especially when the voice may have something valuable, something salient, something that can make at least today if not *the day*. And by "something", I'm not talking about the trivial or trashy that can easily consume the conscience and the conscious. I am talking about the tantamount; that which is deep—even disturbing—and moves you to another dimension of thought, even action, in life and living. This *dimension* will not be an altogether *happy home* (even to get there much less to find some gratitude within); it will be daunting to find, and disturbing to hear (about)—facts over fanciful and fanatical conditions and conduct. But it is more than the prospect of facts, this time and place; it is truth to be found by courage.

It is not courage that makes us speak the truth, but it is a hunger for truth that makes us courageous.⁴³⁶

There may seem to be three possibilities; what you:

- Know – having confirmed it as certain
- ? Think you know – having believed it as certain
- Don't know – because you can't know what you don't know

But with the later two of three, if you don't have courage you cannot ever expect to know more than you already know—or to even consider the *prospect of facts*. To know however (or to think you know) is not enough—but to want for understanding, for wisdom, is where life and living resides.

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.⁴³⁷

Sure, you cannot know it all and, further, cannot begin to understand even less; but still, life and living remains.

⁴³⁶ Agona Apell, *The Success Genome Unravalled: Turning Men from Rot to Rock*.

⁴³⁷ Marie Curie.

Him Who Cares Till When

Getting older as time goes by—a little older with everyday...

But in some ways, the older folks seem younger. Maybe not all, but for some that make it to *the golden years*, some child-like conditions and conduct return: short of the rough & tumble posture, older folks do show some similarity of imagination and wonder while contending with their ailments, medications and mental lapses.

Meanwhile, children are being pressured—or pressed—into acting *more mature* at earlier and earlier ages—so much so that being a child is something that is not only discouraged but disdained. Games have become sports so that so-called peewee players are pushed to the edge of professionalism by parents and patrons preoccupied by (or with) winning at the expense-experience of having fun and making friends.

Beyond sports' mania (and maniacs) are those pre-pubescent souls pressured to sexuality, as one author so aptly describes:

For the first time in history, children are growing up whose earliest sexual imprinting derives not from a living human being, or fantasies of their own; since the 1960s pornographic upsurge, the sexuality of children has begun to be shaped in response to cues that are no longer human. Nothing comparable has ever happened in the history of our species; it dislodges Freud. Today's children and young men and women have sexual identities that spiral around paper and celluloid phantoms: from Playboy to music videos to the blank females torsos in women's magazines, features obscured and eyes extinguished, they are being imprinted with a sexuality that is mass-produced, deliberately dehumanizing and inhuman.⁴³⁸

With the Web-query, "the effects of porn on children", comes a list exclusive of the word, "porn" or "pornography" (for obvious reasons) but represented much more with the words, "domestic violence". And violence, as porn, has evidently been a studied subject and concern; it is another systemic problem that seems to worsen rather than lessen.

Cat Stevens' title song, "Where Do the Children Play," comes to mind.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*.

⁴³⁹ Cat Stevens (Yusuf Islam), A&M Records, 1970.

Getting Younger

We were the children of yesterday.

In the dystopian film, *Children of Men*, the capacity to procreate (or the capability of child-bearing) has long-ended (for almost two decades). At the opening, there is a heavily-publicized news report of the tragic death of the then youngest person, nineteen.⁴⁴⁰ The cause(s) for sterility are seemingly not understood although some underground resistance is working on restoring procreation or child-bearing. Beyond the *tragedy* of the day is a time (2027) and place (Great Britain) that is very cruel and chaotic; a once-empire that is torn apart by internal strife, class divisions—pressures from within and beyond national borders. And if there could be any association to the next line of this song, “we were the children of yesterday”, it might be that childhood has become *passé* bordering on extinction.

The decline of the family (an *association* of marriage) has been described previously and, most often, through Carle Zimmerman’s *Family and Civilization*. To bring this *decline* once more to the table, subordinated to civil law, the following:

In the U.S. we have tried to cloak both forms of marriage (contractual and non-contractual) and family or the lack of it under one general legal system.... As a result, in our culture the parental unit has no real backing or workable public support in the in law.

He continues to describe “the forgotten person” (under this law) as the one who honestly and sincerely wants to be a parent. And among the consequences of this subordination—besides the unsupported family—is a decline in birthrate.

The birth rate has dropped rapidly to a negative amount through a movement that began in the various European countries in the last third of the nineteenth century and has spread throughout all Christendom.

He adds: “This is exactly what happened in Greece and Rome.”⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰ *Children of Men*, Universal Pictures, 2006.

⁴⁴¹ *Family and Civilization*. The ancient Greek and Roman societies.

Him Who Cares Till When

We are the men who worry of nothing.

Is there anything to really worry about in this coincidence; the similarity of declining birthrates, the dying and death of societies? Should we fear not only this trend but other developments endemic of a declining society? And to recall the relevant words of G. K. Chesterton, “Most modern freedom is at root fear”; there is a sense that even freedom, is some form, is fraught with fear. But need I rehash the many possibilities of (or for) fear—the many times that this word and associations have been described—except to leave this subject with a counterforce, faith. There are many types of fears (or phobias), but is there similarly many types of faith? The Book of Hebrews defines faith as: being sure of what is hoped and certain of what we do not see.⁴⁴² But as to the object(s) of faith is another question. Some forms of faith man not include Christianity or Judaism; these kinds may turn to other things to trust, blindly or not.

- Children may have faith (or trust) in the parents and conditionally, parents in their children
- Employees may trust their employers and vice versa
- Citizens their leaders and (well, that may as far as it goes)

And so on and so forth goes the possibilities of faith or trust. But what happens when such faith is in doubt; what happens when the conditions or conduct that undergirded this faith is jeopardized, compromised or otherwise, diminished? What happens when the inevitable happens?

- When families no longer have faith in their own—what’s left of it
- When employment is no longer fueled on mutual trust
- When freedom is replaced by tyranny

And so on and so forth goes the once-certainties of faith or trust. What remains of faith when these (and other) objects (persons, places or things) fail to fulfill the expected or anticipated source of your hope, the *counterforce* to fear(s)?

⁴⁴² Paraphrased from Hebrews 11:1.

Getting Younger

We are the men who fight without aim.

One possible response is to fight. You can fight for this *object* (recovery, restoration, redemption) and so on. But as with all conflict and contention, there is some cost. On the primary subject of this book, a spouse may fight to save their marriage in the wake of divorce proceeding but, against divorce reforms previously described as No-Fault and Unilateral, they have little if any chance to save their marriage short of the other spouse (presumably, the *moving party*) retracting their decision, terminating the divorce proceedings. With little if any chance in the unchanged decision of the other, a spouse must now accept that this *object* (of their faith) is failing or has failed. And further, if younger children are involved, the same spouse may be looking at separation as a consequence of non-custodial designation by the state; thus, the spouse is forced to divorce and forced to disparity—potentially losing faith in both marriage and its associations. Depending on the behavior of both the discharged (non-custodial) and designated (custodial) parent, the consequences can degrade to the degree that the two—once married—are not opposed in continuing conflict and contention. This fight may be the result of one parent more than the other; yet, within the law, the custodial parent has more authority or legal latitude to act (or react) so as to effect their will over that of the other—even the children. What may have been a savable or restorable marriage, in the legitimacy of a covenant or contract, has been destroyed under the authority/ruling of the state regardless of *the best interest of the children* other considerations and consequences. With the acquiring of state authority, a once-spouse can change from loving and caring to fearful and calloused. Those empowered by such...change from individuals to the *institutionalized*—taking on the nature of authority:

- The incapacity to tell the truth
- The reckless, relentless pursuit of power at all costs
- ...and all other traits and treatments previously described

Having ingested this power, they depend on it for survival.

Him Who Cares Till When

We listen to no one, yet speak of our wisdom.

The Greek's called it *hubris*: a characteristic of an individual (more so than a group...although the group the offender belongs to may suffer consequences from the wrongful act); it often indicates a loss of contact with reality and an overestimation of one's own competence, accomplishments or capabilities, especially when the person exhibiting it is in a position of power. In the modern times, this condition and conduct is associated with overconfidence and pride (of the worse sense).⁴⁴³ The Book of Proverbs warns of this kind; that it *goes just before the fall*. These writings are among those that use *the Greek tragedy* with associated words and meanings, *hubris* and *nemesis*, wherein such pride often or invariably leads to *the fall*.⁴⁴⁴

But as to individuals, such behavior can even become narcissism: the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one's own attributes. The term originated from the Greek mythology, where the young Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water. And at the expense of not convincingly comparing one to the other, I will go so far to suggest that, among the traits of this disorder, is exploitative-entitlement in the role of parent among other personal relationships. Here are a few potentially relevant traits:

- Denial of remorse and gratitude
- Inability to view the world from the perspective of other people
- Using other people without considering the cost of doing so
- Detesting those who do not admire them
- Vulnerability to shame rather than guilt
- Hypersensitivity to any insults or imagined insults
- Difficulty with empathy

Narcissism is an arrogance that allows for unmitigated exploitation of others without regard for their feelings, interest or ill-effects.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ This modern application can apply to individuals and institutions (or groups) alike; but regardless, it promotes ignorance, blinding them to reality.

⁴⁴⁴ Hubris; Wikipedia.

⁴⁴⁵ Narcissism; Wikipedia.

Getting Younger

We are the pawns in the game.

The possibility for this worst of prides to become narcissism is evidently comparable between individuals and institutions, as:

A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.

But again, *the fall*; when the excessively proud are *blinded*—unable or unwilling to amend the conditions they've created—and fail to consider the consequences of their senseless actions and boundless ambitions.

Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man....⁴⁴⁶

Perhaps contrary to its origin (of self-love or infatuation), narcissism may involve a detachment from the self, from self-realities.

The narcissist, cut off from her spirituality, is one who spends unquantifiable energy supporting and maintaining and utterly and completely fake self, in denial of one's true self, trading it for glamour to compensate for a core of being that is simply wracked, a deep dark cold void; using and abusing others to maintain and sustain the false state.⁴⁴⁷

And in this *detachment* are the possibilities in family, as already described, whereby “others” are mere *pawns in the game* that, by this designation, play a paradoxical and perilous part of the most expended, the least appreciated:

If I am a pawn in someone else's chess game, you better believe I am going to demand an explanation before being shoved at some rook. I'll play my part, damn it, but I want the courtesy of being asked for my consent!⁴⁴⁸

Are we, or could we be, *pawns in the game*?

⁴⁴⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.

⁴⁴⁷ Stacey Scott Mae.

⁴⁴⁸ Thomm Quackenbush, *Danse Macabre (Night's Dream, #2)*.

Him Who Cares Till When

We're getting younger as time goes by.

How is it that *we're getting younger*—since it's not natural to grow younger? More than “forever young”, *getting younger* is a peculiar statement as it is a status. Can it be done and, if so, how?

Two seniors meet at in an assistant living arrangement. They each have their years of marriage and children, job and career and all the other status that of life and living to the present. Each has their health problems and each, with passing age, has lost the sexual drive (hormones and all) amid other functions. Still, they have their minds and hearts; enough of the humanness to assume an interest still in friendship, maybe more, to the point that they each derive a great deal of satisfaction in each other's company. Perhaps in the back of their minds that know that life on earth is reaching its last days, yet they are determined to invest some energy and effort in this relationship among others. Special events, like Valentine's Day, call for child-like sentiments with the exchange of cards or something more. These two are cute together—similar to two children in the way they talk about and in the company of the other. From time to time, the burdens and bleakness of life and living—dying and death—come forth, but in some degree, they have each other as a soft breeze brings momentary relief from the sun.

I'm not ready to let the youthful part of myself go yet. If maturity means becoming a cynic, if you have to kill the part of yourself that is naive and romantic and idealistic - the part of you that you treasure most - to claim maturity, is it not better to die young but with your humanity intact? ⁴⁴⁹

But I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now, goes the refrain of Bob Dylan's lyrics from “My Back Pages”. ⁴⁵⁰ And to the meaning: if wisdom enables right (or righting) conditions and conduct---more capacity to act on our conscience as individuals—than perhaps acting as children is, in this respect, a good thing.

⁴⁴⁹ Kenneth Cain, *Emergency Sex: And Other Desperate Measures*.

⁴⁵⁰ “My Back Pages”, Columbia Records, 1964.

Getting Younger

A little younger with everyday;

But this wisdom, if it is so vital to life and living, comes at a price. And who better to qualify the price than the Solomon of the Bible; the son of David, the king who asked God for wisdom (and received it).⁴⁵¹

- Wisdom is more precious than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with her (Proverbs 3:15, 8:11)
- She is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold (Proverbs 3:14)
- She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare to her (Proverbs 3:15)

And continuing in the next two verses of Proverbs 3: *Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are in peace.* Can (or has) such value be realized in humanity or, more personally, in your life?

Solomon is central to this subject of wisdom (as he is to his nation) and, further, he has evidently *taken stock* of *his world* as the subject of Ecclesiastes.⁴⁵²

I know that there is nothing better than for men to be happy and to do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.⁴⁵³

Where does *unholy wisdom* and Solomon's wisdom differ (besides that already described, *sorrow* and *grief* versus *pleasant ways* and *peace*? At least one credible source suggests that human wisdom is based on human reasoning and understanding—which is foolishness to God. Holy wisdom occurs from a different perspective; it sees things Godly reasoning and understanding as a presumably *pure* perspective.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ From 1 Kings 4, God granted Solomon wisdom (understanding heart to judge thy people that I may discern between good and bad...) at the question/request.

⁴⁵² The author of Ecclesiastes, Solomon summarizes *his world* as full of enigmas—the greatest of which is mankind: human wisdom (unholy wisdom) is flawed and *leads only to sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief* (1:18).

⁴⁵³ Ecclesiastes 3: 12-13.

⁴⁵⁴ Pure in that insightfulness-understanding is derived from absolutes (rather than relevant...).

Him Who Cares Till When

We are the children of tomorrow—not yesterday.

The scriptures describe a way; *the Way* that Christ mapped-out in The Gospel: not a way that leads to death and destruction, but the way that leads to life and living.⁴⁵⁵ When the church of Christ was formed, it did not seek to build great structures—monuments of stone and marble—but rather to establish and expand the *Cornerstone*, a unified body of believers in Christ, the son of God.

But why; why try to grow this *body* against great odds and oppression?⁴⁵⁶ In the most singular, simplest of reasons, it was to produce great faith in the *Father*, so much so that these *believers* would place their faith in no other things save Christ, the Gospel. To that end, they were *children* in the sense that they knew (or were coming to know...) God as the *Father* amid a new-found *family*.⁴⁵⁷ Such personal decision and *calling* would **not** be the *easy road*, the convenient course, in the pressures of that day or, potentially, for the time that remained.⁴⁵⁸ Struggle and sacrifice is not solely the life of these particular *children*, but the source of such...is deeply-rooted in the differences between human and holy wisdom, the human perspective versus the holy one. And such *deeply-rooted differences* can be very divisive.

The Bible is clear here: I am to love my neighbor as myself, in the manner needed, in a practical way, in the midst of the fallen world, at my particular point of history. This is why I am not a pacifist. Pacifism in this poor world in which we live—this lost world—means that we desert the people who need our greatest help.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁵ *The Way* was the name given to the early church first described in Acts 2: 42-47 as *the fellowship of the believers*.

⁴⁵⁶ This *body of believers* faced continuing opposition and oppression (from Christ's ministry) from both the conventional religion (Judaism) and the state (Roman occupation-imperialism)—the events leading-up to and including the crucifixion, a foreshadowing of this treatment.

⁴⁵⁷ Acts describes them as sharing their material possessions, one with the other, and meeting-up frequently—even daily—to encourage and to be encouraged in the expression of the teaching of Christ and his disciples.

⁴⁵⁸ The “time that remained” refers to the often expressed *Last Days*; the period from Christ's ascension to Christ's return, the Judgment.

⁴⁵⁹ Francis A. Schaeffer.

Getting Younger

We were able to connect over many months using one or more modes of the modern day. I have to say that I preferred face-to-face encounters only because it seemed to yield more fruit. Even in the yielding however, I knew that our conversations could not continue indefinitely. I knew that conversations were not the end.

"We've all been in contact," Good-hero told me during one of our phone conversations. "Rebel and I had lunch together and we've planned to meet with the others over the holidays."

"That is good news," I replied. "I can't wait to hear about it," I added as an invitation for future conversations. "And how is married life?" I asked, with Good-hero having wed the prior month.

"Good," he said promptly, with nothing more.

But such dialogue was typical of these modes; a few sound bytes of pleasant news to savor without any substance for nourishment. "And is Mascot still laughing," I asked to break the momentary silence.

"Oh yes; he's a real joker—always has been—as his way of dealing with life. But sometimes he cries too; as though he had been storing-up the tears for a long time—and I suppose this is a good thing."

"You mean crying," I said, somewhat surprised by the depth the dialogue had suddenly taken. "I mean, expressing his true feelings?"

"Yes, that's it," Good-hero concurred. He continued to explain that Lost-Silence had been spending more time with him and with Rebel. "She's almost like a parent in some ways; consoling them at times while, at other times, being critical—in constructive way."

"That's good to hear." *Who better to encourage them than their own,* I thought. *I couldn't imagine a better circumstance than this....*

"And you, your journey," I asked, stretching for some more *fruit*.

"I am in contact with our dad, his family, too," he added. "They came to one of my graduations and plan to attend another," he explained.

"That's remarkable Good-hero," I said while trying to suppress the emotions evoked by this news.

"It was peculiar strange at first, he said; it was as though we were strangers yet, at the same time—"

Him Who Cares Till When

“Connected,” I interrupted in my excitement.

“Yes; sort of like *Déjà vu* except that everyone is older, maybe much older than previously...thought,” Good-hero explained. “I had hoped that some day I would be able to see them again, but could not conceive the event given the gap, the conflict, the divorce and all,” he added. “It was desired but not desirable, if that makes any sense.”

“I understand,” was all I could say realizing now more than ever that this reunion was indeed remarkable.

Within a few days, a similar phone conversation occurred with Rebel; actually it was some text messages followed by some e-mails and finally the call. And though we had more *face-time* then all the others, our relationship was the least certain, the most mysterious of all. I could understand the others more, I thought, but not him; for whenever it seemed that we were making strides, he would disappear either in body or mind, medicated or perhaps not.

“What’s up,” he began as a commonly used phrase.

“I spoke to the others,” I replied, moving immediately beyond....
“Your brother said that all of you have been in contact.”

His tone noticeably different, Rebel responded: “Yeah, we’ve talked and texted.”

“And you’re pleased by this,” I asked.

“Yeah, sure,” he coolly said, without any other expression.

“Well I am thrilled,” I continued, breaking the silence. “To me, this contact means everything.” But then, he said nothing about it, but rather, moved to another subject, separate of family...ties.

“When are we going to get together again?”

“Whenever you’re ready, Rebel.”

“Yeah, ‘ready,’” he replied, seemingly unsure on how to continue.

“Ready is right; anything less would be uncivilized,” I said in an attempt to add some flavor to our bland conversation.

“What...oh yeah, ‘uncivilized’—from the commercial, I get it.”

“Oh well, I tried but I guess it is dated,” I remarked. “But again, anytime you’re ready, Rebel.”

Getting Younger

And so he came again, and again, for what Rebel seemed to need most of all was to believe that someone cared—someone could commit themselves to a relationship of some trust—and not discard him because of his drugs, related or independent decisions.

“Are you stoned,” I asked—not for the first time.

And with a moment of what may have been indecision, he responded with a nod, “Maybe, but not enough.”

This habit would lend to this arriving status; the expected effort to bear secrets tightly-held was best confronted under the influence—seemingly less inhibited, even neurotic, about exposing perceived weaknesses, wanting, and waywardness. His cause for secrecy was not derived internally or independent, but was learned by the hypocrisies that he either identified or imagined among or through his greatest influences however the effect and whatever the consequences.

What and how much had I lost by trying to do only what was expected of me instead of what I myself had wished to do? [] I am an invisible man. [] I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, simply because people refuse to see me.⁴⁶⁰

And though his sister be called the “lost” and “silence”; still, he was the one that was purposely desired as past—something intentionally forgotten among and between the immediate family—rather than as a reminder of what future awaits those who dare defy her dictates.

“Okay, I guess that means that you are high but could be higher,” I asked with both agitation and allowance. *He does this because it is what learned at an early age*, I kept reminding myself. *However chaotic his life may be, it is his life to live, to love or not, and to die.*

Chaos is what we've lost touch with. This is why it is given a bad name. It is feared by the dominant archetype of our world, which is Ego, which clenches because its existence is defined in terms of control.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶⁰ Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

⁴⁶¹ Terence McKenna.

Him Who Cares Till When

At the risk of ruining the moment, droning-on with more dictates, I put away my impulse and impositions, waiting instead for his next move—his moment for his matter. And minutes passed before he finally murmured:

If the words 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' don't include the right to experiment with your own consciousness, then the Declaration of Independence isn't worth the hemp it was written on.

"What was that; something about the law," I asked.

"No, not really; more about independence of mind and matter," he said, as though breaking through his own mental block.

"And what about it, the words," I continued.

"It comes from an author, Terence McKenna, I've been following. His writing is about human consciousness, natural and other psychedelics.

"Far-out," I quipped on the matter, his murmur.

"It's really ironic; that a natural-sourced substance has been made illegal though it is parchment among other products."

This was not the first time that Rebel had posed such thoughts in word (however clearly spoken or explained). I knew that his academics had been a *tough road* for most of his young life, but such moments impressed me that he still had the way and willingness to use his mind for learning—for life and living. "So hemp is a natural substance and, because of that, you hold that it should not be banned—is that it?"

"It's more than that," he replied. "It's much more than hemp or any other substance like it. Hell, I was drugged for most of my childhood at my mom's direction—as was my older brother. My addiction began—"

"Long ago," I finished. "Yes, you've told me that much."

"But this is only a personal paradox," he continued, "Try considering a country that alleges to seek peace by committing continuous war."

"So the similarity is—"

"Most similar is the lies," he said with firmness. "They lie to you, about you and among you," he explained. "It's like that governor in your story---'What is truth?'"

"I see your point: in times of conflict, truth is a dangerous thing."

"More than that, I'm afraid," he said, intently looking me in the eye.

Getting Younger

"What is the most dangerous drug in our society," Rebel asked.

"I don't know for sure, maybe Alcohol?"

"You could be right," he responded, "and it is legal of course."

"I know, but prohibition was tried, failed."

"What it was something else, another—"

"Drug," I cut-in. "You mean Meth or something like—"

"No, not a synthetic or natural drug, but some other addiction that alters the conscience and the conscious," he explained. "It sways public opinion and enables virtually all of society to be swept-up in lies, deception and distraction," he continued.

"You can only mean the media," I said with certainty.

"That's right, **Who-Cares**. The media is the most serious...and television is by nature the dominator drug par excellence. Control of content, uniformity of content, repeatability of content make it inevitably a tool of coercion, brainwashing, and manipulation."⁴⁶²

Wow, he had been doing some studying—and now I'm the student. "Sounds like you discovered some truth of your own," was all I could say in response.

"And you helped," he added. "It was you who raised the question about the question, 'What is truth?'"

Listening and learning—I would not believe it if I wasn't here to witness it. "Yes, the story of the governor and his great nation-state."

"However you title it, but for me, the story of lies and more lies," he said without sarcasm. "A story that resonates...."

"I can see that," I agreed. "And thus, the rebellion," I added.

"The bigger you build the bonfire, the more darkness is revealed."⁴⁶³

I don't know about the others,, but he's certainly shedding some light on me today. "So you've not only seen the light, but it is illuminating beyond—is that it?"

"Yeah, it may not be pure, but I think some light is there."

⁴⁶² Terence McKenna.

⁴⁶³ Terence McKenna.

Him Who Cares Till When

Rebel came and went, but each time, seemed to be that much more confident in this light, life and living, even loving both self and others too. He had *come far*, I think, and I was simply satisfied because I could be there to go further with him. During this time, the others came and went too—not nearly as often but similarly with more confidence in the prospect of reconciling with each other, if not there parents and other family. All in all, they were becoming closer, more caring and more courageous in life and living amid and apart their connectedness.

The parent's relationship cannot be overstated in terms of its value or influence to the child or children; and when that relationship models more adversity (and even hatred) than the preferable love, the children bear the costs on their own relationships and understanding of what marriage and love is all about.⁴⁶⁴

And they had to *bear the costs* when, in my mind, deserve to be redeemed—and from those responsible for this treatment, the admission of responsibility and the offering for reconciliation. Yet,

Many parents fail to grasp the impact on children of fathers living outside the household.... Numerous authors have argued that it does not serve children's best interests to establish custodial arrangements that place fathers in a marginal role.⁴⁶⁵

The reality for many children is unfortunately that:

As the social role for fathers has diminished, so our cultural story of fatherhood has by now almost completely ceased to portray fathers as essential guarantors of child and societal well-being. Not to be overly gloomy, but in some respects it has been all downhill for fathers since the Industrial Revolution.⁴⁶⁶

And so, these children are a few among the many and, over several decades, have joined of majority or movement of children systematically made parentless by the state, civil law, and other destructive forces.

⁴⁶⁴ *A Once and Always Father.*

⁴⁶⁵ *Divorce and Loss.*

⁴⁶⁶ *Fatherlessness America.*

Getting Younger

What becomes of such matters and movements; the weakening of marriage and its association amid other measures to destroy social strength? What can or should be done to turn back the tide that has been eroding theses underpinnings—as a storm with ever-increasing intensity and effect? Is it too late to restore or reclaim these things?

G. K. Chesterton was quoted near the beginning of this book (p. 9) that *someday the family and state would confront one another*; and Dr. Stephen Baskerville concurred that *that time has come* (referring to divorce reforms and the effect of sky-rocking divorce and the slow, but steady, decline of marriage and its associations).

Even now,, the systematic dissolution of marriage(s) or the dilution of marriage—as an authority established by God—has resulted in the state-driven redefining of marriage as legally including two of the same sex or gender; a definition that has never occurred in the history of marriage, in all of civilization, as a telltale of just how significant the effect of so-called divorce reforms among other detrimental forces.

Those decrying this latest development (in the downfall of marriage) should have been—if they were not—taking action decades ago to end (or withdraw) from state-authorized marriage. Such action would have distinguished the absolutes and affections for marriage—as a covenant—from the arbitrary and activity against marriage—as a relationship of convenience. The state has assaulted marriage and, in its aggression, is directly responsible (though unaccountable) for the developments described thus far, the decline in social strength.

Meanwhile, our entire economic status is under scrutiny and, while this subject may seem off-line or non-related, it is very critical in shaping the future of our society. These economic woes—coupled with continuous international conflict and contention—is hollowing out our society like the phorid flies that lay eggs in the abdomen of the honeybee—eventually reducing the entire population of the species.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁷ When the eggs hatch, the bee begins to go crazy. These “zombees,” as they’re called, will then leave the hive in the middle of the night, fly a short distance away, and nose dive into the ground. A week later, about a dozen fly larvae will rip their way out of the bee corpse.

Him Who Cares Till When

Perhaps there is a more accurate or appropriate metaphor for the myriad of causes lending to the effect of not only a societal breakdown but the dying of what has been called a democracy, republic or similarly-assumed society of such standing. As Jimmy Carter recently stated, “America is not functioning democracy.”⁴⁶⁸ I should add that this statement, the report, gained little traction in the mainstream media or similar forums.

But nation-states do ebb and flow, come and go, and sometimes stay some course as historically recorded. But then, time and place comes into play; that is, the relevant conditions and conduct that create and characterize who and what we are—versus what we think we were and are—in the course of our learning and understanding.

Among Christians is the concept that they will be spared the worst of the *last days*—such that *wars and rumors of wars*, among other signs, are met with welcome and wanting rather than woe and worry, in the described *pains* of end-times.⁴⁶⁹ Meanwhile, many have committed themselves to the political process and public service on the back of one of what is presumed a two-party system. And to these last words I leave you with two trusted and valued sources, their instruction:

Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest, and sacrificial.⁴⁷⁰

One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative. Christianity is not conservative, but revolutionary.⁴⁷¹

Sincerely, Him **Who-Cares**

⁴⁶⁸ “President Carter says America has no functioning Democracy”, July 21, 2013; truth-out.org.

⁴⁶⁹ Referring to the Dispensationalist, Pre—millennialism; that a second return of Christ will occur whereby believers will be lifted-up to meet Christ during this return, before the Tribulation or period of most intense pains; Wikipedia.

⁴⁷⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

⁴⁷¹ Francis Schaeffer.

Arthur's Notes

Brief Bio of Participants or Siblings ⁴⁷²

Good-Hero	<p>The role of the 'family hero' is usually adopted by the oldest child. This role is also referred to as the 'parental child,' the 'superstar,' and the 'goody two shoes', This child attempts to do everything right. He/she is the family's high achiever, and as such appears quite ambitious and responsible. Given the family circumstances (i.e., a chemically dependent parent), the child is often admired for excelling under difficult conditions. The family hero reduces tension in the family simply by doing everything 'right.' The hero is the source of pride for the family, inspiring desperately needed hope and giving the family something to feel good about. The hero's accomplishments are distinctions around which the family members can rally and say, 'We're not so bad after all.'</p>
Problem-Rebel (Scapegoat)	<p>The 'scapegoat' role is often adopted by the second oldest child. The scapegoat can be viewed as the alter ego of the family hero. This child does very little right and is quite rebellious, perhaps even antisocial. Scapegoats may be involved in fights, theft, or other trouble at school or in the community; they are often labeled 'juvenile delinquents.' Male scapegoats may be violent, while female scapegoats may express themselves by running away or engaging in promiscuous sexual activity. Scapegoats most often abuse alcohol and drugs themselves.</p> <p>This child is referred to as the 'scapegoat' because he/she is the object of the parent's misdirected frustration and rage. The child may be abused both emotionally and physically by this parent.</p>

⁴⁷² Role Behavior in Dysfunctional (or drug-dependent) Families;
employeesfirst.ie/ resources/ documents/ FamiliesRolesinDysfunctional
Families.doc

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Lost-Silence	<p>Even in functional families, the middle children are thought to get less attention than their siblings, and seem less certain of their contribution to the family. This tendency is exacerbated in chemically dependent families. The 'lost child' may be a middle child but may also be the youngest. The chief characteristic of the lost child is seeking to avoid conflict at all costs. Such children tend to feel powerless and are described as 'very quiet,' 'emotionally disturbed,' 'depressed,' 'isolated,' 'withdrawn,' and so on. These children tend to be forgotten, as they are very shy. They are followers, not leaders. They engage in much fantasy. If they stand out in school in any way, it is by virtue of poor attendance. If asked to do something they fear doing, they may pretend not to have heard the instructions or claim not to understand them. These behaviors point to a great deal of insecurity. The lost child helps maintain balance in the family by simply disappearing - that is, by not requiring any attention. In essence, the youngster in this role supports the family equilibrium by causing no new problems and requiring minimal attention</p>
Comedy-Mascot (Mascot)	<p>The last commonly described role is that of the 'mascot.' This role is also referred to as the 'family clown,' or simply the 'clown.' The youngest child in the family often adopts the role of the mascot. Everyone in the family likes the mascot and is comfortable with having him/her around. The family usually views the mascot as the most fragile and vulnerable; thus, he/she tends to be the object of protection. Deutsch notes that even the chemically dependent parent treats the mascot with kindness most of the time. Mascots often act silly and make jokes, even at their own expense. The clownish behavior acts as a defense against feelings of anxiety and inadequacy. They often have a dire need for approval from others. As adults, they are very likeable but appear anxious.</p>

Arthur's Notes

Structure and Flow

This structure and flow combines input from several sources (that will be referenced); the basic purpose is to create an atmosphere in which the described conversation-conference can take place with some measurable progress toward solving problems; but of course, the problem(s) must first be identified and understood.

In my own profession of engineering, this structure and flow (of problem-resolution) is usually team-based—the benefit being that the group is intelligent (or knowledgeable) and invested—capable in and compelled to resolution(s). Because of this common group effort as well as business-orientation, these methods (and the tools) will not be considered as applied except to the extent of some tendencies that conveniently cross-over.

“About Education” offers some strategy and guidelines for problem-solving in the realm of psychology. First the strategy, then the guidelines: In some cases, people are better off learning everything they can about the issue and then using factual knowledge to come up with a solution. In other instances, creativity and insight are the best options.⁴⁷³

Identifying the Problem	While it may seem like an obvious step, identifying the problem is not always as simple as it sounds. In some cases, people might mistakenly identify the wrong source of a problem, which will make attempts to solve it inefficient or even useless.
Defining the Problem	After the problem has been identified, it is important to fully define the problem so that it can be solved.
Forming a Strategy	The next step is to develop a strategy to solve the problem. The approach used will vary depending upon the situation and the individual's unique preferences.

⁴⁷³ What Is Problem-Solving?

psychology.about.com/od/problemsolving/f/problem-solving-steps.htm.

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Organizing Information	Before coming up with a solution, we need to first organize the available information. What do we know about the problem? What do we not know? The more information that is available, the better prepared we will be to come up with an accurate solution.
Allocating Resources	Before you begin to solve a problem, you need to determine how high priority it is. If it is an important problem, it is probably worth allocating more resources to solving it. If, however, it is a fairly unimportant problem, then you do not want to spend too much of your available resources into coming up with a solution.
Monitoring Progress	Effective problem-solvers tend to monitor their progress as they work towards a solution. If they are not making good progress toward reaching their goal, they will reevaluate their approach or look for new strategies.
Evaluating the Results	After a solution has been reached, it is important to evaluate the results to determine if it is the best possible solution to the problem. This evaluation might be immediate, such as checking the results of a math problem to ensure the answer is correct, or it can be delayed, such as evaluating the success of a therapy program after several months of treatment.

Of course, problem-resolution can be complex (bigger than a “math problem”)—which is where the conversations-conferences lead potentially to “complications-crisis” before subsequent steps are possible, if possible.

Arthur's Notes

Who I am (and am not)

I am a mentor, a counselor in a casual way, who sincerely—even empathetically—cares about the matters of marriage and family under the pressures and perniciousness of state's divorce laws. My “self-driven” learning, coupled with my own personal experience, is the foundation from which I found my claims.

I am not a therapist or counselor (in matters of health or law), but only a laymen, father and caring person who has witness the effects of divorce and post-divorce treatment of those forced to divorce and to surrender their children—among other egregious conduct of the state.

In this story, this book, I am the primary narrator as well as the author; and while the book is not autobiographical, it is none-the-less a fictional account of what I conceive in the way of potential healing from the devastating effects of divorce to parents, children and society at large.

As a narrator, I am not omnipresent—I do not know everything about everything or everyone(the participants, there peers, etc.) —but what I do know comes through my experience(s) as related to the subject matter, and the subsequent learning reflected in my other books or works. In short, I am parent that, with much loss through divorce, is compelled to learn and write about it. My qualifications go so far as the belief that I am at least willing, if not able.

As for the balance of knowledge and learning (that which I do yet know about), some information must come from the participants through the dialogue (conversation-conference) and perhaps by other means or modes for which I cannot describe in any more detail at this time. As with any undertaking of this kind, some details will reasonably follow while others show-up at the last minute (or even in the editing).

Why I am doing this (attempting to mentor...)

I am doing this for them for those like them, the children of divorce. I am writing this story for the possibility that it might help them.

Him Who Cares Till When

What I hope to accomplish (my goals and objectives)

Of course, to complete the book; see the project to its end and, even more, to see it offer fruit in the years to come; this is my goal. Objectives are delineations of the goal, and include:

- Learning, more learning and understanding
- Quality in both timeliness and relevance of the story, its content
- Healing for each and all of us
- Relevance to their needs and their own goals and objectives

How I will proceed to the degree that planning is possible

As U.S. President Eisenhower was credited as saying, *a plan is worthless but planning is essential* (paraphrased). And with that in mind, I continue my planning even now while waiting on some intervention in and as the story unfolds.

Arthur's Notes

Final List of Topics

A	G-J
Abandonment (anger, fear)	Girls (femininity, female, women)
Absent Parent (alienation/ intervention))	Grandparents (extended family)
Abuse (physical, emotional, etc.)	Individualism
Acceptance (father)	Interests
Addiction (legal/illegal drugs, alcohol)	K-O
Adolescence (with connection to adulthood)	Loneliness
Adversaries/Allies (friends/enemies)	Loss
Anger (several possibilities on subtopic)	Love
Anxiety	Loyalty
Anger (several possibilities on subtopic)	Marriage (re-marriage)
Anxiety	Mourning (grief)
B-C	Narcissism
Behavior	Nurturing
Bible (beliefs, spirituality)	P-S
Boys (masculinity, male, men)	Parenting (co-, single, step)
Commitment	Rejection
Community	Separation
Conflict (confusion, contention)	T-Z
Courts (civil law)	Therapy
Custody	Trust
D-F	Vulnerable (vulnerability,
Defense (marriage and family)	Wise (experience, wisdom)
Depression	
Distrust	
Divorce	
Emotions (development, maturation)	
Family	
Fatherhood/ Fatherlessness	
Feelings	
Forgiveness (freedom)	

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Single-parent system

The single-parent system (or primary custody) describes the process of “awarding” children to one parent while discharging the other parent (non-custodial). To understand this system is to begin by accepting that in order for the state to award the children, they must legally seize the children as part of the marital assets.

The division of assets includes children as part of marriage property. Often, but not always, the mother will be awarded the children in single-parent custody; thus, the father will be discharged or removed from his parental duties in large part—with the exception of financial support as direct payments through the state and as other liabilities such as insurance and other needs as court-ordered.

Of all aspects or conditions of the divorce decree, child-support receives the bulk of attention and enforcement in the post-divorce period; and while you think that such attention is due to the children’s interest, standby for some learning that at the least cast doubt on this thinking if not convince you that indeed that civil law acts in its own interest. From the Alabama Family Rights Association (ALFRA), the following e-mail that entitled: “Exposing Truth about Alabama’s Application of Title IV-D and Child Support Enforcement”:

Did you know for every dollar collected in child support by the state of Alabama the federal government gives the state two dollars? That is \$1000 of state income for every \$500 of court ordered child support.

Is it really about the child's best interest or all about money?

Congress created the Social Security Act, a section of which is called Title IV. Title IV describes how tax dollars will be distributed among the States to subsidize their individual welfare programs. In order for States to tap into the federal treasure chest, containing billions of dollars, they must demonstrate that they are complying with Title IV mandates to collect child support revenues. In other words, to get money from the federal government, each State must become a child support collection and reporting agency.

Arthur's Notes

Every unwed or single parent seeking welfare assistance must disclose on the application the identities of the other parent of the children and how much child support the other parent has been ordered by a family court to pay. The parent must also commit to continuously reporting the other parents payments so that the State can count the money as "collected" to the federal government's Office of Child Support Enforcement. As with all bureaucracies, this process has developed into a monstrosity that chews up and spits out the very people it was designed to help.

States have huge financial incentives to increase the amount of child support it can report to the federal government as "collected". To increase collection efforts, States engage in the immoral practice of dividing children from both parents in family courts.

Have you ever wondered why family courts award custody to one parent in 80%-90% of all custody cases, even when the other parent is determined to be just as suitable and fit to raise the child? It is because the amount of child support ordered by the State is largely determined by how much time the child spends with each parent. This means that the State "collects" less child support if parents share equal custody. **By prohibiting each parent from having equal custody and time with their children, the State's child support coffers are increased and federal dollars are received.**

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Key Elements of Popenoe's Assertion and Assessment

In the subtitle "Fatherhood in Contemporary Culture" of *Life without Father*, David Popenoe makes the following assertion and assessment:

The end result of many cultural, social, and economic trends we have discussed is a society surprisingly unsupportive of fatherhood. Indeed, if one were specifically to design a culture and a social system for the express purpose of undercutting fatherhood and men's contribution to family life, our current society would be close to what would result.

Consider the following key elements one would want to incorporate:

- Make marriage into a weak institution. Say that marriage is just a piece of paper...Replace the phrase, "till death do us part" with "so long as I am happy."
- Sexualize the society. Emphasize sex as often as possible in the media and popular culture...
- Institute an educational system that disregards the fact that childrearing is a major adult responsibility and that marriage is important to childrearing.
- Have an economic system that does not recognize worker's family responsibilities and that stresses ever-increasing material consumption.
- Develop a culture that heavily stresses individualism. As the primary goal of life, promote individual freedom and self-fulfillment rather than social responsibility and obligation...
- In social discourse, through the media, and in the design of the built environment, de-emphasize the importance of children to the continuation of society.
- Overlook the importance of fathering when discussing gender roles.
- When fathering is discussed, don't mention that fathers are unique and irreplaceable as protectors, disciplinarians, and guides...

From almost every social and cultural perspective, fatherhood has been made not only increasingly difficult but often seemingly superfluous and unnecessary.

Arthur's Notes

Comments/Response, Family-Life (program, Little Rock, AK)

Dear friend,

Thank you for writing FamilyLife and for listening to the broadcasts with Dr. Wayne Grudem.

FamilyLife also believes in the covenant of marriage (with God) and our mission is to strengthen marriages so that divorce won't be an option. Through our broadcasts, marriage get-a-ways, website, and resources, we discourage divorce and champion reconciliation.

As you stated so eloquently, the laws in our nation are **not** currently friendly to marriage as God designed it. Here in Arkansas, couples can choose the covenant marriage license in which couples agree to counseling and a longer period of time before divorce can be filed. This became an option when Mike Huckabee was our governor. However, a couple doesn't have to choose the covenant license and, sadly, many don't. Divorcing on impulse instead of getting help is all too common.

We also believe in extensive pre-marital counseling and, thankfully, many churches are doing that since the alarming statistic became known that divorces in the church almost equal the divorces of the non-churched.

However, we believe that the number one priority is the hearts of people. Faithfulness to the marriage vows and covenant cannot be legislated, but when hearts are transformed by the power of the Gospel, behavior changes.

Thanks for caring and God bless you,

On 2010-10-29 07:52:36 AM H. Kirk Rainer) wrote:

QUESTION: First, thank you for your vital ministry and for your daily radio program. Regarding today's program with Dr. Wayne Grudem: As one who has witnessed (firsthand) divorce in the U.S., I realize(d) that the Church is no longer authority over marriage; but rather, the State (as licensure) is the authority of marriage. In effect, the State shows no regard for vows, a covenant or any spiritual or religious base; rather the State has diluted marriage from what was once a

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contract to a relationship of convenience - made so through no-fault divorce.

The sad commentary is that somewhere along the way, the Church surrendered authority of marriage to the State; a change or process that is at the crux of why marriage continues to be weakened, and thus, threatened at present by radical changes.

I believe that the only way to sustain or limit the effect (further) is for the Church to take back marriage; otherwise, this institution will continue on a course of secular and arbitrary law. If marriage is a sacrament, then why is the State the authority?

Arthur's Notes

Why do children need two parents? ⁴⁷⁴

Or ask another way, why are both parent's important to their children? The statistics that are presented at alwaysfathers.com (references in the footnotes below) at least give reason to consider the increased risks imposed on children without fathers or possibly in single-parent homes.

Child abuse may be the first consideration (or concern) and, for the rights reason, is a focus area of today's social statistics. An environment with both biological parents remains the safest place for children. Even before children are mature adults, crime is a concern (or is possible) and, often coupled to it, drug abuse.

I speak from personal experience when I say that having parental support in school can make the difference; sadly, many children do not have such a support benefit.

Yes, children who get help from parents have a better chance in their education. Even the brightest kids can be riddled by emotional problems, or perhaps less complex, a basic attitude problem.

Whatever the reason or cause for a father's absence (from his children), the problems are more probable. An often cited resource for identifying these "problems" are: *Second Chances: Men, Women and Children, a Decade of Divorce*; and the follow-on publication, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*. ⁴⁷⁵

More now than ever, women are choosing to have children out-of-wedlock. Could the high divorce rate of four generations be connected to this current choice? Divorce has generational consequences - among

⁴⁷⁴ The content comes from my own Website, alwaysfather.com, and from the sources cited. Additional material, statistics, are accessible on the site that were obtained from:

"Father Facts" 5th Edition, National Fatherhood Initiative;

"A Shared Parenting Tool Kit, American Coalition for Fathers and Children";

Father and Child Reunion, Warren Farrell;

Taken into Custody, Stephen Baskerville;

"The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man"; a study by representatives from the University of Virginia and DePaul University School of Public Service".

⁴⁷⁵ Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis and Sandy Blakeslee, 1988 and 2000.

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them, the rise of the single-parent family. Marital status remains the strongest predictor of whether a father will be present in the home.

David Blankenhorn suggests that the "three most important things to children" are to:

- Be loved by their parents
- To (or to be able to) love their parents
- Have enduring relationships. ⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁶ David Blankenhorn: the founder and president of the Institute for American Values and the author of *Fatherless America* and *The Future of Marriage*.

Arthur's Notes

Paul R. Amato of Penn State University ⁴⁷⁷

This is based on the proposed question: "If the proportion of U.S. children living with their two biological parents were as high as it was in 1980, what would be the likely impact on the range of social problems? Alternatively, what if the proportion was as high as it was in 1970?"

Social Problem	...as in 1980	...as 1970
School failure	With U.S. family structure as strong today as it in 1980, each year about 300,000 fewer adolescents fail a grade at schoolabout 643,000
School suspension	...485,000 fewer/year	...1,040,000 fewer/
Needs psychotherapy	...248,000 fewer/	...531,000 fewer/
Delinquent behavior	...216,000 fewer/	...464,000 fewer/
Involved in violence	...211,000 fewer/	...453,000 fewer
Smokes/uses tobacco	...240,000 fewer/	...515,000 fewer/
<u>Considers suicide</u> Attempts suicide	<u>...83,0000 fewer /</u> ...29,000 fewer/	<u>...179,000 fewer /</u> 62,000 fewer/

⁴⁷⁷ "The Impact of Family Formation Change on the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Well-being of the Next Generation", Paul R. Amato, Pennsylvania State University, 2007.

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***The Future of Marriage*, “...ideals for re-institutionalizing marriage in the U.S.” ⁴⁷⁸**

- End marriage penalties for low-income couples (that penalize marriage by increasing their tax liability)
- Pass new laws offering financial and other incentives...to couples who participate in premarital counseling
- Increase public and private sector funding for comprehensive, multi-sector, community-based initiatives aimed at strengthening marriage and improving outcomes for children
- Make marriage education and other marriage support services more accessible to low-income couples and communities
- Encourage churches and other houses of worship to incorporate marriage mentoring as a regular part of congregational life
- Do **not** legally redefine marriage as “a private relationship between two people”
- Learn more about marriage formation and marriage success in communities of color
- Add high-quality marriage and relationship education to the public school curriculum
- Teach young people in schools and elsewhere that unwed child-bearing is wrong
- Create communities of therapists who are pro-marriage and who are improving educational models for working with distressed couples

⁴⁷⁸ *The Future of Marriage*, David Blankenhorn, 2007, p.245/6.

Arthur's Notes

- Seek to reduce unnecessary divorce by combining longer waiting periods for divorce with stronger provisions for courts to refer couples to marriage education
- Expand children's rights to include the right to a natural biological heritage and the right to know their biological origins
- Create a blue-ribbon Commission on Marriage charged with leading a civil, serious public conversation about the meaning and possible future of marriage in the U.S. and establishing national goals for strengthening marriage

He concludes: "To me, and many of my colleagues, it is a worthy goal. Why?" Because:

- A society in which marriage does not thrive is not a thriving society
- The gift of the self through marriage is one of the finest things that humans are made of
- A child deserves a mother and a father who love the child and love each other
- The goal is not only desirable; it is possible
- We owe it to ourselves to do all that we can to improve marriage's fate

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Is Marriage Dying?

Just Google such a phrase (the dying or decline of marriage), and you'll discover how critical—how much a crisis—marriage has come to be in the U.S. (and perhaps elsewhere).⁴⁷⁹ The fact of the matter is that marriage per capita has been a steady decline since the 1960s with incremental, though consistent, decreases with each passing year and decade.

Though a little dated of the possible “hits”, a 2011 article from U.S. News & World Report begins as:

A Pew Research Center/ Time magazine study released Wednesday reports that the prevalence of marriage is at an all-time low, with just 51 percent of American adults married today. By contrast, in 1960, 72 percent of American adults were married. Furthermore, only 20 percent of 18-to-29-year-olds are married today, as opposed to 59 percent in 1960.⁴⁸⁰

So whether dying or not, an institution or not, marriage is certainly diminishing (with more recent data, 2014, showing that slightly less than half adults are married).

It is reasonable however, that the decline is not entirely the result of divorce, either directly or indirectly (as a secondary effect), but what is certain is that *anything the government subsidizes—you get more of it*. Thus, divorce reforms that lead to sky-rocketing divorce has most certainly and significantly contributed to the decline in marriage, the detrimental effect to associations (fatherhood, parenthood, childrearing and development, and society and culture at large).

⁴⁷⁹ While this book focuses on the U.S., the decline of marriage and family is nothing new—nor is presently limited to the U.S. I focus on the present and my nation-state because of my obvious relationship, and therefore concern, both this time and place. *Family and Civilization*, Carle Zimmerman, s a resource on the history of marriage & family covering a broad time and place from the ancient world to the present Western society.

⁴⁸⁰ U.S. News & World Report, “Is Marriage a Dying Institution?” Tierney Sneed, Dec. 14, 2011.

Arthur's Notes

In a most recent article in the Huffington Post, the matter of marriage decline is described in the larger possibilities of the general question: "So what's really happening?"

Some theories point to the economy, some argue Millennials don't feel the same societal pressure to marry as generations before them and others suggest that the younger generations simply don't need marriage anymore, instead choosing to cohabitate and raise children outside the institution of marriage.⁴⁸¹

And while quantified results are not available (or could not be obtained), the reasons range from that described above—that marriage is no longer a viable option—to my own condemnation of divorce reforms, the immediate and secondary effects. And is a link between these two, consider a Millennial that lived-through his parent's divorce. Could he be consequently less willing—if not altogether resistant—to "making the same mistake, risking the loss in/through the consequence?

⁴⁸¹ Huffington Post, "The Decline of U.S. Marriage Explained in One Incredible Gif", Tayrn Hillin, 10/01/2014.

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Family and Civilization; three types of families⁴⁸²

Trustee	When the state is weak, the extended family or clan is the primary social power, and the state itself is seen as a union of families rather than individuals. Rights and property belong primarily to the family itself, and its current living members see themselves as mere trustees, charged with passing along what they have received. The family is the primary instrument of justice: the family itself is held accountable for the misdeeds of its members, and each member has a duty to avenge wrongs against his kinsman.
Domestic	As the state gains power, it takes over the role of enforcing justice and tries to stamp out the private justice of the trustee family. Universal religions extend moral duties to non-kinsmen. With the spread of trade, it becomes useful for a family to be able to sell the property which it had been holding in trust. Out of these pressures arises the domestic family, the type which Zimmerman believes constitutes the best balance of family and society. The domestic family consists of the living members of the nuclear family unit: father, mother, and children. Religion provides strong social sanctions against divorce, childlessness, and sexual immorality.
Atomistic	As individualism and impiety spread, the ideological foundations of the domestic family are undermined, leading to the atomistic family. In an atomistic society, marriage is seen as a temporary and socially unimportant contract between independent individuals. As atomism spreads, divorce becomes common, adultery loses its stigma, sexual perversions of all sorts come to be accepted and even celebrated, children rebel against their parents, childbearing comes to be seen as a burden, and the population implodes.

⁴⁸² *Family and Civilization*, p. 21-36.

Arthur's Notes

Ten Signs of a Culture's End ⁴⁸³

- A society which no longer worships or acknowledges God
- The decline of the family
- A society's low view of life
- The prevalence of base and immoral entertainment
- The increase of violent crime among young people
- The declining middle class
- An insolvent government
- A government that lives off of society's moral decay
- The ruling class loses its will
- The failure of its people to see what is happening

⁴⁸³ William Jefferson Clinton Memorial Library, written by Brad Keena; clintonmemoriallibrary.com/clint_change.html.

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Cynicism; Associations or Components ⁴⁸⁴

Cynicism is described (in the reference) as part and parcel the consequence of Western Civilization, its secularization. So is it then the result of a broad movement—a detour from the sacred? Yes, according to this source; cynicism is a symptom of a more-deeply rooted secularizing of society.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, the roots go beyond that the individual, their personal history and heritage, to the broader spectrum of culture and society; hence, the illness has a much larger scope that goes well beyond a personal problem to more of a public threat—especially for the young people of today.

This is the secular age in which we live. It is a world that increasingly claims to “know better” than faith and enchanted reality. It is seeing the world...as grown-ups; [and] how might it be expressed in the popular conscience? That’s right: cynicism.

The author suggests that the young person must be “cynical about cynicism”—to be critical of cynicism, its presence and predominance in both the personal and public life. To do so begins with recognition of associations or components *at the root of cynicism*:

- **Apathy** where indifference and discontentment reign
- **Criticism** where the person places such as premium on their own analysis of the world at the expense of love
- **Misdirection** where a fixation on someone or something stifles any substantive devotions, leaving the soul deprived and dissatisfied
- **Isolation** where criticism is directed from nothingness (rather than a basis) such that there can be no countervailing force or critique
- **Events or experience(s)** where suffering has produced legitimate, though retained, concerns that, left unchecked, renders an *everlasting, irrevocable counter-offense of justified negative emotion*

⁴⁸⁴ Jonathan Parnell.

⁴⁸⁵ Secularization: the transformation of a society from close identification with religious values and institutions toward nonreligious (or irreligious) values and secular institutions. The secularization thesis refers to the belief that as societies progress, particularly through modernization and rationalization, religion loses its authority in all aspects of social life and governance; Wikipedia.

Toxic Relationships⁴⁸⁶

From an article, "Five signs you're in a toxic relationship" in Psychology Today, the following:

- **It seems like you can't do anything right:** the other person constantly puts you down as not good enough. They mock your personality, and you feel ashamed most of the time. You only feel pardoned [only] when you take on the traits of the person doing the condemning or judging.
- **Everything is about them and never about you:** you have feelings too, but the other person won't hear them. You're unable to have a two-sided conversation where your opinion is heard, considered, and respected. Instead of acknowledging your feelings, they battle with you until they get the last word
- **You find yourself unable to enjoy good moments with this person:** every day brings another challenge. It seems as though they are always raising gripes about you. Their attempt to control your behavior is an attempt to control your happiness
- **You're uncomfortable being yourself around that person:** you don't feel free to speak your mind. You have to put on a different face just to be accepted by that person. You realize you don't even recognize yourself anymore.
- **You're not allowed to grow and change:** whenever you aim to grow and improve yourself, the other person responds with mockery and disbelief. There is no encouragement or support for your efforts. Instead, they keep you stuck in old judgments insisting that you will never be any different than you are now.

It is noted that the tendency of actually seeking-out such relationships can come from as far back as childhood:

Past negative experiences... ingrained in the way we think and feel that we don't realize we are steeped in toxicity until—or hopefully when—someone else points it out.

⁴⁸⁶ "Toxic Relationships, Rosemary K.M. Sword and Philip Zimbardo, Ph.D. Psychology Today; psychologytoday.com/blog/the-time-cure/201308/toxic-relationships.

Him Who Cares Till When

ADHD and Depression among Young People ⁴⁸⁷

This information will hardly *scratch the surface* on what has been a growing trend (predominately in the U.S.) and public health concern for well over a decade.

This new research indicates that we're seeing a growing trend in the use of ADHD medications among adults. In 2005, the numbers continued upward from 2004, as they have every year since the beginning of this decade. ⁴⁸⁸

From *Toxic Psychiatry*, psychiatrist Peter Breggin;

Hyperactivity is the most frequent justification for drugging children. The difficult-to-control male child is certainly not a new phenomenon, but attempts to give him a medical diagnosis are the product of modern psychology and psychology.

Drugging children is big business—as with that for adults. Unlike any other country, the U.S. is practically plagued by depression or, more directly, anti-depressant medication. ⁴⁸⁹ **Are we being made depressed or just drugged?** ⁴⁹⁰

There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorships without tears, so to speak; producing a kind of painless concentration camp for societies, so the people will in fact have their liberties taken from them, but will rather enjoy [it]. ⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ “More Young Adults taking ADHD Drugs: ADHD Drugs Jumps 19% in Young Adults in 2005, Report Shows,” WebMD Health News, Miranda Hitti, Louise Chang, MD, March 21, 2006.

The Trillion Dollar Conspiracy, Jim Marris, 2010.

⁴⁸⁸ Robert Epstein, MD, Medco Chief Medical Officer.

⁴⁸⁹ Referring to the profitability of “Big Pharm”, this industry uses its wealth and power to co-opt every institution that might stand in the way including Congress, the FDA, academic and medical centers, and the medical profession itself—where doctors are influenced to prescribe their products.

⁴⁹⁰ *Our society is in the throes of a virtual epidemic of depression. The numbers are quite staggering. More than twenty percent of the American population will experience at least one episode of what we refer to as clinical depression....* “Is Our Society Manufacturing Depressed People?” Psychology Today, Mel Schwartz L.C.S.W., March 19, 2012.

⁴⁹¹ Aldous Huxley.

Arthur's Notes

The Dangerous Pursuit of Happiness ⁴⁹²

We may have wandered away from an ancient definition of the word 'Happy', which is 'good fortune' or 'good luck'. The dangers of our contemporary version occur once we are in charge of making happiness happen:

- ❶ The first is the extremely seductive maneuver of making happiness a feel good experience by defining it as pleasure, joy or excitement.
- ❷ The pursuit of happiness under the pleasure principle can easily distract us from living life on life's terms. Life's terms include everything out of our control such as the arduous tasks of dealing with loss, coping with pain and suffering and the choices of others.
- ❸ Attempting to live life mostly on our terms tends to arrest our emotional development, placing us in an adolescent holding pattern as we avoid life's larger issues.
- ❹ The resolve needed to create meaningful and enduring relationship easily erodes under the mandate of happiness as pleasure. Creating depth and meaning will likely not be mostly fun.... Likewise married people can seldom enjoy happy, harmonious marriage, as psychologists would force it upon them and lead them to believe;[simply put,] the image of the "happy marriage" causes great harm.
- ❺ It is easy to begin lying to others and ourselves about feeling overwhelmed, lost, anxious and sad. These less than fulfilling experiences indicate a failure to be happy, which can translate into a failure to live right.
- ❻ It becomes easier to slip into the delusion that life is not mysterious and insecure. To accept life on those terms would definitely make the pursuit of happiness silly and impossible to live in ecstatic bliss.

⁴⁹² Huffpost Healthy Living, "The Dangerous Pursuit of Happiness", Paul Dunion, Ed.D., LPC, 09/05/2014.

The Four Negative Side Effects of Technology ⁴⁹³

1. **Elevated Exasperation:** These days, children indulge themselves in internet, games or texting. These activities have affected their psyche negatively, consequently leading to increased frustration. Now they get frustrated whenever they are asked to do anything while playing games or using internet. For instance, when their parents ask them to take the trash out, they get furious instantly. This behavior has shattered many parent-children relationships.
2. **Deteriorated Patience:** Patience is a very precious virtue and its scarcity could deteriorate a person's Will. Determination is a necessity that comes with patience and without it no individual can survive the hardships of life. According to studies, tolerance in children is vanishing quite increasingly due to the improper use of technology. For example, children get frustrated quickly when they surf internet and the page they want to view takes time to load.
3. **Declining Writing Skills:** Due to the excessive usage of online chatting and shortcuts, the writing skills of today's young generation have declined quite tremendously. These days, children are relying more and more on digital communication that they have totally forgot about improving their writing skills. They don't know the spelling of different words, how to use grammar properly or how to do cursive writing.
4. **Lack of Physical Interactivity:** No one can deny the fact that the advancement of technology has produced a completely unique method of interaction and communication. Now, more and more people are interacting with others through different platforms like apps, role-playing online games, social networks, etc. This advancement has hampered the physical interaction skills of many children. Due to that they don't know how to interact with others when they meet them in-person or what gesture they should carry.

⁴⁹³ "The 4 Negative Side Effects Of Technology", Edudemic, Alice Martin, May 30, 2013.

Silent Treatment⁴⁹⁴

Summarized and condensed from the referenced source, *the silent treatment* is a form of emotional, social abuse. What is really going on during this period of silence? If the behavior has signs of a sociopath, then there are two driving forces at work in the *silence*:

- **Winning** – the sociopath is never wrong in their mind; *the silent treatment* is merely a way of ensuring that, regardless of the cause for conflict—if that is the case—they will *win the day* (month, year or whatever time required in the episode of their *silence*)
- **Control** – to win (or to never be admittedly wrong), the sociopath must *control the field*. Forget meaningful dialogue or conversation (toward any reasonable approach of the relationship). Being reasonable is not the objective for the sociopath—only *winning* (or *controlling*) at any emotional (and other) expense to the others...

How to cope with a sociopath; *the silent treatment* and other behaviors:

- The only way out of this vicious cycle (which will repeat for as long as you allow it) is to stop playing the game; thus, remove yourself
- You cannot change the sociopath and their behavior towards you, but you can change you, and your response to their behavior
- It is not your fault: there is nothing that you did to either deserve or cause this; in fact nothing you could have done would have changed the outcome

The behavior is repeated because of the way that the sociopath sees the world: life is a game to be controlled and won. **People are objects to be used to achieve their own agenda, and get what they want.** Hence, the sociopath will use fellow employees, family and friends to obtain *control* and to *win*—whatever the specific objective or means and methods to this end—with relentless energy, even enthusiasm.

⁴⁹⁴ "The Sociopath Silent Treatment", August 9, 2013;
datingasociopath.com/2013/08/09/the-sociopath-silent-treatment/

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Anti-Social Traits

The corresponding section lists numerous selected traits (pages 181-182); below is a brief on this behavior, disorder. As a reminder, the behavior or disorder has varying degrees; thus, not all traits or symptoms are addressed here or in the body of the book.

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) is listed in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic & Statistical Manual (DSM) as a Cluster B (dramatic, emotional, or erratic) Personality Disorder.

In its most active or acute presence, ASPD can occur as unlawful conduct, violence and crime; but in milder examples, is represented by numerous traits of insensitivity, disregard and deceitfulness, based on social norms.

- Disregard occurs through any and all of the traits listed in the body, under the primary condition and conduct, "Acting-Out"
- Deceitfulness occurs through:
 - Omissions – intentionally/purposely withholding relevant information or facts so as to confuse and convolute
 - Lies – no need to elaborate except to say that lies beget lies
 - Chaos-manufacturing – an abuse of authority whereby a manufactured crisis creates an opportunity
 - Domestic theft – could include forgery, liable and slander, and intentional/purposeful misreporting as a means to acquire legal, financial, or other authoritative advantages
 - Emotional blackmail – can included veil threats, bluffing
 - False Accusations...
 - Frivolous litigation – pretense, false allegations...
 - Imposed isolation – to reduce or end *outside* information
 - Proxy recruitment – usually predicated on lies, deception, etc.
 - Scapegoating – invariably involves diversion, deception...
 - Thought-Policing – promoting and propagating thought or thinking begins and ends by controlling information

ADHD Meds –the Long-Term Consequences

From the following citations, the classification of “ADHD” is presumed to include associated prescriptions of psychotropic medication.

“ADHD in adolescence has long-lasting effects on adjusting to the vicissitudes of life and is associated with difficulties in being a wage earner, worker, parent, and so forth,” said researcher David W. Brook, M.D., professor of psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine.

Compared to teens and young adults without ADHD, those were:

- Nearly twice as likely to have physical health problems;
- More than twice as likely to have mental health issues;
- More than five times as likely to have antisocial personality disorder;
- More than twice as likely to have impaired work performance;
- More than three times as likely to have financial stress.⁴⁹⁵

Could it be that Ritalin (and/or psychotropic medication) is more harm than good?

Thirty years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO), concluded that Ritalin was pharmacologically similar to cocaine in the pattern of abuse. It fostered and cited [Ritalin] as a Schedule-II drug—the most additive in medical use.

The Department of Justice has also cited Ritalin as a Schedule-II drug under the Controlled Substances Act, and the DEA warned that “Ritalin substitutes for cocaine and d-amphetamine in a number of behavior paradigms.”⁴⁹⁶

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