

THE DAY FATHER NATURE WENT TO WORK

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LAST UPDATED: June 28, 1998

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Father Nature left the house for work, and the kids watched him walk through the door. All through the weekend they were waiting for Dad to go to work — they were “chomping at the bit”. And on Monday morning, to work he went. The kids looked at each other with that all-too-familiar gleam in their eye.

After Father Nature left, Mother Nature went to embrace her children — but they weren’t buying what she had to sell.

“Pop’s gone, pop’s gone”! yelled the kids. “This is our chance”!

And then, while Mom looked hopelessly on, the kids went to work.

The first order of business, of course, was to pull out the Golden Calf from the attic. It had lain away for too long, covered with dust. The kids dutifully dusted it off, and began to do the primeval dance for which they had had so much nostalgia. But midway through the dance, they got bored. They were older now, and they now saw this dance as “old-fashioned” — these kids were “hipper”, so they required more sophisticated amusements.

“Hey, Jimmy, let’s pour chemicals in the bathtub!”

“Cool”, came the reply. And so they did. And at first, their play was relatively benign. But as the day grew longer, they began to grow tired of this “kid stuff”. They started to trap birds, and put them in cages, and trap fish, and put them in bowls. These seeds, to be nurtured in the soil of Apathy instead of being obliterated by the herbicide of exercised Will, would soon bear bitter fruit.

“I have an idea” said Jack. At first, the kids started to shiver. Jack (and his twin brother Damien) were the “bad kids”. The other kids were scared of Jack and Damien, and this fear gave these bringers of bad tidings an undue clout.

“Here’s my idea”, said Jack. “Let’s put Fido and Rover in a small cage, and EXPERIMENT on them.”

A sinister proposal, but the other kids did nothing to stop it; some because they bought Jack’s “cover” (omitted here), some because they lacked the will to enforce their ethical perceptions, and the others because now all alone, they could not overcome Jack by themselves. A dangerous climate of permission for

the most heinous acts was created; and this climate functioned as a license to commit even more heinous acts in the future.

While Jack executed his nefarious “experiments” on animals who had done nothing wrong, and to the contrary who had evinced a simple loyalty that had led others to proclaim them “man’s best friend”, the other kids hid their eyes and covered their ears — and failed to intervene. And by this action, they became Jack’s co-conspirators.

Now it was Damien’s turn. “Put Bossy and Lambchop in those small cages for all their lives”, with some suitable covering words. And while Bossy and Lambchop pawed at the sides of these ridiculously small cages in obvious distress, the other kids hid their eyes and covered their ears — and failed to intervene. And by this action, they became Damien’s co-conspirators.

The games were not as fun now. Little did these kids realize that Jack and Damien would not just settle for ANIMALS. In the same way the kids got tired of worshipping the Golden Calf, so too would Jack and Damien no longer restrict their schemes of restriction (of immense orthogenetic significance) to the “lower orders” of the chain of life — they had bigger fish to fry.

The twins began to escalate their unholy game-plan by “picking on” the smaller children, who, like the animals, could not defend themselves, and then the females, who were also physically weaker, and eventually the “minorities”, whose critical error in life was being shaded “different from the rest”. And then the bigger kids began to join in the fun, and the octopus ink used to justify these activities began to spew from their mouths: “Look out for Number One”! “Nice guys finish last”! “If I don’t do it, someone else will”! “That’s the way the real world is”! And while this octopus ink was being spurted out into the atmosphere, the other kids hid their eyes and covered their ears — and failed to intervene.

Soon the games crept up, and soon all were to be infected with this intellectual virus. Faithlessness, cheating, lying, gamesmanship, pornography, video games of destruction, and all the other instantiations of inauthentic life began to sprout. And the kids began to indulge in these new games, and soon they became trapped by their history and by the New Ethic they had created, an Ethic of “individualism” which had created a behavioral climate and inertia that could not easily be overcome.

And while all this was occurring, Mother Nature looked helplessly on. And eventually her sorrow became overwhelming. Grief-stricken beyond all recovery, She let out a shriek of such blood-curdling power that the children, for a moment, halted their activities — a shriek so loud that it echoed throughout the Universe, a shriek so loud that FATHER could hear it — at work. And Father knew what he must do when Mother was violated — he must defend Her.

And the kids knew too. And suddenly the children were filled with remorse. But alas, the damage had been done. How could they expect liberty for themselves when they had for so long denied it to so many others? Suddenly, the sound of the ticking of the clock on the wall began to reach deafening levels.

One of the kids looked out the window — Dad was driving up! He was home early. These kids weren't chimps — they knew what that meant. And look, Mom was still on the bed, sobbing!

“We're sorry, Mom, we're sorry!” yelled all the kids but Jack and Damien. And they WERE genuinely sorry. But it was too late. The inertia of their actions during the day had had their effect. Did they think that Mom was like a light bulb, and that her emotions could be turned on and off at will?

No, they knew what they were doing was wrong. And they knew what Dad would think when he came in and saw Mom on the bed. And they feared that look in his eyes.

“Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”. Some of the kids had learned that in school in Science. The evolution of humanity is revealed in the progress of the embryo to the fully-formed child. The genetic code is recursive, and contains our past, present, and future. In our DNA was programmed the structure of the great drama of the Universe, the battle between good and evil. The macrocosm revealed in the microcosm. The Fibonacci spiral found in the seashell, and in the orbiting of the planets.

And in English class, some of the kids had read ULYSSES by James Joyce, where Joyce tried to tell them that all human experience could be read in the activities of an everyday man living in a small town in Ireland. And in FINNEGANS WAKE, his masterpiece seventeen years in the making, Joyce described the

historical instantiations of ALP (the female principle), and HCE (the male principle). Indeed, this principle of yin and yang was built into his own name, “James” (male), and “Joyce” (female).

But Joyce had intricately encoded his critical meaning, preventing easy access. “If you want to understand what I have to say”, said Joyce, “you have to WORK for it”. This may have been the most important of the messages Joyce would send. To the untrained eye, his content was hopelessly hidden by virtually unintelligible form: phrases like “wann swanns wann” and “henconvention’s compass memphis” and “isaac jackquemin mauromormo milesian” were the fibers comprising the fabric of this largely impenetrable manuscript.

Significant then, that on the last two pages of this message in a bottle, suddenly the code was removed, to send a message we had to receive, at all costs. Joyce began with these four chilling words, the cry of one who had the “Shining”:

May I be wrong!

And then:

It’s something fails us. First we feel. Then we fall.

And then:

All me life I have been lived among them but now they are becoming lothed to me. And I am lothing their little warm tricks. And lothing their mean cosy turns. And all the greedy gushes out through their small souls. And all the lazy leaks down over their brash bodies. How small it’s all!

And then:

I thought you were all glittering with the noblest of carriage. You’re only a bumpkin. I thought you the great in all things, in guilt and in glory. You’re but a puny.

And then, finally:

And the clash of our cries till we spring to be free. Auravoles,

they says, never heed of your name. But I'm loathing them
that's here and all I lothe. Loonely in me loneness. For
all their faults, I am passing out. O bitter ending! I'll
slip away before they're up. They'll never see. Nor know.
Nor miss me. And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad
and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father,
my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere
size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes
me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms.
I see them rising. Save me from those therrble prongs!

They had committed the crime of crimes, and they were going to pay. Some among them tried to figure out what Dad would do. They knew about the violence coming, but those who had read yet another book in Political Science class — George Orwell's "1984" — knew that Dad would have to go a step further to prevent this treason from happening again: RESTRICTIONS. And they knew who Dad would put in charge to ride herd over the kids while he was at work: Jack and Damien. Of all the kids, Jack and Damien could be trusted to carry out Dad's plan of retaliation to a T. Their utter lack of any ethical sense made these twins the alpha and the omega of the Fall of Man: the tempters, and the enforcers.

The kids knew they would be under restrictions for a long time, and it wasn't going to be fun. And that was the point: Father Nature's message was, "if you're going to shift your costs onto Mother, I'm going to shift those costs right back onto you — with interest". "See how you like it" was Father Nature's timeless educational technique, known in the Golden Calf era as "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", or "as you sow, so shall you reap". Some, from a different tradition, called it "karma", others, from a more different tradition, called it "garbage in, garbage out", and others, from even a more different tradition, called it "the chickens coming home to roost". Regardless of what you called it, no one could deny that it was a very effective method of communication.

Some among them, filled with remorse, and just intelligent enough to see the handwriting on the wall, tried to figure out what they would do when the restrictions came off. They had learned their lesson, even before the lesson had been administered. After 50,000 years, they finally understood. Jesus, it was about time! The tiniest acts of immorality thrown out on a daily basis were seeds that had to be pulled from the soil; otherwise, these unpleasant acorns would become

oaks. And now they had a forest to deal with, and for a while, they were going to be lost in that forest.

They knew they could no longer tolerate disrespect for Mother: She gave them life. And She gave all creatures life. And in the future, they knew that respect for Her and all her creatures was going to have to be Item One on the agenda. Once the Sun had risen again, they would become fiercely intellectual, because the intellect was necessary to pierce the veil of insincerity thrown out by the octopus ink; they would have smaller communities, so that the Ethic they would embrace would be enforced; and finally, they would implement the Ethic of Salvation they had had in their hearts but had denied in their actions for so long.

As long as that Ethic was alive in the everyday actions of people, from small acts of politeness to larger acts of providing mechanisms for the protection of the Golden Ethic from the “Prisoners’ Dilemma” (which operated to destroy that Ethic), forever would be obliterated the existence of the only soil in which the evil tree could bear its bitter fruit; the children would no longer sanction by apathy or any other means the acts of injustice by human against animal and human against human which, temporarily at least, had resulted in the conversion of their potential-oasis-now-viper’s-pit into a desert.

And then Father Nature walked through the door. And then he went to work.