

LADY GODIVA WAS A PRUDE

And Other Brief Examinations of People and Their Institutions

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I. Lady Godiva as a Prude

Reporting a lady's public nakedness no longer is big news. Yet, although most people today accept its general acceptability even if not themselves approving, hardly anyone actually speaks about nudity--be it the kind one now sees in a popular movie or a topless-bottomless bar, or the kind one reads about, or what one sees on a public beach or at a private party. Now you see it, but you won't talk about it. It's as if time has stopped, and fairy tales become fact, and what was once good for the emperor is, in the New Democracy, good for the proletariat; while nakedness may be admired and enjoyed, it must nevertheless be ignored. Surreptitiousness is the name of the nakedness game. No?

Wouldn't it be an unparalleled scandal to learn that Lady Godiva wore flesh-colored body hose during her famous gallop? "Why?" you ask. Who easily accepts that he or she had been deceived. Contrary to nakedness, everyone demands to speak about deception and disappointment but nobody prefers to believe it. And that's what our culture is all about. People have a sense about what is permissible to discuss and what is merely to be known but not mentioned. People also have a sense about what is pardonable behavior and what isn't. Deception invariably isn't.

More or less 800 years ago (crude attempt at extemporaneousness), Lady Godiva of Coventry concluded an agreement with her husband, the substance being that he would abolish a heavy tax if she rode naked

through town on a white horse. One might think there would now be a Canterbury coven rather than a canter. But never you mind, that idea was banished from Coventry. And so, the nakedness story is now legend. However, had it been known at the time that the good but prudish lady had worn a sheer body suit, at the least her husband would have served notice of his displeasure in being tricked; at the worst, who knows what might have happened. ("Off with her clothes"?) The modest lady might have been burned or hanged or mutilated, maybe even disrobed by an angry mob. I have it on good authority--the source that shared with me the long suppressed body hose deceit--that people easily suffer what some view as obscenity, but never treachery and being made the fool. (It's one thing to go about naked, another to be disrobed.) If you're going to screw someone, and if there is even a remote possibility that the person will find you out, face that person. It's the correct way.

Now then, shouldn't the masses be informed what is planned on their behalves, what is being done for them? What's the inside story? I think they should be informed, and as luck would have it I have it. The inside story was delivered to me quite recently. It was accomplished in a hush-hush refined manner, plain brown wrapper, all very ethical. However, I prevailed upon my informant to permit me to share the inside story with listeners and readers galore, the more the merrier. His only stipulation was that I must protect his anonymity, since the inside story was yanked from secret files. But I better not say more. You think Hebrew Ellsberg and Mormon Anderson had their secrets? Ha!

This paper is a presumption. Isn't any paper? Isn't life itself? But back to this paper. For one to have the gall to tell the inside

story is of course galling to those who don't have the gall. Any Celt knows that much. Nevertheless, I gathered courage partly from the security gained in ownership of the ripped-off "top security" file, learning the lesson that security goes just as far as one wants to believe it goes; and partly because by nature I'm a reckless and foolish person. (I'm disclosing truths not before shared with readers galore.) There's much more. Are you ready for a little of it? Good.

I begin with Education, capital E Education as they say. I begin here because there is so much known about Education and so little to know; unlike other areas, Education can be neatly dealt with; as a scholarly field, it has much to offer. However its acknowledged sophisticated professionals are leery of we neat dealers; they view the teaching process as complex and, almost for that very reason, disarmingly simple to those who are not as sophisticated as they. Those sophisticates claim that false ease and easy accomplishments are characteristic of people who are not truly sophisticated; and Education is too important to be given to the general people. Education is indeed important stuff. However, the teaching process is disarmingly simple, and after disarmament we may feel safe. It is simple to understand and simple to predict its effects. Exhibit A: Teaching styles have changed very little during the past 500 years. And learning has kept apace for those given opportunities to learn. We know more collectively. However, what we know more of represents a cumulative phenomenon and hardly a qualitative one. We don't appear to know any "better" today than in Michelangelo's time, or Galileo's time, or Newton's time, or Edison's time, or Einstein's time. People know more but don't think much differently. And no doubt, more people

today know things, but people who knew things yesterday were like we today, educated, but moreso than we today. As "everyone" knows, by reasons of tautology and definition, more does not necessarily lead to better, but "better" is always better than more. When one thinks about Education and teaching in this context, it is clear that, although facts and figures have accumulated during the years, we don't run the Education business today any better than we have in the past. We don't teach any better and students don't accomplish very much more. More students are taught today than ever before, but that's a quantification issue. But I've already said that. So turn to Exhibit B, which is a second reading of Exhibit A. Prosecution goes to the restroom. Be back in a whisk.

I'm back. Now the question one might ask, the question that's consistently asked in one form or another is: "Can we improve the quality of Education?", or "Can we improve teaching competency?", or "Can we (or how can we) reform Education?" What's so puzzling is that we don't ask, "Should we reform Education?" or "need we...etc., etc?" Those are the questions I wish to submit to you. Rhetorical to be sure, but so are most questions; and most answers too. Or don't you remember that answers may be rhetorical?

What's so "wrong" with Education that it always seems to need improvement from a little tinkering here and there to revolutionizing it? Yet there have been few gains obtained from such endeavors. Wouldn't we have been happier had the tinkerers and the revolutionaries gone into other important work, or had just gone fishing? Of course. The tinkerers and the revolutionaries would have been happier. Then, why all of the buss and activity in improving schools? Only because it gives us something to worry about and do, one may demur.

Look at the evidence. Look at the lives of those mentioned earlier, or of DaVinci and Helen Keller. What would today's schools do for those folks that wasn't accomplished generations and centuries ago?

These remarks are about naked deception, those tricks performed by magicians which lead us to believe that black is white, good is evil, right is wrong, and being fully covered is being completely naked. I hope to demonstrate with these revelations that the obscenity is not in the nakedness but in the deception. Playing "the game", or "playing games" once were metaphores. They're not today. They're descriptions. Life is the game today.

II. Attila

Attila the Hun was valued for himself. Mum loved the brute, that Scourge of God. He was her baby, so she didn't see irony in the name pinned on him by the Goths--Attila, the Little Father. It was Big Mum and Little Father. No basic anxiety in that child. Maybe a little Oedipal disease, but who doesn't have that?

And Attila loved his Mum. Hence his problem. Attila suffered the confusions most people suffer. He was convinced that his love was "here", but Mum's was "here" and his "there"; and he believed that true love represents "this", although it actually represents "this" and "that", and more. He didn't yet understand the fundamental situation: Man's endless demand for true love and universal love, both. And both unattainable by virtually all humans, yet each with insatiable need. Speak about conflict, whee! It's like affirmative action. First the feds demand that the agency recruit minority members else the dollar faucet will close. Then the feds demand that the agency certify that other agencies it deals with also comply with affirmative action regulations (regs, as the feds say). Next they will demand that those collaborating agencies certify compliance of agencies they trade with. And so

it could go until the nation is blanketed with compliances, and the inevitable complicity. Just like love.

When a child, Attila was taught that one must be good to be loved; naughty boys are disliked. Yet as he grew up to assume his worldly vocation, it was difficult for him to understand how one could be loved by so many and thoroughly disliked by so many others. Something was awry with the people.

Now for the "here" and the "there" of it; and the "this" and "that". The Hun once had childish romantic visions that love came from the heart and love meant "friendship" and "compassion"; he had read about such love in dime novels that the Huns and Goths published regularly 1500 years ago, the first Gothic novels created for the literati. Unfortunately for the world, Tilly (one of his childhood monikers, the other Hunny) never found adult love in heart activity; (other than whatever continued from childhood, e.g. Mum's). He merely read about that kind of love. Till the day he died, taking almost uncountable victims with him to heaven, "love" to him meant to do another four letter word (which I'm not at liberty to use). Or, to use a euphemism, to "love" meant to make "love."

I should talk more about love today, and that rarer condition, friendship. Most folks have the idea that only good people are loved. That's nonsense. Each one of us knows utter bastards who are loved. And who love. Remember Hunny? One person's bastard may be another's lover, or cherished friend. And I've been told that the trick to leading a balanced life--a little of "this" and a little of "that"--is acceptance of the wisdom that, if everyone has some "good", everyone has some "bad". Someone is "good" or is "decent" or is "fun" or is "loyal" because we love or befriend him or her, not vice versa.

Yet we hate to think that it is vice versa. We romanticize our friends rather than choose romantic people to be our friends.

We wish to believe that we have standards for loving and befriending. But we don't. We love first, then invent our reasons. Again, take the case of Attila and his Mum, or Hitler and his, or you and yours. "But", you may retort, "my friends are different". Hence your friendships with them. Nonsense. Consider please that all friends are "different", and all lovers are "different". Thus the difference between friend and acquaintance, and between lover and score.

Or let's look at bastards. Isn't it strange that with so many bastards around, seemingly surrounding each of us, most of us feel immune from their harassments, and certainly from their friendships. "They", "the enemy", "those bastards" are always out there, never here, never one of us (or us ourselves). Please except those feelings which often exist between former lovers.

The person intent on learning how to survive in a crazy world may learn something from this observation, pointed out to me by a person I once thought was a bastard until we became boon companions.

I wish I knew more than from what I deduced from the Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. I wish I knew exactly what type of mum Freud had. I've had the feeling that Oedipal problems don't cause strain in families when mums behave as mums and not as sisters or friends. Some group should spend time studying the upper class English homosexuals and their mums and, if there's still more time, low income and middle income mums in our culture. We might learn something about this Oedipal thing that Freud hadn't taught us.

I'm weary of this hectic and racy pace. I should stop now and take a cold shower; it's Sunday and Mum always calls on Sunday. One should be refreshed and clean for these occasions, both inside and out.

III. On Jews

As I write this talk, sounds from the Today Show interrupt. My ears catch the talk between Barbara Walters and Johnny Cash. Now, hours later, I try to reconstruct the scene. Here is a rough facsimile of what I may have heard:

"Johnny, don't you feel uneasy about earning so much money from your representations of the common people? I wonder whether you're with the common people anymore."

"No, I'm not uneasy. We spend our money as quickly as it comes in, thus returning it to the people. Insofar as our involvement with people, we've never left them. We're with them all the time. All the time. For example, on our one-night stands my wife and I manage to visit antique stores in almost every city we hit; she's an antique fan. And at every antique store, we meet and talk with many people."

The dialogue is recreated from my memory, which isn't much. However, I believe it's fair to say that the flavor if not the particulars is adequately reported. Let's analyze: This might have been a Jewish dialogue, but Cash blew it. First, his response to Miss Walters' question was a serious one; Johnny Cash wasn't kidding. He seems to believe that one can encounter the "people" in antique stores. How far he has come, or gone? Jews don't usually pull the "let them eat cake" routine, even the rich Jews. Excepting all but a few, they've been "there", and not terribly long ago. Then, how might the Jew have responded?

Barbara: Johnny (as 2000 years ago, today's Jews are named Johnny, or John. They are also named Jon or the current favorite, Jonathan), John, don't you feel uneasy about earning so much money... et cetera, et cetera.

Johnny: Uneasy? Quite the contrary. I feel wonderful. Simply wonderful.

Barbara: You do?

Johnny: Certainly. I've escaped from an ordinary life, from boring people. Therefore, I have a sacred responsibility to avoid the suffering I sing about. Else who will believe that Johnny sings unselfishly, that I sing not merely to be cured of that ordinary disease, the proletariat?

The Jew offers a variation of the Country Club Invitation to Groucho--But I Won't Join Any Group That Would Have Me routine. Or, he offers his chuzpa or independence or defiance. But rarely would he offer common hypocrisy. Could he be insensitive? Believe it. Like others, sometimes more so. Does he book a Safari to Africa to bring color to his life, while he flees in terror or anger from a Harlem, or even the thought of it? You bet, just like other "arrived" folks--the newly "arrived" or those who "arrived" earlier and set up the first shops and the first rules. It's as American to avoid Harlem as to book Nairobi, at least in the arrived suburb. And if not in exactly the same way, enrichment in Louisberg Square is also to be found in controlled exoticness, but always controlled. Harlem is assuredly "out" and black isn't sufficiently "in."

A wealthy Jew differs from a wealthy non-Jew, not only from a Johnny-come-lately with Cash. After all is said and until they're done and gone, most Jews remember that we're insignificant people, just men

and women. In his heart of heart, the Jew identifies with all people, is totally integrated with all other Jews, rich or poor, those he likes and also his crazy relatives. He knows that he's just one of the billions, one of the Chosen but nevertheless one who will soon be gone, and in spite of the monuments he built on earth one who will soon be forgotten by most everyone who knew him. He knows of the stuff that makes and takes life, and what it means. By definition, a Jew is an opportunist while he is a critic about the state of the moment and a pessimist about the world after he leaves it, he is a sort of hero in the face of the darkness beyond. A romantic definition? Certainly. It's his definition.

How did the Jew come by these virtues? Or are they vices? As anyone comes by anything. By experience, necessity, and training. The Jew learns to live a resourceful life, or he will have very great troubles; all Jews have great troubles. You want an example? History has examples, lots. The Jewish immigrant comes to the new country. The first generation new countryman is a skilled worker or even a teacher. The second generation Jew to the new country may be a businessman, or a lawyer, or a doctor. The third generation person may be a professor. But the fourth generation one is again an immigrant. He's been kicked out of the country, if he's lucky.

The Jew is not above putting on airs. Far from it. But inside the air is a certain humbleness, an embarrassed smile, the offhandedness, or an "explanation". As Jews seem to know, it's almost okay to ridicule someone if you are convinced that the person is serious about his airs, that such a person endangers himself if he appears to strive too hard to exceed his station in life. The Jew has learned this lesson

throughout his bitter history. He knows that before he is murdered he is "exposed" as an international banker or manipulator of power-- occupations which Jews should respect as belonging to other groups.

What might be a Jewish "story", an example of the Jews' self-mocking personality but love and fun with life?

"If the rich could hire other people to die for them, the poor could make a wonderful living," so the Yiddish proverb goes. That's a typical Jewish story. It may also be an example why, as a people, Jews are losers, but not failures, something like the difference between Adlai Stevenson and Richard Nixon.

How do I know this much about that strange people? I'm an artist.

IV. On Living Better

The goal of most people is to live well, to live free of anxieties and problems, to enjoy life regularly and to love permanently. How I wish I could write a true piece on living well; but, that's not possible to even contemplate. Therefore, I attempt to write on living "better." Better than what? Than whom? I can't answer those kinds of questions, but they don't seem terribly vital at the moment. So I'll get on with it.

To live better seems to require time, money, and hope. Unfortunately, those folks who have the money don't often have the time. And those who have the time don't usually have the money. The simple "reasons" for such frustrating situations are so obvious as to be almost unworthy for discussion; they are obvious to such a degree that they are not to be trusted. That's the bad news. The good news is that we don't need to know those reasons to proceed. The splendid news is that rich people without time and poor people without money can also live better. At least I think they can. All is not hopeless for those seeking a better

life. Without hope, life is meaningless and painful. Hope is the necessary key to the better life. It is sufficient sometimes.

There are other "keys", not always necessary, never sufficient, but usually of importance. (You may wish to ask, "Where did you find the presumption to speak about these matters?" It depends on the day of the week and how I feel, but my typical responses to that question range from: "In Chicago, where everyone finds presumption." Or, "I didn't; presumption found me." Or, "Speaking of finding things, I found religion in Boston, quite unexpectedly.)

With commendable ambivalence, if in sufficient modesty, I offer the following suggestions:

1. One should learn about his or her personality and create a life to fit that personality. Although it's essential to deal in some fashion with one's anxieties and "peculiarities", much of what one is can fit comfortably into a productive rhythm of life. The trick is to be able to turn one's seeming weaknesses to strengths, to accommodate one's life to his or her characteristics rather than to some idealized vision of what life is supposed to be. Rigidity, doggedness, softness, jaundice, even anxiety may be turned to advantage, may strengthen one's personality rather than weaken it. I think much depends on how one attempts to accommodate one's life to one's character rather than character to life.

2. How does one learn about his or her personality to create a life to fit it? Try to "make" the complex simple but reasonable. Don't delude yourself that the complex is simple; make it seem that way to be able to deal with otherwise unmanageable situations.

3. Also, don't feel guilty about "unsaying" yourself. Life, if it's anything at all, is a contradiction. One confronts contradiction with contradiction. One deals with instability with instability. Behave as if it's okay to change your mind or be wrong, even if you don't think it quite so okay.

4. Insight about people cancel out; hence, human uncertainty. Hypotheses concerned with human values and behavior contradict one another; we hold fewer points of view than points of conflict and confusion. Even in this era, the data on ourselves are like shadows on a wall.

5. Notwithstanding the above confession, which is "true", try not to become comfortable with the idea of being wrong. Being wrong may be among the most functional expressions of hopelessness that a human can wear. It's a fine line we walk, not feeling guilty about "unsaying" oneself, but not being comfortable with the idea of error. Fine lines encourage contradictions but, as I had said, that's what life itself is.

6. Inevitably, this must be the next suggestion: if you hear something from someone you respect or read something by an author you have regard for which you think is irrelevant, you are probably wrong. An important rule for thinking is to search for meaning when encountering the works of people for whom you have or should have respect. One problem to be overcome if we are to have respect for other people is to recognize that most faults that people have don't need correction. It's usually okay when people crash into each other or themselves.

7. I think that for one to feel she is doing okay there must be a belief that she needn't "join the gang" to be okay. Happiness is inside oneself. Outside joys always end: the theatre, the ballgame, the meal, the sex, whatever. And to be faced is inevitable unhappiness, the wars,

famine, disillusionment, and death. To live better requires something from the outside in.

8. Again, I must mention death. One who is not doing too badly for herself does not want to die. But one lives better when she knows she can face death. For some people, it's a lifetime struggle to learn how to face death without terror. Yet one never knows until the very end whether the lesson was indeed learned. Nevertheless, it may be enough merely to believe that you can face death without terror; at least, the years before death will be more comfortable for one who has such belief. Besides, death may not be the ultimate negative. Imagine a life free of all disease and aging, but not of accident, not of "untimely" death? Such a life may be more terrible than one of mortal certainty.

Living better is the wish most of us hope for and work for. Possibly, this is not a goal but a process. Possibly, living better is the process of planning and working for a better life. Possibly, more than the time and more than the money, more than the activity--whatever it is--in the end, living better is living with hope for a future that will be good, but must end in the same manner for all men, all.

V. Before Truth

Before a human being discovers truth, she enjoyed honesty. And honesty didn't offer so many problems to a person that truth does. Nor for that matter did honesty get her into so many fixes as truth does.

The wonderful thing about honesty is its utter simplicity, its elemental character, its relative divorce from prejudice and other self-serving motivations; of course, I refer to "honesty" that is honest, not truth disguised. Truth is the "bottom line", the analysis. Truth

is deduction operationalized, the sum of uncountable parts. The inmate at the State School for "defectives" can, if he wishes to, be honest with you, can tell you what he thinks about this or that or about how a "defective" thinks. The developmental psychologist or oligophrenist can tell the truth at best or pass on lies, and that may not be the worst possibility. At the State School, a man sits in a wheelchair by the side of its main road, 30 or so yards from the entrance, a foot or so from a huge bump in the road, the bump placed there by an assistant superintendent who worried about dangerously fast cars on the institutional grounds. That "defective" man sits there, hour after hour, day after day, year after year, and watches each car slow down or not, hit hard or easy the state's bump. That "defective" man may know more about what occurs when a car hits a bump than any person on earth. Certainly, he knows something. He's watching something day after day, and he probably knows more about whatever he's observing than anyone, even than oligophrenists. He's a guy who can be both honest and truthful. But no one asks him anything. It's sad.

I have difficulty writing about truth and honesty. It's a kind of "theme" teachers assign to school children. That's why I distrust this self-assignment. Obviously, it's too difficult for most adults to tackle, else why its assignment to school children? I hardly ever trust myself with this type of responsibility because I know that while some grade school children can operate within the rules of grammar (things are nouns and behaviors are verbs and putting them together creates language) I'm supposed to know better. But I shouldn't think for long about such doubts as I could think this way about anything I write. And if that

sort of thing persists, the paralysis will conquer me. So, although this is neither the proper time nor place to get into the matter of writing, I'll mention with the left hand what "everyone" knows, that even the mediocre writer must be an egotist to submit herself to the rigor of public exposure. I should also say that I think it's very easy for one to talk herself into a writing "block", but also out of one. I think that much of the problem and its resolution is connected with the ego and the strength of one's positive and negative thinking. But is the "block" an aspect of one's positive or negative thinking? Enough on writing. I will move on easier stuff.

Here's what I think: One should prize her honesty but disdain the truth. One should make fun of the truth, ridicule it. It's not easy because so many of us worship truth. But it does become a bit easier to ridicule truth when I use my modesty as a subterfuge. You see, not to believe the truth upsets truth mongers. And one must be in good shape to resist truth mongers. Therefore, a bit of "I just don't know" and other such modest disclaimers provides the desired result--rejection of truth without angering those who tell the truth: The educated poor soul is not worthy of the truthsayer's righteous anger; the simpleton is more to be pitied than attacked.

Don't believe the truth; believe honesty. How will one know when he finds it? Look for it where nobody is looking, so the saying goes. And hope that some day you will be so wise as to regularly deserve not to be given the truth.

Is it easier to judge someone else's honesty or your own? Or someone else's anything? No, it's never easier; it merely appears easier, in the same way that knowing a little bit of something yet

thinking you know a great deal about it makes you glib. You must be the beginning and final judge of your honesty; only you will know the "grade" you earn. And make no mistake about it (as I have often done), it is difficult to speak with oneself about honesty (in the same way that it's easy to speak with oneself about truth). As incompetent writers invent words while good ones create language, ordinary people invent lies while evil ones use them and live by them; although there are no truths, there are lies, and lies. And that's the problem people must confront when they try to judge their own honesty; their lies. It's a difficult task but, I believe, it's the fundamental self-analysis that people must face in one way or another. Obviously, a person is of at least two minds about everything he or she might better be of one mind. So one never fully lays her "honesty problem" by the heels.

Is it part of one's truth or one's honesty to claim that the world is no different than it ever was? But whatever it is, people should attempt to make it seem different. If we don't, our existences may strike us as even less significant than they now seem. What's truth and what's honesty? Those who make a claim that the world is better-- or worse--have the truth, and they might call those who deny the claim as being dishonest. That's what seems to be wrong with the truth, so wrong that even insurmountable prejudice is more desirable in a person.

VI. Movie Night at the Old Folks' Home

I've been worried about the old folks, what with so many senior citizens' condominiums, and apartment complexes, and old fashioned old folks' homes being built, renovated, and remodeled these days. Almost everywhere one turns, there is a public announcement of a new hole in the ground, or some blaring on the radio to herald the different

solution to the "old folks" problem. And because there is lots of money to be made off the "old folks" problem, and because federal and state and local governments are so interested in the "old folks" problem, I'm doubtful that society will achieve decent solutions to the problem. I'm not sure that the officials will even recognize that it's a problem we created, not the old folks.

The small suggestion offered to you who are working to solve the "old folks" problem is that, on movie nights, only short subjects and so-called filler films be scheduled. It wouldn't be efficient use of a system's resources to run, for example, "Gone With the Wind" on movie night; it's such a lengthy picture and the old folks are so old that there's a fair chance that one or two will expire during the showing. Better some modest old films for old folks, preferably short old films. I offer this suggestion after having examined several proposals submitted to deal with the elderly in America. I believe my suggestion is truly consistent with mainstream thinking in the geriatric field.

VII. On Conserving Resources

If we in this affluent if flatulent culture wish to conserve more of the world's culture and resources, we should go about our business differently. The big question is the "if" question: Do we want to conserve more of the world? Do we have guilt about luxuries we thrive on, paid for by the deprived and neglected elsewhere? Do we want to bring into some equitable relationship the imbalance between utilization of what comes out of the mind, the earth, the sea, and the air and what we are entitled to as our just portion of the world's treasures?

For the sake of argument assume that the people want to conserve what we have. How might we do things differently?

1. Before we do things differently, we need to learn to think

differently. So, we need to ask: Conserve for what purpose? In a peacetime economy, there is little purpose in holding the efficient production and distribution of goods as the main goal. To be sure, it's a goal, but the main one is to offer a good life to as many people as possible. The main goal is to conserve and enhance the health, the sanity, and the happiness of the people.

The country, needing planes to win a war, asked in 1943: How are we going to do it? Today we ask: What are we going to do? So we build beer plants today because we have little else to do, no imperatives; and there's no need any longer to ask how we're going to do it. Who cares? The question today is: How are we going to fill it? Or, the cans? Or, our pockets?

There is not enough to do today, so we should care less about conserving the time of people who would otherwise have nothing to do. I once visited at a village created for what you call the retarded. But they're not. There I saw a young man milking a cow and another holding the tail so it won't swing in the milker's face. How many tails have swung in your face while others were idle nearby. Who's the retard?

2. There must be new order and logic to payment systems for use of public utilities and conveniences. For example, toll charges on highways should be inversely related to the number of passengers in each vehicle, a car with five passengers paying less money at the toll both than a car with one passenger. The consequence of this change in toll charge policy is predictable, I think. More people would share cars; fewer drivers would ride riderless, especially if one added dimension could be factored into the toll charge: The size of the car (or bus, truck, etc.) as against the number of passengers and cargo, also inversely related as to toll charge. This policy has the virtue in

discouraging passengerless cars while not jamming the lanes reserved for those selfish drivers, the essence of yet another proposal designed to unclog the roads (and which has failed).

3. Somewhat along the same line of thinking, charges for airplane transportation should not be linear; for example, the highest per mile air charges should be for transportation that is better accomplished by bus, train, or whatever conveyance that does not burn up the energy required by jet airplane. A plane trip from New York to Chicago should be less costly to the traveler than one from New York to Syracuse. Unfortunately, such a system will require federal subsidization, that prospect pushing me to abandon the idea.

4. America's problems with its postal non-service is justification enough to reconsider postal policies. I recommend that all "junk mail" (assuming that we will achieve a simple definition of "junk mail") be taxed substantially higher postal rates. Also, mail sent and delivered within a circumscribed neighborhood area should be charged proportionally more for that service than mail sent to very distant places, the hypothesis being that most communication is best achieved by use of voice to voice (telephone), face to face, body to body, and other direct interactions. Our motto might be: "Talk, See, Touch. Fight Paper Pollution" (which could give a person writer's block; well, what's good for the geese is good for the goose).

5. Why not examine the consequences of changing medical insurance programs so that out-of-pocket costs decrease as the seriousness of illness is increased. This kind of program would need some form of governmental subsidization. But what else is new?

6. Heating and illumination charges should be related to a region's climatic conditions and availability of natural sunlight. For example, natural gas or fuel oil would be more expensive in Florida than in Syracuse, but more expensive in Syracuse than in Alaska.

7. The underlying regulatory principles of the plan are quite simple, based on two proven bureaucratic approaches: the so-called "Al Capone Ruse"; and the old "Change the Rules Rule". As you know, Big Al was a murderer, pimp, dope dealer, and general stinker. The government guys got him for income tax evasion. Income tax evasion! Can you believe it? Incredible, but true. The government could regulate the conservation program by application of the "Al Capone Ruse". If, for example, the utilities don't comply--they steal, cheat, ignore, maim, or murder--the government would turn off their lights, heat, and cool air. Then--THEN--The utilities' bosses would be arrested for chilling their workers or making them squint, tit for tat. Or, if you can't get the bastards one way, find another way.

Which leads to the old "Change the Rules Rule". If the "Al Capone Ruse" doesn't work, change the rule. If the utilities comply with the clean air rule, but they continue to act like bastards, get 'em because they use too much X or Y to keep the air clean. If it's progressive this year to do "Z", change the rule next year making it progressive to do away with "Z." Get the bastards. Get 'em. Get 'em.

The above examples illustrate a strategy to combat the pathology of wastefulness (There's a pathology of almost everyting.). If we want to conserve resources, we must reward those who work for greater conservation. It's capitalism's way, the American way. This approach

could move us from speaking about conservation to doing something about it. However, there is a problem, the one alluded to above. Implementation will require escalated governmental involvement in the affairs of the citizens. Therefore, it may never work, not because it can't work but because government has a way of making things not work. But think about this idea. Possibly, you may be able to create other plans to circumvent bureaucracy's penchant to gum up things. Now that would be worth something for the people to have.

VIII. Animals, Vegetables, Meatballs, Oddballs, and Cleanup Time

Most of us can be slotted into four convenient people-holes: animal, vegetable, meatball, and oddball. I imagine that there are other people-types, but one doesn't encounter them; they are only imagined. The animals are the physical types, the vegetables the passive ones, the meatballs plot to get an edge on everyone else, and the oddballs are the unique ones. The problem with such slotting is the explicit problem of our culture. It's the problem of a society whose leaders are hurt and angered when they are forced to see that the large institutions they have contrived for the aged, the weak, the sick, and the ugly do not decently serve those people. It's the problem of a monolithic social welfare system that is so antisocial and selfish that its workers can't comprehend why there are no humanitarian institutional directors, that there can no more be a humanitarian director of the bug house than of Dachau. It should be that, by definition, one who would administer such places cannot be a humanitarian.

Cleanup time. Got to tidy up this talk; the end is coming quickly. Like my old friend Morrie "Motha" Tucker was wont to advise the younger generation, "Never say in mixed company that you're pissed. When the occasion should arise, tell the folks that you're urinated."

Or like my other old friend Lenny Doctor, who became a doctor, was wont to explain over and over again, "The real fight is not between the Jews and the Arabs, but between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S."

It's all words, and how they're put together, and shaded, and related to the others, and to us. That's all that matters, the words. Then how come only the Jews and the Arabs are bleeding and killing each other when the real fight is between the Russians and the Americans? Doctor Doctor doesn't exactly walk into walls all day, but he's full of crap. Yes, yes. But, there is also an emperor's side to the story. How sad it is for him to walk around naked, knowing it, hating you for pretending not to notice, hating himself for pretending not to know what's up.

(Whistle blows. End of Game.). "Time."