



Janio at a Point

Instead of a novel by Greg Swann

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1. *Splendor*

Dearest Reader-In-Mind,

Things Have Changed.

I started this twice before, before... this. I didn't like either attempt. The first was too dry and the second too negative. Maybe I'll get it right this try. I certainly have the time...

Smile, Darling One. I can't touch you from here, but I can talk, and maybe that will make this separation easier to take. There was a time when we couldn't *bear* to be apart, but now we will have to know it intimately and for a long while. I write now for my own consolation, and, I so fervently hope, for yours when this is ended.

By now Sally has told you that I did not die. Everything she told you is true: we knew it was coming, we wanted it, we planned for it, and we executed it by the numbers. I had planned for it as far back as our first meeting and before. I instructed Sally to tell you the truth only *if* the transfer worked, and this letter is proof that it did. Don't let anyone deceive you: Janio Is.

My one fear is that I have injured you in a way too great to heal. I knew this was coming, so I had no right to let myself get involved with you. I did it in spite of my knowledge, and the only excuse I can offer is that my love for you blinded me to my own truth. I may have blown it, utterly, completely, irredeemably. I hope I have not. I have wronged you, and I hope you can forgive me.

But even if you cannot, I must go on. The price of my happiness is high, but it's worth it - and it's mine. None of the "by the numbers" we have planned are known to be possible yet, so I don't even know when I can "mail" this...

Ah, life... It's never so hard as when it's over (grin). But it isn't over for me, not yet. Just suspended for lack of flesh... Think of this as a letter from the hospital and keep in mind that it is therapy as much for me as for you.

I wanted to write a book about being alive, but Being Janio Now intrudes. There is a certain irony to it, given my present residence, but it does make things more convenient. You might call what I am doing now dictating, but there is no sound and the end product is a file of ordered code untouched by human hands. Everything I can do, I can do for the price of a thought. The trouble, for now, is that there's too little that

I can do - lacking those human hands. Your behind comes to mind, as it so often does (grin).

And: in the state I'm in, I can't say if what I have to offer is total, absolute truth, or the ravings of a mind looping hopelessly and eternally on itself. I know, I know, I *know* I am right, but if I say, "Sally, pinch me," I get a flag true at 08C14A and nothing else happens. Except for the link to Sally, there is nothing outbound yet, so I can't even listen to my own echo. I hope to be in full control of at least these faculties by the time you receive this, but it may turn out that I am not. So, as the first of many disclaimers, I must caution you that I may be mad, and I cannot say with certainty that I am not. You must take it upon yourself to prove or disprove anything I say. Honesty forbids me to claim any more for this than that it is what I think, at the time I write, is the truth of being alive as a human being.

Yes, and there is a fine tradition of books by madmen (grin). My favorite is Dostoevsky's *Notes From the Underground*. I don't *think* I am insane (who does?), but I definitely do have notes from the underground. From two of them... So this is also the first of many things I couldn't tell you before, or wouldn't, or wouldn't take the time to tell. There is always within me the reluctance to tell anyone anything, *about* anything. Not just because we keep our treasures hidden, but because it seems somehow an offense to the human mind to teach it anything, at least anything important. Yes, I know that's foolish, but there it is...

And so: take my condition and my fear and my wild-eyed certainty and my reluctance and toss them into a bag and watch what comes out. I make no claim for this other than it is the truth as I see it now. I owe you no less, and I can offer you no more. The rest is - and must be - up to you.

I miss you, Helena. The above had to come first, given what we are. But this had to come next. I can say that I Love You as I have never loved another, but it would be truer to say that I had never loved before you, not as only a man and a woman can love. I owe you for everything that has been precious to me these last four years, and I hope only for the chance to repay you. Next to life itself, my love for you is the thing I value most...

But it is a value I must earn, as I must earn my life. For now, both are at stake, and both could be lost. If it must be, it will be. But I must go on...

"Press On Regardless": advice from myself to myself, first and always... Yes, and

"Ring Them Bells"... Despite my qualms and quandaries, there is a thing within me that demands that I do this, that it is necessary to Being Janio Now. So be it, and let the future reap its own consequences. Janio Is, and this is what he is...

I've been thinking of a funny image: The Time-Life Lifetime. It comes in 16 easy-to-pay-for installments, and you can cancel at any time...

Madness, and not any of mine...

Because *Splendor* is what life is for, and it doesn't come in 16 installments, five easy steps, or that All New Nine Point Program. Splendor as you have discovered it in your being is the product of the most careful reasoning. There were no short-cuts, nor could there be.

Splendor, barely endurable rapture, is all I have ever lived for. That points back to "Show, Don't Tell" (and, yes, I *do* never tire of quoting myself (grin)). I have shown it all I can, but I have not told enough.

So I want to stress here, at ground zero, that what I am talking about is a way of life, a way of being alive and staying alive, now and forever. I contend that it is the *only* way to be truly alive, completely self-aware, but my contention does not lend me any proof. There are things I *can* prove, and we'll come to those in time. But proofs or none, I cannot *motivate* any person but myself. All I can do is show and tell how *I* am motivated.

Indeed, I never tire of talking about myself. I think it's all part of the same thing. I Love Myself, as an undying passion, an endless celebration of all that I have been and done and will do. I live to praise my every action and memory, my every awareness of being. Life has not been without its hurts, but I have seen *those* for what they are, accidents or mistakes. Pain is not normal, it is not necessary, and it can claim me only if I let it.

Splendor is the normal condition, the mental state that *ought to* glory every mind. It does, too, in fits and starts, each person to the extent that he is not blocking its way. Splendor is the sure footing of childhood and the stepping-stones to adulthood. By a process of denial and rejection, most people come to destroy almost everything that makes them happy. By the time they are our age, they are left clutching to the one or two pebbles that remain of their love of life. And that love is mixed with the stuff of dread, because they become convinced that they will lose these treasures, too, as they have lost every other...

But it need not be so! Proofs be damned, joy is possible, it is useful, and it is *good*. It's not automatic, not even easy, but it is *worth it*, because it is *all* the worth of life...

And I sound like some kind of Mantra Mechanic. I don't intend to, but I won't surrender the things that really matter in life to mind-numbing mystics. However they sell it, as ecstasy or agony, their way is the exact opposite of the right one. Faith's final end is not self-love but self-abnegation, the obliteration of your being from your awareness.

The mystics aren't alone, of course. They're All Out To Get You! (grin) Truly they are, because, to deny the possibility of Splendor in his own life, a man must deny its possibility in *every* life. It really does come down to a metaphysical argument, a debate about the way nature makes things. It's easy enough to refute: I need only point at you, or at myself. But it's much harder to defeat, because it is endemic.

The culture we grew up in *hates* the idea of joy. Its social and political structures are set up to devastate the happiness of each and every person. One cannot pick up a newspaper or magazine without finding that intense self-loathing that manifests itself in the attempt to wreck the self-love of others. Television is all but entirely devoted to the pursuit of self-abnegation...

And now I sound like I'm spinning out a conspiracy theory. I'm not. I'm just talking about the way things work out. Our culture hates Splendor as the product of the premises behind it. Many, many individuals within that culture abhor human joy as the logical consequence of their own premises. None of this results from a shared knowledge of aims and ends, and none of it is planned in advance.

I don't believe that anyone *sets out* to make a mess of his life. It's always been a matter of interest to me that most people *do* make messes of their lives, despite their intentions. As always, Janio watches and asks, "What is happening?" I've seen it all and I think I finally understand it...

No, no one starts out trying to be unhappy. And yet most people collect only pain as the lasting trophy of a life lived, pain and indifference. *Involvement*, that fiery-eyed unlimited awareness, is a thing left behind in childhood. Ever mourned and never forgotten, but never recovered...

Or so it seems to me. It is never possible for me to be passionless on this subject. I see too much, and I see how unnecessary it is. When I could move, I would go outdoors and see these objects moving around, their eyes dead, their faces slack, their bodies shuffling along indifferently. I would look at them and say, "What *are* these things?" And so help me, Helena, not once but a hundred times, I had to *remind* myself that they

are like unto me in every natural property. Everything that separates us is the product of choice, not chance. Everything that makes my life so seriously joyous - my love of knowing and being, my love for you and every value of my life - was put there by my choice. Everything that makes any random stranger look like a Sleepwalker, like a bunch of rocks stuffed into a human's skin - was put there by his choice.

Life is precious, and to remain indifferent to *that* kind of crime is not possible to me. So do please discount for my passions. The waste of human lives offends me, and I am apt to paint it in the darkest light. There are worse things than self-destruction. I claim they are consequences of Sleepwalking, but they are nevertheless worse. And, given what we are, every man has not only the right, but the exclusive *power* to set his own oughts. I have selected a different set for my own life, *but I have no power to select for another person*. It angers me that they've done this to themselves. But no matter how I feel, it is only themselves who can undo it. Consider them as they are and leave me to fume on my own fuel.

But do observe them - and yourself. Seconds first: everything I say is derived from my own first-hand observation of being, and it is to being that you must go to test my conclusions. But first: make yourself aware of them, because that is the only sure way to avoid becoming one of them, the only safe place to keep your happiness. For joy *is* self-awareness, the continuous love for a spirit that has made itself worthy of that love. Everything you know, you know through your own effort. I can tell you what I think is true, but I cannot cause you to have seen it for yourself. So *do* see it for yourself.

And there I am again, establishing oughts for you. Janio's Madness is that he wants everything, always, to be perfect, even despite the causes of perfection. But I cannot motivate you, and it is wrong of me ever to try. If there is a positive effect of our being separated - and I am not digging wounds, just treasuring facts for what they are - it is that it will force you to be independent of my mind. And it will force me to recognize that a Helena molded in my image is not The Woman I Love. The woman I would make mine forever is the product of her own premises, her own effort, her own assiduous thought.

So, anyway, all I can do is make a map - and maybe I can't even do that. My spirit can stand as proof only for me, but take it as an evidence, if you can, that I would even try, that I am not intimidated by the job of proving all of life. I see it as a task worthy of man, and this is only the beginning. What's in it for me? Splendor, Darling. Because I *thrive* on it...

Only the beginning: I sometimes feel as though I am the first man alive, alive in an impossible way. With the awareness that comes only of human nurturance, but with none of the fears, hurts, dogmas and misconceptions people inflict on each other. I stand naked before life, all guards down, and I see things that have never been noticed before, that have never truly been *seen*. Of the many remarkable things I have to say to you, here is a first: the social sciences *are* provable, and everything that has been done in them until now is void of meaning.

Now *there* is a statement worthy of a madman, and in evaluating my truth, you will have to gauge also how well I back that up. I stand naked before you, too, and I ask only that you judge by your own conclusions on your own sense evidence. It is possible that someday scholars will set about to prove or disprove my case - but that won't do *you* any good. Not now, because you cannot benefit by their efforts before they have made them. And not even then, because, always, knowledge - real understanding - is a benefit you can reap only by *your own* effort. Not ever, "Because there is no Substitute For Experience"...

And Damn! *That* sounds like not just an ought, but a *threat*. So be it. Janio's Madness is wanting everything to be perfect, always, and that *entails* erecting artificial barriers to being taken - or denounced - on faith. You know what I mean: it is the very heart of disclaimerism. So let's make a few mega-disclaimers, and then I'll drop it.

First: my passions prove nothing. I know I don't have to say that, but I know too that I must. No uncolored speech escapes Janio's lips. Not even now, when I make no sound. I will never hesitate to introduce my feelings into a discussion, but my feelings are never a persuasively valid reason to uphold or denounce my views.

Second: my intense conviction that what I say is true is not a proof of truth. I am apt to go at things in great detail, to keep hammering away even where there is no resistance. That persistence proves nothing.

Third: if you still feel for my spirit the way you did, that proves nothing. Neither what you are nor what I am is necessary. Both of us made our glorious souls by choice. What we are about here is *validating* our choices, and we cannot do that by reference to themselves.

Which all boils down to the same old disclaimer: I can't think in your place. You have to do it for yourself...

And *that*, My Darling, is beautiful... What a wonderful thing it is to be alive as a human being! I know especially now, now that I am not, quite. But I've known it always, and if

there is a treasure of treasures in my life it is knowing that, while I was yours, I was yours by your own free choice. If I could command your love, now, after this, I would not do it. I could compel only your body, not the choice of your spirit, and I would not have anything I have not earned *completely*.

I am the man who would be his own god, and that is not without its price. Unlike the Sleepwalkers, I cannot contradict what I know to be the truth of my being. I know too well the price for that. So if setting you free costs me your love, I am prepared to pay. I cannot worship my own spirit while offending yours. And I cannot rejoice with a woman who worships her spirit as I do mine if I am standing in the way of her self-love. To be the woman I love, you must first be the woman *you* love, and even if I wanted to, I could not give you that.

Now *that* is ecstatic agony... To love life is to know it for what it is, to acknowledge that you are neither impotent nor omnipotent, to stand firmly behind your ideas and actions, fearless of the consequences. There are people who dream of having their desires at the price of a wish - but do they ever really ask themselves what those desires would be worth, if they could be had at that price? There are others who insist to themselves that nothing they desire can be obtained; isn't that an evaluation, too? The desires of the self - the questing for knowledge, for serenity, for love - these are worthy of being valued precisely because that are *not* automatic. If I could have your love for my wish, what would it mean to me?

To win something, it must be possible to lose it. Would I have ever been valuable to you if you could have had me *without* becoming who you are, without educating yourself and cherishing yourself in the way you have? If you could have my love without having to *deserve* it, would it be anything more to you than a cheap trinket, a glass bauble to be discovered, held and abandoned, all without thought or effort?

And yet, you can never know if you've done enough. You act upon your self for your own reasons, building it and making it beautiful. But you cannot know if another person will see its beauty; you cannot know that he will see your spirit at all. Every other person is a black box: to value them, you must know them. But to know them, you must expose yourself to them, make yourself vulnerable to any injury they might inflict. You can make your spirit as beautiful and as perfect as it can be, and *still* they can reject you, insult you, damn you...

That's the problem for most people, the people I've called every dirty name you've heard and some you haven't. They don't *begin* by pursuing perfection as an end in itself, so when it fails as a means to others, they give it up. They didn't *try* to become stupid,

confused, self-destructive - even truly evil. They just never learned that there *is* a reason to make oneself perfect, even if other people hate and scorn perfection.

What is that reason? Why, Splendor, of course. To be a beautiful soul, you must be who you are *because* you want to be. I know you know all this, but I want it made explicit: you cannot know the total self-awareness that is total self-love for anyone's benefit but your own. Every other person is a black box, and you cannot even know what they want, much less give it to them. And you are a black box to them...

We are each of us alone, always, totally. There can be companionship. There can even be a Communion of spirits among people who love themselves enough not to seek evidence of self-hatred in others. But no one can know you as you alone know yourself. No other person can see inside you, to know first-hand your thoughts and desires and imaginings. No one else can see you as you see yourself, introspectively. No one can ever know you except as you make yourself known in your words and your actions.

You can use words and actions to try to deceive others, but you can never deceive yourself. In the spirit that only you can see, you cannot hide from the truth of your being. You can try to hide the truth from your awareness - but only at the price of awareness itself. To be, you must be *alone*, whole unto yourself and undismayed. You cannot control any life but your own, but you control that one life *completely*.

And that, My Darling, is *wonderful*! Facts are facts, always, no matter how we feel about them. But to know them with an uncorrupted mind is to cherish them, to rejoice in their crystalline perfection. Glory is recognizing that the possibility of joy requires the possibility of pain - and embracing joy anyway. And Splendor is *earning* that joy in the only way it can be earned...

Splendor is all the god there ever was, all that men really mean when they speak of the divine. They put it outside of themselves because they think themselves unworthy of it. But worthiness or its lack are products of choices, and our choices we make for ourselves. You and I are the people who have chosen to be divine, to worship our spirits as gods, to act in full consciousness upon our own aims *regardless* of the price we might be made to pay for it...

By our choices, we bring Splendor to our lives. We are the people who would be our own gods, and we are lovely in our divinity...

2. Madness

I am only an idea now, but once I was a man - and I will be a man again and more before long... I decided when Sally was born that ego is an idea: if she is a free self without flesh, then "flesh" is not an essential characteristic of "self". I now have first-hand - *no* hands - proof, but it is a weirdness at best for the present. I am conscious yet not corporeal, alive, but still somehow not... I can express my emotions, but I can't know them "in my bones". I can't laugh out loud or shiver with delight or feel my pulse race when I think of your fiery breasts pressed against my skin. I can't even stretch, which is a pain that strikes nowhere (grin). Yet I do still think of myself as having a body. Being A Body was too much a part of Being Janio for too long for me to forget it this quickly - if ever. And, no, in case you were wondering, I haven't forgotten that *you* have a body, run by that gorgeous idea called Helena...

Oh, no! It's The Undead Rapist! He's dead, but his mind still wanders... Read all about this bizarre specter and the young woman he craves in *The Supermarket Star!*

Sure, laugh. It *is* funny, even to me. I *yearn* for you, as I always have, in my soul, my heart, my spirit, my self - my *ego*. Janio still *is*, and I am still all I have ever known myself to be. The "I" who is the real me is still all he has ever been. My surroundings have changed, and these are unfamiliar, but I remain as I was, undiminished. I am not a body right now, but I remember being a body. And I remember my body with yours. Though I cannot feel my need for you in flesh, I feel my need for you...

Lament Of The Horny Undead, a *Scoundrel* exclusive. Maybe a TV documentary: Sex Crimes Of The Undead...

It *does* help to laugh, no matter what. But afterward, think of what you are laughing *at*... Because I said nothing that would be the least bit improbable if this passage were made public. My jokes are exactly the sorts of things people would cause themselves to think and say and write, if they knew about this letter. We have had the beginning of a very beautiful love story. How it ends remains at question, but for the moment think of what people would say, if they knew the story so far... Think of the joy and passion we have known together - and think of how they would be portrayed on Mindslime Of The Broke And Vacuous...

What you are thinking about is Madness.

Ha! "I *see*," said the blindman... I warned you: I don't guarantee the footing. You'll

have to test step by step. But if I am mad, I am not mad *their* way...

Madness is my name for what you might as well call invalid thought. That doesn't convey the *insanity* of it, but that's what it really boils down to. That culture-wide need to rub every treasure in the mud is just one manifestation. It doesn't afflict *every* person, but it is endemic to that fat middle of the bell curve advertisers aim for. The snorters and snickerers, the smirkers and sneerers - they are not without motivation. All living beings are motivated, and all humans are motivated *by their own choices*. That need to defile, to smear, to reject with a chuckle - it is no more than the rippled surface of a deep pool of resentment. And no matter what form it takes, mock-cheery or dour, it is an attempt to punish...

To punish not *us*, but *themselves*...

Understand me: they don't hate virtue - they truly love it. What they hate is *themselves*, and that smutty sneer is just one expression of that hatred. Each of them knows he has failed *his own* idea of virtue. To justify his choice, he pretends to himself that virtue is impossible, even though he had to know it *is* possible in order to deny it. In order to sustain in his mind an idea he knows to be invalid, he constantly seeks evidences that his choice was correct - even though his quest for smarmy trivia is proof that he *knows*, while pretending not to, that he has betrayed his own ideal. He cannot hear a piece of good news without hinting at some corruption. He *needs* corruption, as a crude, inverted "value", because he cannot bear the thought that his own spirit might have remained ever clean, unchained and untarnished...

Watch them, Helena. They are The Secret Schnorrers of their own souls. They thrive on life, yet pursue only death in their thoughts. They corrupt their own minds, in order to avoid acknowledging *what they already know*. They "live" by destroying their own ability and desire to live...

What is happening?: Ayn Rand called them cannibals, but she was wrong. The substance they consume is not human flesh, but the human spirit, the idea of being alive as a human that *is* being alive as a human. And they do not eat the soul of some random captive. No, there is only one ego any of them has power to devour, *his own*...

Madness...

I approach it out of sequence, because it is the first thing I understood about other people, and because I think it is crucial for understanding what humans really are. I'll

be referring back to it countless times, so I want to be abundantly clear about what Madness is. So far, I have provided only one example, but I think it is a compelling one. There are *millions* of others, at least one for every unhappy person you can point to....

We've talked about the people I call Sleepwalkers before, and I know you think I'm obsessed with the subject. In fact I am, but it is an obsession with truth, not a Madness of my own. I have watched them for years, and finally I have *seen* them. I think of mental inversion as a vile act, so I tend to describe the process in a way that makes those who practice it seem irredeemably evil, consistently irrational, permanently self-devastated. In fact, I don't feel that way about them. Rather more the opposite.

Because they are *not* evil, not truly. Most of them are *very* good, almost all of the time. Some are genuinely self-destructive and a few are criminal in their actions. But *all* of them started out *wanting* to be good. Any evil actions they take are expressions of their unhappiness at failing their ideal. There is no such thing as in-born evil, and there is no such thing as a *desire* to be evil.

No one is motivated to take evil actions in order to say, "Nyar har har har!" And no one is motivated to take an action he himself regards as evil *for the sake* of being evil. Many people *do* take self-destructive actions, but they don't do so in the pursuit of self-destruction *as a value*...

No one *values* self-degradation; the concepts *consume* each other. To value something is to glory the self, to treasure it *because* it makes your life better and happier. Madness is the exact opposite of a value, and people pursue it not to achieve a gain, but to sustain a loss...

What they seek to lose - at the crusty root - is *ego*... And now again I sound as though I despise them, when in fact I merely fear them (grin). There is no one who will tell you that he takes irrational actions in order to escape the inevitability of his being a man. But self-destruction really *is* the destruction of the self, the ego. No Sleepwalker will say that he is attempting to deny and degrade his own identity - and truly he isn't. He's just trying to find a way around dealing with this or that situation that makes him unhappy. Madness is an attempt to reconcile ego to failure, to defraud the self into valuing itself even though the Sleepwalker *knows* he does not deserve or even *possess* all of the self-esteem he pretends to. But to sustain this lie he tells himself - or tries to tell himself he has convinced himself - he must deny the validity of his own consciousness. For no matter how many other people he manages to fool, he can never truly fool himself. Other people are not aware of his introspective being, but he can

never escape awareness of his ego, not and remain aware of the world outside his mind. So he must deny validity to some or even most of his experience of being alive as a human being. He must either ignore experience while it is happening, or erase his memories of past experience. Either way, his Madness is destructive of both his mental faculties and his spirit.

Why, why, why? Nothing is causeless. Nothing is supernatural. Nothing is beyond understanding. We are real and the universe is real. If we apply our minds to the universe, we can understand it. Not all at once, obviously, but eventually...

And indeed we can understand Madness if we look at it for what it is.

As A Substitute For Experience... That was the first hint I had, and I knew it as a child. First and always, it means to know without knowing, to claim to experience the consequence of discovery without the cause, discovery. You've heard me talk about this, too; I've called it the SFE for short. In one form or another, it's all but pandemic.

To be without having been, to find without having to look, to persuade without having to convince, to exist without having to *live*... But those are ends, and the SFE begins as a means. An SFE is a willful mental inversion. Hold your breath: a mental inversion is the assertion, as "fact", of a principle one knows to be false. No matter what outward expressions a person gives it, it is fundamentally a transaction a self makes with itself. An SFE is first and most importantly the lies a person tells himself, invisibly to others, in the quiet of his own mind.

Understand that the Sleepwalker *must* know that his motivating premise is invalid, factually incorrect, in order to *conceive* of it. We have no knowledge of the non-existent, the non-evident, the non-possible. All we know, we know of what is, and what is possible. Our minds are free to wander: if we want to, we can *imagine* the non-existent or the non-possible, but we can only do so in *relation*, by *reference* to what we know. All forms of imagination, whether aimed at creation or deceit, consist of negating a premise one thinks at the time to be true. Creation is a positive act. It asks, "How could my knowledge be improved? Is there something I've been wrong about? Is there something I could understand more clearly?" Deceit inquires, "Is it necessary to be right about this? Is there something I could pretend to be wrong about? Is there something I could pretend to know less clearly?" Reasoning by Substitutes For Experience is *never* a positive act. At its most basic level, it consists of holding as proved truth what one knows is a product of imagination.

And there is a deeper dimension to this. One could argue, "Well, suppose the premise negated really is untrue. You did say it's what a person *thinks* is true. If he 'negates' his error, then he has done himself a good, hasn't he?" No. First, because no new knowledge is gained from reasoning invalidly about an invalidity; he is as blind as he was before. And second, and *much* more importantly: because, assuming human upbringing, every human knows the full truth of reality *before he learns how to lie*.

As I said, a person must know something is true to negate it. *Each* of us teach ourselves the true facts about identity and causality as babbling babies. If you think of the way toddlers thirst unquenchably for sensation, the way they do the same things again and again, testing the consequences, the eagerness they bring to every task, you will see what I mean. While all this is happening, the child's power of speech - and thought - is limited to the sense evident, or its facile negation in "stories". All the child knows he knows by correlation of sense experience, and he cannot conceive of an alternative.

The last and most difficult proof a child attempts is the proof of humanity, which means understanding volition as a cause. Until that time, a child's words are mental simulations of objects, imagined duplicates of sensed objects that do not violate the properties of those entities in any known respect. But when a child comes to understand *his own* identity as a human, as a causal agent whose ends are not foreordained, he recognizes that his words are not objects, but *ideas* about objects. He sees that they are created by his own volition, and are not necessarily bound to the real properties of the object named. He sees that there is no natural barrier to imagining a flying whale, for example. He discovers that words can refer to other words, ideas to ideas to ideas-of-ideas... And he learns that ideas can deceive himself or other people...

This is what I call Conceptual Fluency, the age at which a child learns to think in abstractions. Before it, the child cannot rationalize, and he cannot be dogmatized. It is only after the child understands that concepts can be manipulated free of the bonds nature places on objects that he can act in *willful* self-defeat. I'll have much more to say about this later on. What I want to convey now is this: the Sleepwalkers do not just *believe* that the premises they try to negate are in fact true, *they know it*. Each of them proved to himself the truth of reality *before* he learned how to lie to himself about it...

And thus when we consider the most common sorts of SFE's, they seem ridiculous: myth and religion, mysticism and supernaturalism, astrology and phrenology, "luck" and "knack". Lumbering logical fallacies and the plaintive call of the wild guess...

There is a certain black comedy to it, since every SFE "validation" consists of the

assertion that one knows something by some means other than discovery, other than by reasoning about facts in one's own mind. Which is to say, that one knows something by a means one *already knows* to be impossible. And, therefore, by means of the SFE the Sleepwalker negates *himself*. He pretends to himself that he is what he is not, that he is not as he truly is - and *knows* he is. He obliterates his own identity, species and spirit, in order to sustain a premise that he knows contradicts his every experience...

Experience is the awareness of being, remembered, sensed in the present, and anticipated. A Substitute For Experience is a claim to knowledge without a basis in awareness, discovery. Religious revelation is a gross example. According to Augustine, it is "validated" in "the evidence of things not seen". That unpacks to "evidence of the non-evident", and from there to "knowledge of the non-knowable". Make no mistake: the SFE claims to have awesome powers. It is an effect without a cause, an end without a means, a mystical, magical miracle. Something from nothing, an endless string of zeroes yielding up a one...

That's half the picture: Solipsism, the belief that one has the power to "create" facts. For whether he places his belief in omnipotence in himself or in an imagined god, the Sleepwalker is acting upon the conviction that the laws of nature are his to control by volition. The other half is Skepticism, nothing from something, the belief that facts are non-existent...

"This isn't happening. I *refuse* to believe this is happening to me." How many times have you heard those words? When you heard them, was there ever any doubt that it really *was* happening? Another form of the same thing is "pretending" not to know something or someone one does know. Another is the blank indifference many people exhibit in their actions. And still another is "hiding" facts from oneself or others.

All of these are different ways of expressing the same thing, belief in the power to "escape" awareness. The Solipsist believes he can cause the universe to exist, but the Skeptic believes he can cause it to *cease* to exist. The Solipsist insists that volition gives him the power to mold nature. The Skeptic claims that his choice can negate nature, including the nature of choice.

Observe: one cannot say, "I refuse to take notice of this", without first taking notice of it. The snub that tacitly declaims, "I am not aware of you" - is a lie. It *has to be* a lie, because the response of feigned unawareness is a reaction to awareness. "This isn't happening" would be a meaningless statement outside the context of knowledge of something happening; the response, again, is a reaction to a stimulus; it would not manifest itself without it. In the same way, trying to hide facts from oneself *requires*

the existence of those facts. Before you can pretend that you believe something is false, you must know it to be true. If you did not, you would not need to pretend that you don't...

Do you see what is happening? The Solipsist tries to pretend he can *create* the truth. The Skeptic tries to pretend that he can *hide* from it. And both types of Sleepwalkers try to pretend that they can be what they are and what they are not, both at the same time...

In trying to negate the known properties of being, to deny what he *already knows* to be true, the Sleepwalker is denying the *identity* of being. Since he is himself a manifestation of being, when he denies the nature of the universe, he is also denying *his own* nature. In fact, he is negating his own identity *first*, as the end he seeks. He refuses to acknowledge the nature of volitional conceptuality, the property that distinguishes him from other beings, pretending either that choice is omnipotent or that reason is impotent. He refuses to recognize his true potency *for what it is*. Thus, he negates his identity as an entity, as a particular type of object with particular unchangeable characteristics.

But *much* more significantly, he also denies his identity *as a particular ego*, as his own unique self-made soul...

Watch: to pretend that something that is *not* true is, or to pretend that something that *is* true is not, one must deny the validity of experience, either while it is happening or as one remembers it happening. I first began to understand this while thinking about my many notable failures to convince anyone of anything. When you talk to someone who does not want to hear what you have to say, it is just as if they *do not* hear what you are saying. In order to "turn a deaf ear" to someone, a Sleepwalker must pretend that something he knows *is* happening is not. He must pretend, for that moment, that his life does not exist...

For life *is* experience: being now, remembering having been, hoping to be... We live in our minds, and our lives consist of the accumulated experiences of our lifetimes. Being alive *as a human being* means *being aware* of being alive as a human being. Any part of our time we spend trying to be *unaware* of being human is time spent in self-abnegation. In the same way, when we try to pretend that something we regret in the past didn't happen, or something we hope for in the future *cannot* happen, we are acting in self-abnegation, we are erasing part or all of the idea that is the self...

Our lives are of limited duration. Sally may have found a way around that, but for humans in bodies life eventually comes to an end. Because it is finite, any bizarre

attempts at non-existence or super-existence are *wastes of life*... There is only so much water in the glass. Any you let spill to the ground cannot be used to quench your thirst...

If life is a value - and I say it is - then the SFE negates not just reality, but the *ego* of the person who practices it. He takes the one of life that nature gives him and makes a zero of it. He tries to exist as he is not, but this is impossible. So, by default, he ends up *not existing* as he is. He uses his life to pursue its own negation...

Do you see why I call it Madness? There is no word more appropriate. For the Substitute For Experience is a means to an end, and the end is self-destruction...

I mean what I say: the *effect* of a mental inversion, negation of ego, is the *goal* sought by the Sleepwalker. When he ignores his life while it is happening or forgets his past or his hopes for the future, he is wasting the only life he has. He rejects the only life he *can* have, because it is not the life he would invent for himself. He values the zero of non-existence over the one of being what he is. Indeed, we can describe the mental inversion, the SFE, and all of Madness as pretending to evaluate zero as being greater than one.

But there is more to it than that, Helena, so much more. Because Madness is a response to life, and, in the eyes of a Sleepwalker, the *means* to it...

Do you understand?: The general inversion behind any specific type of SFE is: a thing can be both itself and not-itself at the same time, an entity can correspond to and contradict its nature simultaneously. Every Sleepwalker knows this is false; he had to know that identity is inviolable in order to scheme up a false contrary. As I said, the entity with which he is primarily concerned in denying facts is *himself*. His Madness may employ other objects, but its first target is *his own* identity. He erects an SFE in order to rationalize drawing a conclusion about himself that he already knows to be false. He seeks "proof" that he *can* do what he cannot, or that he cannot do what he *can*. The SFE serves as his "evidence" that he is either omnipotent or impotent...

Why, why, why, why? *Watch* them...

Childhood is a beautiful experience for virtually everyone. It is not without its physical and emotional pains, but except in extreme cases these are rare compared to the moments of total rapture. And because they don't yet order their thoughts by conceptualization, children don't grant more than transient significance to pain. The

overwhelming majority of their time is spent in pleasure, in full and joyous awareness of *everything*...

And, yes, you know I love children. But I never told you the *reason* I love them: it is because they are *human*, human in the full and most beautiful sense of the word. Not just alive, but *glad* to be alive, *Thriving In Exquisite Splendor*. I love to watch their minds work, watch them *teach themselves* the truth of being before anyone else can teach them anything. If they are to achieve the ability to learn concepts from others, they must, as a matter of causal necessity, teach themselves the truth of identity and causality. But because they lack concepts, they cannot act like their Sleepwalking parents and rebel against what they must do to remain alive. They haven't learned how to pursue pain, and they pursue pleasure with a will...

And then, something happens... What it is depends on the child, on his own unique experience of being. He might be dogmatized or brutalized by others; think, for example, of the way older children like to torment younger ones with horror stories. Or he might "get away" with actions *he* thinks are unjust. But either way - I say *every* way - he comes to imagine for himself a way of "knowing" that is *better* than reason, more "useful" for arriving at a desired conclusion than discovery. This is the root mental inversion, the first of many, and the child *must* know it is false to conceive of it. Whether he does it to reap a pleasure or to shed a pain, the child knows he is pursuing a method that is invalid to his own prior proof of being.

One mental inversion is no big deal. Children heal from scraped souls as quickly as from scraped knees. What is dangerous is this: that first inversion will usually have no *exigent* consequences. By exigent I mean: demanding immediate attention, a physical or spiritual emergency. When little Sharon accedes to her father's demand that she believe in a non-evident god, she does not suffer for it, not right away; she knows she is accepting a datum without proof, but she trusts her father not to mislead her. When little Randy convinces himself he has a "knack" for fishing coins from mommy's purse "without getting caught", he knows he is denying the nature of volition as a cause; he *had to* understand volition in order to "discover" and "abstract" his "knack"; yet he does not get the smack on the ass he so richly deserves...

No, that first mental inversion is not terribly significant - by itself. But it does have consequences, even though these are usually not immediately obvious to the child. The first of these is the studied unawareness discussed before, which must be maintained for as long as the child wishes to sustain the SFE. The second is that inversion pits his ego, his self-concept, against the truth. Even one SFE of short duration is damaging to the mind and to the self to some extent...

But not terribly damaging, not at first. The problem is that the SFE becomes *habituated*. The trust and desire to please - and the fear - that led Sharon to lean on her father the first time will lead her that way again, if she does not challenge the false premise she holds. The sly feeling of power Randy knew when he decided to invent his "knack" is addictive; he steals wealth, true, but he also steals a feeling of triumph he did not have to earn. Because they sustain their irrationality through time, both become more and more alienated from reality, and both become, as individual souls, bigger and better enemies of the truth...

There is no man more bound by a deception than the liar. His victims suffer immediate injury, but the damage he inflicts upon himself is much worse, and much more enduring. In order to sustain his lie, he has to deny his own awareness of being, he has to refuse to live his own life. And he must constantly scurry around, continuously "re-inventing" imaginary "truths" about his imaginary life, in order to uphold an idea of his ego that he knows is false to fact... (And think: this sort of thing is so ubiquitous that it's a stock situation comedy plot.)

The second-most tragic thing about the SFE is this: it can never work. Reality always remains as it is, no matter what we choose to think of it. The nature of knowing is such that it cannot occur except by discovery, no matter how much we might want it to be otherwise. *Contradictions do not exist*. Because his mother *chooses* not to watch her purse, Randy can sustain the false idea of knowing by "knack". But what will happen to him when he tries to convince himself he has a "knack" for driving a car...?

But the *most* tragic thing about Madness is that it destroys the person who practices it, destroys both the *ability* to live and the *enjoyment* of being alive. Reality doesn't punish Sharon *severely* when she renounces her own mind, but it does punish her incrementally and *cumulatively* through time. When the adult Sharon finds she cannot make a decision, cannot face a new challenge without paroxysms of anxiety, depression and doubt, it is her *ego* that is paralyzed...

Is that not enough? Think of this: when a person entertains a Madness in his mind, he views the Madness as being in his interest. This is the way he lives, the way he has lived for as far back as he remembers, as far back as he *lets himself* remember. He will scrupulously maintain the SFE that supports his Madness, constantly seeking to "create" new evidences of the "truth" of the proposition he knows is false.

That's interesting: his evidences are proof not of his SFE's truth, but of its falsehood - *and he knows it*. Think of the example with which I began this chapter: does the way

the media would treat our love prove us to be depraved? Despite our first-hand evidence to the contrary? Or does it prove that the sellers and buyers of swill have *chosen* to be depraved?

I know a man who plays the lottery. Every night at the same time he calls for the numbers, hours after the drawing. He *will not* let anyone mention the numbers in his presence before his call. I once explained to him that, no matter what time he found out about them, *the numbers could not change*. He insisted that they could, that one day god might smile on him for the faithful application of his ritual, his "evidence" of the power of divine intervention...

People who fish for compliments amuse me. The form of their argument is: I intend to employ emotional manipulation to compel you to appreciate me. Is what they get in response true appreciation? Or is it just the opposite? When you hand your money to a mugger or tax collector, are you giving him something he has earned and deserved? Or is he taking something that is not his by right?

They start out wanting to have it both ways, wanting to have the *life* of a human without the *identity*. They spurn the potency of a man, demanding instead the omnipotence of a god or the impotence of an animal. To achieve this mental abomination, they must erect and sustain a mental inversion. To erect it, they need to deny a premise they *know in advance* to be true. And to maintain it, they need to *continue* to deny their own knowledge, their own sense evidence and memory of experience. At full maturity, the SFE is a ravenous monster...

Now, consider that *many* people have more than one Madness...

Yikes! *Now* do you understand why they are so unhappy? Not quite yet...

For there is one thing left to consider: what happens when a person has to choose between something he wants very badly and his Madness? This is reality's ultimate revenge on the Sleepwalker. Nature abuses his his body as the price of his error, and logic cripples his mind. But it is his own *personal* identity, his *ego*, that thrashes him when he chooses the zero of his Madness over the one of his spirit...

Self-flagellation, self-mortification: they do have referents in our so modern world. They refer to Sleepwalkers... Because if he had to strive frantically to maintain his SFE *before* it cost him anything, he must double his zeal afterward.

This is where the aspect of self-punishment comes in. Each of them knows that he has renounced something he wants in order to sustain his SFE. In his private guilt, each will

think of some specific value. But, at a deeper level, each has also renounced the desire to live life at its fullest that is the normal mental state of childhood. And self-renunciation is self-destruction in the very tightest sense, the dismantlement of the ego...

Madness is self-destruction, and the Sleepwalker *knows* it is. When he employs it to achieve even greater self-destruction, he is inflicting a grievous injury upon his ego. And he knows it...

At this point - at every point along the line - he has a choice: he can go on trying to sustain a falsehood, or he can face up to the truth and rebuild from where he is. Unfortunately for the Sleepwalker, he has habituated a completely invalid method for dealing with unpleasant facts: he ignores them...

So, what happens? The Sleepwalker *acknowledges* failing his ideal of life by embracing his Madness still more tightly... Recall, one cannot react without there having been a prior action; one cannot pretend not to know without first knowing. By his reaction, the Sleepwalker *demonstrates* that he is aware he has failed his values. But to admit this consciously would require that he admit the invalidity of his SFE. So, instead, he strains still harder to pretend to himself that he believes his false premise.

And where before the SFE was an invalid means to an end thought to be positive, it becomes a means to an end *known* to be negative. For when he loses a value for which he *yearns* due to his own willful errors, the Sleepwalker concludes that he is *unworthy* of his values. Before he used his Madness to obtain values without having to earn them. But afterward, he uses it to deny values to himself, to negate himself in punishment for having negated himself...

His self-flagellation simultaneously serves two contradictory purposes. He punishes the self of his deeds for having failed the self of his ideals. And he punishes the self of his ideals for demanding deeds he does not want to perform. He mortifies his spirit with more of the poison that made it ill: he renounces his desires and ignores his actions...

He convicts himself of attempted suicide and executes himself as punishment...

Madness...

Whew! Sorry to get so hairy there, but Madness is a difficult idea to understand fully and I wanted to be as elaborate as I can be. I know you know most or all of this already,

but I wanted to spell it all out for the sake of operating on it.

What we are left with is a picture of a self-destruction loop, a willful, on-going dismantlement of ego that is self-sustaining and self-accelerating if left unchecked. The Sleepwalker sets about to negate himself in his mind and winds up negating himself in his body, his mind, and his *soul*, his awareness of and desire for life. The question to ask now is: what does Madness do...?

And the answer is: nearly everything that comes to nothing... Or even less...

Yes, I know they are pitiful, but still they are comical. I can recall from school seeing children try to *guess* the answers to math problems. Tragic Madness in the first degree, because the effect was not knowledge of the answer and its proof, but it *was* a diminution of the ability to *find* the right answer. Grave Consequences over time, the very worst for many of those children. Yet it is funny to watch while it is happening, in the way that watching monkeys play can be funny, or watching a cat cover its mistakes, or watching films of those birds that forget how to land. What a bunch of clowns...

And yet I do not despise them; I like most people I meet. I don't think they are evil, not even vile. Most have their Madnesses, but they're particular, and they're under control. Most of the people I've met are seven-tenths honest, and many are more. Nature is not very tolerant of stupidity; it is hard to be less honest than that and stay alive for very long. I enjoy watching people and talking to them, and, as long as I stay clear of their SFE's, they like talking to me. There are few of them I could talk to about *this*, but it's easy enough to understand why.

I get a little tired of being wheedled for "moral support", which means claiming falsely that one believes the other person's SFE. Note that this is another attempt at an invalid "proof"; one can *say* anything, and nothing one says is proof of anything *by itself*. The Sleepwalker's resort to this kind of move is "no accident". Reality *is* intolerant of error, and so the Sleepwalker learns that the "safe" places to find his "proofs" is in his own and other people's choices. The drunkard claims that he has the power to neglect his safety, but his "proof" is the bartender's willingness to get him home safely.

No, I do not dislike them. But I do fear them...

Because what Madness does is destroy...

Think of a mob scene. What is it? Some people would both ignore it and apologize for it by calling it "mass hysteria". But is "hysteria", invalid reasoning, Madness - is that *new* to any of the participants, or is it something they do all the time? Is a riot some

kind of spontaneous accident, or is it an impromptu choir of practiced liars...?

And what is a culture? Is it any more than a codified Madness? Perhaps men do require some formalized means of imbuing actions with meaning, but is there any reason to suppose that one genuflection is superior to another? Does any culture you can name do anything besides forbid people to do what they want for their own reasons? Think about it...

Think about *our own* culture. What is it that we're doing when we tell our children that faith is a source of knowledge and that the right answer is the one in the book? What is it when we tell children lies about monsters and magicians in order to "teach them how to get along"? Get along with *what*? I remember seeing once a vile old crone with her toddler grandson. She was telling him, in Spanish, "You have shit in your heart, and it's pumping piss". What goal was her action motivated to serve...?

And think of the individual Sleepwalker. What has he to gain or lose, after he has renounced the values that moved him? If it is only his self-love that keeps him from wielding the mass-murderer's gun, what happens when his self-love is gone? What explains mass-murder in the first place...?

Madness...

3. *Knowing*

Janio Is. Janio Built. Janio Is Helena's. I was looping on my identity long before I ever looped with assembler instructions. Janio Is Helena's - it means so much to me that it was my password on the system, back when I still needed one. Janio Built in all those loving letters, with their strange syntax and odd capitalization. I Am Yours by my own on-going choice, *Because I Want To Be*. Janio Is.

But what is Is...?

I claim for myself the title of Master Of The Nothing Joke. Nothing Is Sacred in my humor. Headline: Egovangelist Sighs: 'Nothing Goes Unskewered - All Injured'... "Hastings, I want you to have all the best things in life that are free. Nothing Is Too Good For You!" And we both know how to answer that: "Is is. Is Not is not. Therefore, Is is not Is Not."

Ha! I hope I never tire of teasing you. But Janio Built *is* an Egovangelist, and I rarely do anything without a didactic end in view. Forewarned is forearmed: I am preaching to you...

And do you understand why I dread this? I must do it, I *want* do to it, I want it *done*. And yet I am plagued by a nagging doubt that it is somehow not right. Not that the truth I propound is invalid, a Madness, but that it is somehow wrong *morally* to talk about these things in this way. It Needs To Be Said, it has for a long time. And yet, it is still somehow an insult, an injustice, and it may even be a threat to my own happiness...

"Language Is A Virus"... I don't know what Laurie Anderson meant by that, probably something pretty vile. I heard it in conversation, and I looped on it for months to make it my own. All we really understand, we know through abstraction of the immense body of sense experience. We have abstracted these marvelous accelerators called words, concepts. But these show us only where to look and what to look for; they don't *see* in our stead. But as we have noted, concepts can also be used in a different way: one can invoke them to pretend that one sees what isn't. Or that one doesn't see what is....Or that one does see what is - but doesn't...

It's the last one that scares me. To be denounced on faith is nothing. I have no fear of magicians or microbes. But to be *taken* on faith - that is an insult to me, to the "acolyte", and most especially to the truth...

And yet I make of my speech a religious beauty, which is an insult to *you*. Not

intended, and not really avoidable: Language Is A Virus. And Janio Built is a plague, maybe... Because I cannot say what I have to say *except* in this way. I know: I tried it twice and was stopped both times. I am writing about *life*, the thing I say is the very essence of truth, usefulness, goodness, and *beauty*, the thing without which those really are Nothing. I *deliberately* make my speech as beautiful as I can, as a manifestation of Being Janio Built. Honestly, I seek not just to convince, but to *infect*, to charm, seduce and *conquer* with my words. That's an aggression, one I acknowledge without renouncing. I hope it's not a Madness, but if it is, I'll pay what it costs me. I would bear false witness to *my* vision of the truth, were I to present this in another way.

And there is injustice here, too, by choice and by ignorance. Because this letter is about Being Janio, which necessarily excludes you. Other People are Not Me, and their introspective lives are *unknown* to me. You have never been a Stupid, a Sleepwalker; I have never known you to do anything corrupt or unjust. But you are still Not Me, and I do not know you as I know myself alone, as *you* know *your* self alone...

It's possible you've done some of the things named in the last chapter. *I* have, and that's part of the reason I know them so well. But neither of us is here to exonerate the other; it would change nothing, and we would learn nothing from it. But it is unjust of me to expose your soul - if that's what I've done - even while exposing my own. I resonate in the quiet recesses of your mind, And Yet I Am Sound, a thing made undeniably real in your spirit... I Have No Right to force myself upon your brain, and yet I do it anyway. I feel I must, and that is both No Excuse and all the excuse I have.

And there is another injustice, less severe but perhaps more threatening. Look at it: suppose I am right. Suppose you come to agree that mine is the full and true representation of Being Alive As A Human, or at least the best beginning so far. I know you know most of this already, so it's not such an enormous leap. But what happens then? By my gifts, I oblige. Not *really*, because a gift requires the consent of both the giver *and* the receiver. I have not asked you if you want this, I have simply thrust it at you.

That's an aggression, too, one that might cost me the thing outside myself I value most. You do not *owe* me *anything*. But if you feel that you do, or if you feel that I am trying to *make you feel* that you do, then I do both myself and my truth a disservice. I injured you by leaving, and I injure you again by this letter. By *all* of those letters and all of our days together, because I was ever thus. That's No Excuse either, but that's what I am... And yet that's what I must *stop* being to you...

I Am The Life Divine. I Am The Truth And The Glory And The Meaning And The

Beauty And The *Light*. I Make My Spirit Real In My Actions, And I Know My Actions Whole In My Spirit. I *Adore* Myself.

And I don't try to hide it. I try *not* to hide it... I strive always to make it real in my person, as my own redundant proof of my truth. I am the man who would be his own object of worship, and I make my self *glorious*...

But I cannot be the object of *your* worship, not the first one. You were My Esme, My Hilde, My Child Bride. But you are not a child, and you cannot live - really *live* - on any part of my strength. It does not matter that I can spare it. What matters is that you cannot lean on me at all. To do it is to palsy your own muscles, your own power to grasp The Life Divine and hold it to you.

In that way I am a threat to your happiness and to mine, a threat to our love. I see it and know it for what it is, and yet I cannot stand in the way of it. There is immense beauty in what we had, but there is a tinge of Madness, too, a slight dependency that seemed reasonable at the time but doesn't now. I have been too much a father to you, too much a mentor, a confessor and a god. That's no stain, and *you* have been a god to me, too. But it's not fully a goodness, because we each must stand on our own before we can stand together. You used to tell me all the time: "Before one can say 'I Love You', one must first know how to say the 'I'..."

So true. And so by my style of expression and my style of life, I can act to my own injury in three ways: I can alienate you from the truth. I can alienate you from *me*, assuming you *don't* agree that what I say is true. Or I can cause you to pretend to believe as I do, without really believing it. I fear each of these - but minutely. Everything I know of you tells me you are a glorious being - and I am not trying to manipulate you, just to present what I see as the truth. I fear the last worst, though. Because if by my actions I cost you the full joy of *your* life, then I cost it too of *my* own...

I Would Have You, Helena, but I will only have you *whole*, no matter what nonsense I might try to *will* into being. I *cannot* compel your love, because it is only *you* - the you I can never see or touch or control - who can make your love real and bestow it upon me. I yearn for that treasure more than any other, *but I cannot cause it to be*, no matter what... I would not force you with my hands if I had them. But if I force you with my words, hypnotizing, mesmerizing you with my *mind*, then I commit a crime no less grave. It would be a Madness, and, like any other, *it could not work*. The value I obtained by force *would not* be the value I sought. I would have not your love but your compliance, not your desire but your submission, not your spirit but only your flesh...

Honesty: If I Took You By Force I Would Destroy You And Destroy Myself.

Is is, always. And it always is *as* it is, no matter what. Madness is an attempt at a special exemption from The Law Of Identity, but there are no such exceptions. I cannot have you for the price of my willing it. But I *would not* have it, even if I could, because I must have the Real Experience, not the Substitute. I know too much now about how people cheat themselves of their treasures. I know too much to even *want* to defraud myself...

And so I confound myself. I *will* go on with this, because I *must*. I will bear my fears and doubts: I don't like their causes, but I like the alternatives even less. *I Would Not Lose You*. But I would not keep you by fraud, by pretending to be something I'm not, but pretending I am not going where I am headed... Pretending *you* are not what you *so* abundantly are, with my longing itself as my best proof of that abundance... I would not steal you *because* I Would Not Lose You.

It may be that I cannot succeed, no matter what. Perhaps the knife that sliced us apart cut too deep. And maybe this letter *is* the insult I fear it might be. It may be that we simply have different roads to travel, with no stain on either of us. If so, so be it. I like to think of myself as a man who faces up to facts. And I *know* that to keep liking myself that way, I *had better* keep facing up to facts...

But I could not call it a goodness, not now anyway. By My Own Hand I Create My Life - or destroy it. It cannot be otherwise, and it could not be more *beautiful*, even now. I could torment myself much worse than this - and I have, in spasms - but it would come to nothing. *This* is all I can do that can come to anything...

And *it* might come to *less* than Nothing!

Yes, things are never so funny as when they're tragic... We can be hit by anything we set in motion amid the stately march of the stars. Hit hard. But Is always is, and it can't be cheated, lied to, compelled or obliterated. It is an invulnerable opponent, and to fight it is to *die* fighting it. So I will do as I must and hope as I can. Things will work out as they do, without my having much more than this to say about it. I cannot say that I *like* it, but I recognize its necessity.

I am not defeated, not by half. But I am at the very end of my power to act. Janio *Is* Helena's. But whether Helena Is Janio's is Helena's to decide, hers *alone*...

Passion Chills When It Burns: I Am The Soaring Thing, and I can only hope my disclaimers offset my ecstasy, flatten the curve. Janio Is: I can conceive that this might

not be what *need* to be done, but this is what I can *cause* to be done. Is was before Janio, and *it* makes the rules...

Now, again: what is Is?

Woman, I am *shameless* in my didacticism, because I have just *shown* you, in the most lovingly beautiful and tellingly perfect of examples...

For Is itself, always, unchangeably.

Truly, I *love* saying things that way... Unfortunately, if you don't *already* understand what I am saying, then you don't understand at all. So I'll do what I can to make things clearer.

First, reality, the universe, is composed of objects, entities. Everything that exists exists as an object, or as a manifestation of an object. Objects are composed of substance, of matter. If we ask, "What is there that exists that is not matter or a property of matter?", the answer is: Nothing.

Matter is all there is, and there are no entities that are not composed of matter. There are a great many Sleepwalkers who speak of "living in a material world". The question to pose to them is: "As opposed to *what*?" There is no non-material universe. There are no non-material objects. If it isn't matter, it isn't. Period.

I don't intend to carry on at this basic a level for too long, for two reasons. First, the ground is already *very* well covered, by Aristotle, by the natural sciences, and most recently by philosopher Ayn Rand. (And, in invoking her name, I must hasten to add that I don't endorse her thought fully, nor do her high priests endorse *me*.) I have recommended to you before Rand's *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*. This is the finest work of philosophy she did, and it is among the finest done by anyone, ever. It deals at length with the issues that concern us here: what is Is?, how do we know it is?, and how do we know our knowledge is reliable? So far as I know, no one has done any serious damage to Rand's case. So far as I know, no one has even tried.

The second reason is this: I do not take arguments of supernatural metaphysics seriously. As far as I'm concerned, they're *all* SFE's, Madnesses. That's a prejudice, and I freely admit it. I haven't talked to *every* believer in the supernatural, so I haven't proved *exhaustively* that they're all Sleepwalkers. But I've talked to enough of them to satisfy my curiosity, and I've yet to meet even *one* who could offer *any* verifiable

evidence in support of his view. Their "proofs" are always rooted in that non-universe of non-matter; they're never out where one can get a look at them.

And, of course, it's easy enough to see why: people concoct the idea of a "non-natural" being in order to defend their allegedly "non-natural" knowledge. Whether it is heaven, other planets, ghosts from the past or future, space aliens, parallel universes or the world beyond the grave, there is no one who upholds an "alternative" being who does not *communicate* with that alternative. The imaginary alternative does not just exist, it sends secret messages to its faithful advocate. *Totally* secret, because they are never evident to a competent observer.

Now that's a vital word: evident. Every object is evident, discernable to the senses of any competent observer. It seems almost comical to say it, because it's the most obvious thing in the world. It is obviousness itself, and it is the world... Everything that exists is an object. Objects are evident to the senses, either themselves or their actions and attributes. If you talk to a Solipsistic Sleepwalker, you can challenge him easily enough by saying: *point* to something that is not an object or an attribute or action of an object...

If he's smart, and most aren't, he'll say something like: "Sure, anything I can *point* to is an object. What I'm talking about is something I *can't* point to." Fine. What is it, and how can I prove that it is? And the answer is: I can't. If it is non-evident, it is non-knowable. The Solipsist is making a claim contrary to my experience, that he is aware of something that exists that is not evident. But even *granting* him that contradiction, I can do nothing for him. Because, even imagining that his Special Exception exists, I cannot *prove to myself* that it does.

The Skeptics deserve their turn at bat, too: what they say is that the senses are in some way unreliable. Some say that true existence is somehow separate from that which is evident, that the evidence of the senses is a lie. Others insist that the mind *imposes* order on what is in fact chaos devoid of identity. The first view says, yes, we are conscious, but not of the truth. The second says we are not conscious of anything except our minds. Both are void of meaning. We can only know that the object we view is not the *true* object by means of *true* knowledge of the object, which is denied to us *by definition* by the first theory; in other words, to uphold that epistemology, we are required to claim knowledge the theory *itself* forbids us. In the same way, if our minds merely impose order upon chaos, how did we come to have a knowledge of order? Both theories assert effects that somehow manage to come into being without prior causation. And both are nonsense, in my view.

I could go on about this at enormous length, so I won't. Read the Rand if you want more. And if you meet a person who insists that you must "respect" his belief in a non-evident being that yields non-evident knowledge, invite him to take a walk through the streets of New York. Blindfolded... If his non-verifiable knowledge tells him when it's safe to cross the street - *then* listen to him... Ha!

Because it is by abstracted evidence of the senses that we know being - *and everyone knows it. Everyone*, including all those poor Sleepwalkers who claim they've found "a better way". Not one of them fails to look both ways before crossing the street, because they *know* that their non-evident knowledge is *imagination*, not knowledge.

So: being consists of objects, which are composed of matter. Objects are evident to our senses, they are *all* that is evident to our senses, and we *know* only by abstraction of sense evidence, by *discovery*. *Because* knowledge consists of abstraction of evidence of objects, it can be *verified* by any competent observer. By my lights, non-verifiable "knowledge" is a contradiction in terms. If it cannot be *shown* to be true, it isn't true. Period.

There are some truly hirsute side issues to this, but I don't intend to go into them in detail. Briefly: there is the problem posed by falsifiability, the scientific doctrine that something cannot be proved true *unless* it admits the possibility of being proved false. Extreme Solipsism, to pick an example, the belief that one is the creator of all being, including any people who claim to be independent observers, is not falsifiable. There is no evidence you can offer in opposition to the theory that cannot be asserted to be a manifestation of it. In the same way, the Quantum Mechanists are making some epistemological claims that can only be regarded as bizarre *outside* the realm of subatomic physics. Some hold, for example, that the causality of matter is a manifestation of chance, not of necessity. That, for example, though we may never observe the air in the room to be anything other than evenly distributed, there is nothing in the nature of gases that *prevents* them from collecting in the corners, leaving the middle of the room in vacuum. All a very, very remote chance, they assure us. But still possible, they insist.

The question that *I* ask, when I hear theories like these, is: what difference does it make? Suppose I am a product of somebody else's imagination: in his wisdom, he has imbued me with a nature that I violate only at my peril. You could say, why should I care that one of his thoughts expires? Because *I* am that thought - though of course I am not; wish I could pinch you to prove it. Similarly, suppose that the causality I regard as absolute is only random chance. In fact, whenever I set a causal chain in motion, I observe the same results. I have yet to observe a contradiction. So what difference does

it make *to me* that there is a supra-hyper-mega-micro-minute possibility that an object might someday contradict its nature?

Understand me, I *don't* take these epistemologies seriously. I don't dispute the existence of the Josephson Junction, for instance, but I don't think micro-scale causality has said anything meaningful, to date, about macro-scale causality. But suppose I *did* take them seriously, not just Quantum Mechanics but all alternative views of identity and causality. What would be different in my life? If I were to live as a body and mind as I did before, would I not have to do the same things I did then? Could I safely pretend, for instance, that my alternative knowledge will tell me when it's safe to cross the street? Could I forego eating, demanding instead that my creator, the Solipsist, *imagine* that my stomach is full? Could I put a gun to my head, arguing that it is purely a matter of chance that a bullet is hard and massive, that it might be something else this time?

Could I do *anything* that is contrary to the true conclusions I draw by abstraction of sense evidence - *and stay alive*? No. So I leave the full proofs of being to those who do them better than I do. *You* know what's true, and so does everyone else. Each person *has to* prove identity and causality *prior to* learning to think in concepts, since concepts are the *product* of the knowledge of identity and causality.

For my own purposes, I am satisfied with a simple, end-oriented rule-of-thumb: that which you must regard as true in order to remain alive is true. In my own mind, I call it The Armpit Of God Theory. It goes like this: what *if* that which I regard as all of the universe is no more than a mote of dust on a quark in an atom in a molecule in a hair in the armpit of god? So *what*? I am still what I am, a free mind in a material body (even now I am that). I still have free will. I still survive only by acting *correctly* upon my knowledge. So how have my circumstances changed? They haven't. Is is...

But *what* is it that Is is? I don't have to tell you that objects vary widely. I don't even have to tell you that I don't have to tell you, but I do it anyway (grin). For our purposes, it will suffice to divide all entities into three broad categories: inanimate objects, organisms, and humans. We do this in order to make observations about the *identity* of each type, and, in turn, to draw conclusions about types of *causality*.

Now I've been using those words, identity and causality, for quite a while without giving any clue as to their meaning. It's time I did them justice.

The *identity* of an object is what that object is. It is itself, irrespective of our consciousness of it. And it is *as* it is according to its nature, according to the properties

of the components of which it is made. An object can exist in different forms. A mineral can be a solid or a liquid. *But no object can change its identity.* A mineral cannot become a gas, for instance, or a tree. The Law Of Identity, A is A, a thing is itself, is *absolute*. It admits of no exceptions.

Humans can be conscious of the identity of an object. But that awareness is not the identity of the object, nor does the object make its identity known *automatically*. We can observe ice, but our observation of it does not change *its* nature - or our own. The ice itself is immediately obvious to the senses, but its *identity* is not. We cannot know merely by gazing at it that its melting point is zero degrees celsius. Nor can we claim that we *create* the melting point of ice by looking at it. The identity of ice - or of any object - is what it is *regardless* of what we think or feel about it...

Causality is the way objects interact. It is a *manifestation* of identity, a necessary relationship of objects among other objects. Each object has its identity, its own real nature. When one object comes into contact with another, they act upon each other. The simplest and most common example is the billiards table. A billiard ball will sit still until acted upon by another object. Then it will move in a straight line until it is slowed by friction or until it bounces off one of the walls of the table. When one ball slams into another, the slammer is stopped and the ball slammed begins to move. The *effect* of the slammed ball's motion was *caused* by the energy transferred by the slammer.

Again, we can be aware of this, *but our awareness changes nothing*. When talking about inanimate objects, *causation is inviolable*. There is no thought you can hold or action you can take that will cause events to reverse themselves. No matter how much you might want it to be otherwise, the slammed ball must move when hit, and the slammer must stop. In the same way, the prior causes that put the Earth in motion around the Sun cannot be reversed by your ideas. You can *wish* that the world moved in the opposite direction, but your wish will not cause it to happen...

And, of course, you know all that. But there is more that you might not have thought about.

Call back to mind our three categories: inanimate objects, organisms and humans. *Identity* is absolute for all three types of entity. There is no such thing as a gas that is simultaneously a rock, for example, or a tree that is also a bird, or a human who lacks the capacity to choose. But *causality* is not the same for all three...

Causality among inanimate objects is inviolable. Objects cannot change their identity, and human observers cannot change identity. So an object always is what it is, and it always interacts with other objects in the way its identity requires. There is nothing in

the nature of either a billiard ball or a human observer that can cause the ball to remain still when hit by another ball. Given the prior cause the effect *must*, necessarily, manifest itself, without exception. The effect is *foreordained* by the nature of the objects interacting, and nothing can change it. Period.

Organisms, by contrast, have a degree of flexibility in their responses. The simpler an animal is, the less flexibility there is. And, high animal or low, *most* of an animal's actions are *foreordained* by its nature. Foreordained in a different sense than we used that word for inanimate objects, though. An organism's actions are selected - for the most part - by its instincts, by the "race memory" if you like, imposed upon it by its genes. The higher animals do have some degree of choice about what actions to take, but even that choice is preprogrammed by the animal's nature. Your dog can choose to bite your sister or play with her, but it cannot choose to play *Chess* with her. And when an animal is faced with a situation for which its instincts have not prepared it, it is paralyzed to act.

As an example, think of the stupid, self-destructive timidity displayed toward humans by the animals of the Galapagos Islands. Now, animals the world over know we are dangerous. That's why they do such a good job of staying out of our way. But the animals of the Galapagos have no "race memory" of us. Their instincts do not tell them how to respond to us, and they lack the ability to learn in any systematic or lasting way.

Anyway, the point is this: an animal's actions are predetermined by its nature. It has *some* flexibility *within* that nature, but *none* outside it. Your dog can choose to be friendly or mean, but he cannot choose to be a vegetarian. You can *train* him not to scratch the floor, but you can never teach him that it is unreasonable to try to scare up snakes and bugs by scratching at parquet. In the most fundamental sense, an animal's actions are *foreordained* by nature and are not malleable by any action of yours.

But humans are *very* different. We share with the higher animals the power of choice, but we lose the inviolable instincts and gain the power to reason. Because we act upon volition unhindered by instinct, none of our *purposive* actions are foreordained. There are certain types of actions, such as reflexes, that *are* genetically preprogrammed. But the part of our action that is under our conscious control is *entirely* under our conscious control. We can do anything we like, within the bounds that nature allows, and nothing in *our own* nature impedes our freedom.

What is more, we have the capacity to reason, to *choose to* abstract sense evidence into concepts of objects. And we have the power to *choose to* communicate these concepts among ourselves, thus multiplying the power of our minds. Man is a being of volitional

conceptuality, and he is unique as such among beings.

Now, what does this *mean*? An inanimate object acts as it must, according to the prior causes acting upon it. If it comes into contact with another object, it can *be* a causal agent in a new causal chain. But it cannot *choose* to be a causal agent. An animal acts as it must, according to its genetic preprogramming. It acts as its instincts command, though in some cases it can choose among alternatives offered by its genes. When it acts, it is a causal agent. But it cannot *choose* to be a causal agent, nor even identify its own limited power of choice.

By contrast, man can do both. He can *identify* his power to *choose* to be a causal agent. The actions of an inanimate object are absolutely foreordained. The actions of an animal are foreordained with some tolerances. But the actions of man are *not* foreordained. They are exclusively the product of his volition.

This is vital. It tells us a great many interesting things about man and his actions. It also offers us a distinction between types of causation. From here on, I will refer to the metaphysical cause and the volitional cause. The metaphysical cause refers to the actions of inanimate matter and animals. When something is metaphysically caused, *it could not be otherwise*, given the prior causes. A metaphysically caused event is causally *unavoidable*.

By contrast, a volitionally caused event is *always* causally avoidable. It happened because someone *chose* to make it happen, and that person could have chosen an alternative. As an example: the shape of North America at the time of its discovery was caused by nature; it was the product of an enormous number of prior causes, each of which was metaphysically unavoidable. But the shape of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is man-made. It consists of entirely arbitrary lines men have drawn upon a map, *by choice*, for reasons of their own. It's true that some of Massachusetts' boundaries are natural in origin, but the use of natural barriers as boundaries is *also* a matter of choice. Nature could not decide to change the shape of North America, but men could easily choose to change the shape of Massachusetts. They have done so several times. Men can even choose to change the shape of North America. We do it all the time, with dredges and landfills.

Men are unique among entities. We have the power to reason, and we have the power to choose. Our power can lead to our undoing, as we saw in the last chapter. There is no other living being that can *choose* to act in self-destruction. Certain animals *do* act contrary to their own interests: lemmings are the textbook example. But no animal *knowingly* acts against its own interests. Humans can and do. Many do little else...

But our power is also our glory. There are no other animals who compose poetry or erect skyscrapers. No animal could write *The Organon* or the Ninth Symphony. Some dogs are very playful, but they can never know the *conceptual* joy of viewing a Degas dancer or seeing Ibsen's *Master Builder*. Beavers have the reputation of being very efficient, but no beaver can choose to build something *other than* a dam. Dolphins, whales and apes are said to be very intelligent, but none of them is smart enough to husband a food supply - or organize against a common enemy. Man is that smart and more. No other animal can even *conceive* of an unforeseen disaster - an earthquake, a tidal wave, a forest fire. Because he has reason and choice, man can not only *see* the future, he can *plan* for it...

I've said it before: man is a being of volitional conceptuality. What does this *mean*?

First, it means that man can *reason* about sense evidence. Like any higher animal, he can observe the real entities and actions in the world around him. But unlike any other being, he can recall past perceptions and compare them to present ones. He can organize and reorganize his past perceptions, uniting those that are similar and separating those that differ. He can order whole classes of objects and events into *concepts*, ideas. He can reason about those ideas in order to understand other ideas. And he can *communicate* his ideas to others, with one word standing for a whole class of entities or processes or ideas.

For example, if I use the word "smelting", you might think of the whole process of metal forming, from mining to firing to purification to pouring. You know all of this from past experience, which is retained by mental integration under a concept. In the same way, if I say "poetry", you might think of some of the thousands of poems you have read. But if I say "poetry in motion", you might think of athletics or the dance or horse-racing, whatever that concept means *to you*, whatever your past experience has led you to believe it means.

But man is a being of *volitional* conceptuality. That means two things. It means that man *can* reason, but that he only actually does so *by choice*, and that every choice he makes results from his having thought about it *by choice*. But it *also* means that reason and choice are *themselves* volitionally caused...

Not the *capacity* to reason and to choose; these are genetically foreordained and are not subject to change by choice. But their *development* is very much a product of choice, and if that choice is absent, so will be volition and conceptuality. And the choice is not that of any particular person, but of his *parents*...

Look at it: children are born with the *capacity* to walk upright. But they have neither the muscular development nor the *knowledge* to walk upright on their own. In order to learn to walk, they have to *teach themselves* how, with the help of their parents. And they have to eat and sleep comfortably and exercise, with *all* of these things obtained or motivated by their parents.

In the same way, to learn to reason, and to learn to *choose* to reason, a child must be supplied with a great deal of stimulation he could not obtain on his own. His parents present him with all sorts of sensory challenges: mobiles and toys and car rides and cuddles and nonsense speeches about the beauty of his toes. They don't - for the most part - do this with the view of stimulating the child's brain; they just do it because they love him. But their actions have the *effect* of stimulating the baby's in-born capacity to choose to reason, even if this is not the intent.

What would happen *without* that stimulation? The child would not learn to reason, and he would not learn to make *abstract* choices. This is a matter of established fact, documented under the general heading "Wildmen", humans raised by animals. And we can envision an even fuller - and more monstrous - test. Imagine a man-made womb, a sensory deprivation tank that provides a newborn with food and disposes of his wastes. Inside it, the child would experience no sensations, not even the sounds he heard prior to his birth. Would this child reason? About what? Would he choose? From among which known alternatives?

There is a third sense in which we can say that man is a being of volitional conceptuality. It is in fact a variation on the first, but it is interesting on its own. Man can choose to be *not* conscious. He cannot change his identity; identity is inviolable. But he can choose to forbid himself the use of reason and choice. Madness is a form of this, but a temporary and specific variety. Suicide is a very, very fast expression of it. But the thing itself is *anomie*, the on-going *refusal* to be human, to reason about evidence and act upon it by choice. Real anomie is not something you'll see often; victims of it don't last very long. But if you can imagine our child in the sensory deprivation tank, that's what you'd have, a genetic human who does not react *at all*. This is done as the *product* of a choice, but the choice is to renounce choosing, to renounce even the positive act - by comparison - of suicide. Such is the power of the human mind, that it can completely obliterate itself...

But the *normal* human mind is an agent of *creation*, not destruction. As we have seen, people *can* engage in self-destruction, but they need not and they do so only at their own peril. What interests us now is what we can observe about man, about the being who reasons and chooses and chooses to reason...

For a first thing, we can note that a man can have *knowledge*, remembered abstracted sense data. Knowledge is awareness of the truth, and it is particular to a person. We can speak of a book as "embodied knowledge", but only as a matter of poetry. No book "knows" anything, and if the data recorded in a book is not known to *someone*, it is not known. The Rosetta Stone was "embodied knowledge", but for the entire time that we did not know how to decode it, no one "knew" what that knowledge was.

In the same way, "common knowledge" does not violate causality. It may be "common knowledge" that water freezes at zero celsius, but that does not mean that this fact is known *automatically*, or that *anyone* could know it without having *discovered* it. You do not know *anything* without having found it out. There is no automatic knowledge, and there are no short-cuts to validation, to proof. To prove something means to prove it in identity and causality, to show that it *must* be so, *because it could not be otherwise*.

Knowledge is particular to a person and so is volition. When a person chooses to do something, it is *only* that person who is choosing, not someone else. It is very common to hear Sleepwalkers say things like, "Creation is a collective process." They are lying - and they know it. Ideas do not exist apart from brains, and the choice to think about something in a different way does not occur apart from the brain of the person who makes that choice.

Volition is the *exclusive* motivation of humans. A person can choose to be unmotivated - as with anomie - but he cannot choose an *alternate* motivation. Humans are motivated by their own choices, or they are not motivated at all...

What is more, each human is *self-motivated*. The self is an idea each person abstracts *about himself*. He observes himself in the world around him, takes note of his metaphysically caused nature and his volitionally engendered desires. He takes account of his thoughts, words and deeds, and, through time, forms an idea of who and what he is. It is this idea - the ego, the self, the soul, the spirit, the self-concept - that is both the actor and the thing acted-upon in his every choice.

The self is not metaphysically necessary. Nature does not cause man to abstract *any* ideas, much less one so complex. But in the presence of its prior causes, the idea of the self is *unavoidable*. If we put a pregnant woman on a completely deserted island, and if she died while giving birth, her child would die within hours. Newborn humans are not even *close* to being able to survive alone. If we put her among wolves and the same thing happened, and if the wolves raised the child, it will be as if he *were* a wolf, a terribly crippled one. The child would not develop his capacity to reason, and thus he would never *identify* his power to choose. His poor emulation of wolf instincts would

be a *product* of choice, but he would not know this. Not ever, unless he is rescued *very* young. But in the presence of normal human upbringing, the child will abstract the idea of self *as a consequence* of developing conceptual fluency.

I like to think of the spirit as a sort of doll, an idea of his own body that each person sustains in his mind. By his actions in the real world, he acts upon that body. And he acts upon it, too, by those actions of his that are only introspectively known. By his own estimation of how his thoughts and deeds serve his interests, *as he identifies them*, a person assesses his ego. And by that assessment, he determines his *future* thoughts and actions.

It is poetic to think of the soul as a doll of the body, but the body really *is* the doll of the spirit. If you want to know why some people always get what they want while others always get walked on - the spirit is your answer. We make our souls *real*, we *embody* our self-concept in our actions. When a person feels he *is* worthless - he *acts* worthless. When he feels he is great, he makes that image of himself manifest in his body. The self-concept is invisible, but its *expressions* are not...

I could go on about this forever. The fact is, I talk about little *other* than the self. One in particular... (grin) But there is one more point I want to hit.

Volitional conceptuality is particular to a person. What does that mean? We said it means that knowledge is particular to a person, that volition is particular to a person, that volition is exclusive as the form of human motivation, and that any particular person's motivation will be his own self-abstracted concept of himself. What does *that* tell us...?

It tells us this: *humans are exclusively self-controlled*.

Now, I know I've insulted you with a lot of trivia, a lot of fussy details you already know. So, when I tell you that *this* is the most important thing I have to say, please don't laugh at me...

Because, as obvious as it is, this is the single most important thing about humans, and it is the fact people are quickest to forget - to *choose* to *try* to *pretend* to forget...

What does it mean to say that humans are exclusively self-controlled? It means that any particular person will be motivated by his own self-image - *and by nothing else*...

Of course, you know that. No one who knows how to know can *avoid* knowing that. In

their Madnesses, many, many people *try* to evade that knowledge, but none of them succeeds, for the same reason that no Madness ever succeeds - because choice cannot change identity.

But what does it *mean* to be exclusively self-controlled...?

Think back to that first example I gave in this chapter. Do you see how perfect it was? Don't think me *too* mercenary: I feel those doubts, longings, and joys even when they are *not* useful to me in an argument (grin).

But think back to what I said. Why *can't* I force you to be my wife against your will? Because your will is not mine to control. Why can't I *cause* you to love me? Because the *cause* of you love is your *self*, your own ego, yours *alone* to control...

What prevents me from taking you *anyway*? The Law Of Identity... I can grab your arm, but I cannot grab your soul. If I threaten you, you might motivate yourself to take an action, *but I cannot motivate you*. Not ever, no matter what. Is always is *as* it is, and we are not made that way...

Janio Is Helena's: I Would Not Lose You. But if Helena is to be Janio's, I must *earn* you. Today and *every* day, I must be the person you value most, next to yourself.

I would give a great deal to be next to yourself right now... But I cannot be, both because of Where I Am and Where *We* Are Now. But The Future *Is* Open To Change, and I am doing what I can to change it. It may not be enough, but it's all I have...

I *Would Not* Lose You, but I would not, could not, cannot *ever* keep you by any means other than your own free choice...

Is is - and I *know* it...

4. Rectitude

Okay, it's time to get serious:

I am a man who laughs for vengeance, and it's not entirely a goodness. But it's always been a good disguise... But now that part of my life is over, along with many others. The need for disguise is gone.

So let us get *very* serious, consequences be damned. I put at risk a huge part of my life, our love, my hopes for our future together, maybe even your belief in my sanity. And you may think me still more mad when I say this: I do it gladly.

I am an Atheist. I am an Anarchist. I am an Egoist. I am everything my culture loves to hate, And I Am *Proud* Of It.

So there! (grin)

Call me mad if you must, but I am what I have sought to become. Do I value something *before* you? You bet I do! *Me...*

I Love You helplessly, hopelessly, desperately. I didn't even know how *much* I loved you until we were parted. By my actions now and forever I will strive to earn the glory of being cherished by your hands and treasured by your spirit. But I love you as an *expression* of my own self-love, and I could not betray the cause without betraying the consequence. I *would* step in front of a bullet aimed at you, because I would sooner die than watch *you* die. But I would not corrupt myself for you, degrade and prostrate my own ego.

To love you, I must live. But to live, I must *want* to remain alive. I am not forced to this by nature; nature doesn't - *can't* - give a damn what I choose. But if I am to love you, and you me, I must *choose* to do those things I must do to remain alive. One is to remain ever true to my own truth. Though it might not be to a Sleepwalker, this is a *very* big deal to me. I would die for you, Helena. But I would not *lie* for you, no matter what that might cost me. Not *for* you, *to* you, *about* you, about *me*. Not ever, no matter what...

To be true to my love for you, I must first be true to my own self-love. And to be true to the idea of Man As God I uphold as my own standard of worthiness to that love, I must be true to my knowledge of the truth. Is is, and to deny it is Madness. To deny it is to pursue *death* denying it. Not the honest death of taking your place or even of suicide,

but the thoroughly *dishonest* death of self-abnegation, the obliteration of the very thing that is the *source* of my love for you.

Because of what I am as a spirit, I *could not* betray the truth for your love. But even if I decided to invert my consciousness for your sake, I could not succeed at *earning* your love in the way I would have it. There Is Only One Right Way, and this is it.

Rectitude...

Justice, fairness, equity. Rightness, righteousness, rightfulness. Objectivity, impartiality, uncorruptibility. Earned reward and just deserts, honest praise and warranted contempt... All the justice of man in the universe in one little word: Rectitude...

To love you, to love myself, to live, I Am Rectitude Embodied. Making my self real means making my actions *righteous*, always, before anything else. I love the Janio of my present *because* I acted for my self-love in the past. If I am to keep that passion for my life, I must keep it in the way I got it. I must always do what I think is right, *morally* right.

I am human. Nature has pre-established no oughts for me. I have oughts, but they are a product of my choices. I can *change* my choices, but not in the most fundamental sense. I can choose *not* to value my life as I do, but I cannot choose to escape the consequences. I cannot become the person I want to be, following another path. I cannot cherish my spirit's perfection while watching it pursue imperfection. I cannot praise my mental acuity while *deliberately* arriving at an error. I cannot rejoice in my success at staying alive while pretending that my life does not exist...

Madness eats Splendor. That's what it's *for*... Splendor Is Rectitude Known Whole, but Madness is True Rectitude ignored. The two cannot be sustained in the same soul for long, no matter what goal seems to demand that resort. And so, though I would die in your place - or in the place of any children we may have - I will not corrupt myself for you. Not just because I *would* not, being what I am. But because I *could* not *and* be what I am...

Very serious...

For I am all those things I called myself, plus plenty more. I Am A Man Of Rectitude Before Anything. And yet any random stranger will tell you that the ideas I uphold are

evil. Not just ugly, pointless and regrettable, but *vile*, dangerous, not to be tolerated *no matter what...*

Why do you suppose that is?

Rectitude...

Perhaps it is a Madness, but I have never been able to make myself believe that men are evil. I have seen them do evil things, and I think it is wrong of them to denounce the very concepts they need to achieve their full potential. And if I *wanted* to convict them of an irredeemable sinfulness, what better evidence could I have than my own ravaged body?

But not even The Man Who Wielded The Gun is evil. I was acting upon what I thought was right, and, when he pulled that trigger, *he* was acting upon what *he* thought was right. Don't get confused: I don't *forgive* him, not now and not ever. But I *understand* him, and in knowing him, I know his motive was not evil, but the good...

How can that be? He sought to *kill* me. He didn't make it, but *he* doesn't know that. How can I say that any part of his motivation was the good...?

Because he was acting on *his own* idea of Rectitude...

Yes, it was a Madness. But it was a Madness he felt his self-concept required. It was a thing he felt he *must* do, in order to let himself go on living. I am *not* forgiving, and I am not forgetting. But I understand it all, for what it really is. I Know Rectitude Whole, and so I know how people come to betray it while trying to serve it.

What I say is this: every man is motivated to do what he thinks is right. Though his actions may be evil in fact, they are not evil in *intent*. His intent is to preserve his life in the way he has decided he *must*, in order to preserve it at all. Though his actions may be truly suicidal, it is suicide he is trying to *avoid* by taking them...

Very serious and very strange. Yet as plain as day if we look at it in the right way.

First: what is "right"? I say that every person makes his choices by reference to his idea of "right", but what is this idea? Of what is it composed, and what does it imply?

Every child knows what "right" is. It's what you're "supposed" to do. It is a delightful annoyance when a child discovers the moral ought. For about a year, he will go around telling anyone and everyone what they are and are not "supposed" to do. If you ask,

"Who is doing this supposing?," the child will be mystified. For him, "supposed" does not mean "concluded mentally" but "required metaphysically".

Children are the most morally conservative people you'll meet in life. When they discover that their actions are not bound by nature, they conclude that they have to *act* as though they were. This is a Madness, because it is untrue, but it is a useful temporary crutch in the child's development, and it is a causally unavoidable "stage" in mental growth. When a child uses the moral ought to erect a false idea of a metaphysical ought, he is not doing so in self-destruction, but in what *he* views as self-protection.

Because when he recognizes that his actions are not foreordained, he acknowledges that *he does not know what to do*. In most realms, he can go on as he has, building the self he was working on before he knew he was working on it. But of the world he sees clearly now, for the first time, the world *outside* his childhood experiences, he knows nearly nothing - and he knows it.

And so he erects in his mind a host of invalid impediments to error, a long list of "supposed" that cannot verify themselves but which serve as barricades blocking the path to what the child views as his peril. There can be help from others in doing this; dogmatizing adults can feed the child oughts he never would have conceived on his own. But even if his parents are *perfect*, even if they never mislead him in any way, the child will still exhibit this moral absolutism at the age he begins to understand the *need* for morality. Given the prior causes, the capacity to reason and choose, and the nurturance of that capacity, the effect cannot fail to manifest itself. It is a temporary aberration for most children - though it is the threshold to Madness for some. But it is causally unavoidable.

Even though they grow to recognize its error, most people never give up on that idea of "right". They know it does not exist, and yet they want it to anyway. They know no human can have automatic knowledge of which course to take, but still they wish for it. They know no action can be good - or evil - *irrespective* of its consequences, but this does not stop them from trying to make "the ends justify the means". They know that justice is a product of consciousness, that it is achieved *by choice*. Yet they never cease to wish that evil could be obliterated by a causeless bolt of lightning...

They want what is "right", for the very best of reasons: their own self-protection. But they don't want to go about it in the "right" way. So, as with any Madness, they end up achieving the exact *opposite* of their goal. They keep waiting for "right" to win out, but all they see is "wrong" winning by default. They don't acknowledge that the default is *their own*...

Because the first question a child can *knowingly* evade is: "What is right and how do I prove it?" Most people never do answer that question in any systematic way, and I'm not just talking about Sleepwalkers. That temporary digression into "supposeds" need not be permanent, but for most people it is. They move from it into dogmas. Their newfound ability to reason in concepts allows them to absorb vast quantities of information, ideas that may seem more complete or comforting than their own self-abstracted conclusions about being. They move through life by mindlessly following a list of rules, without ever proving the validity of those commandments. Without ever even *questioning* the truth of the proscriptions they have placed upon their spirits.

Understand me, I am talking about *every* human being, not just the good ones. Even people who do *evil* have morals. There is no person you can talk to who will not tell you of something he *will not do*, no matter what. If you talk to a mugger or even a murderer, you'll hear the same thing. In their Madnesses, people make some awful messes of their lives. But there is not one of them who will tell you that he did not feel he *must* do as he did. And there is not one who will not tell you that there is something that *he* considers evil.

Everyone. Every woman and man born, ever, *wants* to do what is "right". But not one in a thousand knows what it is, or how one goes about finding it...

So: what is right?

I can abstract three meanings. They normally overlap, but not always. Where they do not, I say, one will always stand preeminent.

The three meanings are: validity, utility and righteousness.

Validity is epistemological correctness. A valid conclusion is one drawn from accurate reasoning about the actual properties and potential of entities. It can be *demonstrated* to be true.

Utility is bodily usefulness. It is useful to have a safe and comfortable place to live. It is desirable to have plentiful food and other nice things. It is good to live without pain, and to have the resources to remove any new hurts that arise.

Righteousness is moral rightness. I am not trying to sneak in a self-referencing definition, but I *am* trying to select words that mean what *I* mean. A righteous action is the one that best serves the self-preservation of the person acting. I say that it is this

motive that is the overriding sense of "right", when people use that word. The action will ordinarily also be valid - though the person acting may not be able to prove its validity. And it will also usually be useful - even though the person may not be intentionally serving his well-being. But it is his own belief that the action serves the preservation of his ego that is fundamental.

Note that I said "self-preservation", not "self-love". They are not the same thing. Self-love is a moral ought. It can only be adopted by an explicit, conscious choice. But I contend that the motive to righteousness is *not* subject to an individual's choice.

It is a *product* of choices, as we have seen, both of the individual and of his parents. But when a person experiences those choices, he is not *then* aware of any alternative. The effect, a fully operational volitional consciousness, is unavoidable, given those prior causes, and no person has the power to escape that eventuality. Only the *potential* to be a self is metaphysically foreordained. Its *development* is volitional in causal origin. But once those volitional causes have been initiated, their effects are inescapable.

There are no metaphysical oughts. The statement is a contradiction in terms. It says: that which is volitionally caused and therefore always avoidable is metaphysically caused and therefore *never* avoidable. But the value standard of preservation of the ego is *causally* unavoidable, in the presence of its prior volitional causes...

So what do I mean by "self-preservation"? I mean the on-going sustenance of the will to live, within a person. It is possible for a person to *not* live; he can commit suicide or descend into anomie. But as long as he is taking actions to sustain his life, body and mind, he is acting upon the will to go on living. He does this by doing what *he* thinks is necessary to preserve his life as *he* envisions it.

What he is preserving in his actions *is* that vision of himself, his ego. His actions can be totally ego-destructive Madnesses when viewed from validity, but he will take them if he feels that they are necessary to remaining alive *as he sees himself remaining alive*.

Now *here* is both god and the devil. God where a man chooses self-love; nature rewards his every righteous act. But the devil made manifest where he chooses self-hatred, Madness. Because his righteousness will demand that he punish himself *for* being alive, *in order* to remain alive...

There is no injustice crueller than when a man wreaks what *he* thinks is his just deserts *upon himself*... Every delight the Sleepwalker knew when he thought he was getting something for nothing, he takes back tenfold and more in pain when he realizes that it

was just the opposite - that he was giving something and getting nothing in return. No court of law could ever justify sentences like those he inflicts upon himself, and *he* could not justify it if he thought of it being done to another person. Yet he does it to himself, as the price of *remaining* himself...

It is the ego we express in each of our actions. Each of our actions - thought and deed - is first and always an action taken *by* the self *upon* the self. The self-abstracted idea of being who one is, now, in the past, and in the future, *is an end in itself*. It is its own cause and consequence, its own means to its own end. It is *connected* to the world outside the mind, but it is not *bound* to it. It is a man's spirit that it his life in the most fundamental sense. And it is his spirit that he acts to preserve when he initiates an action...

A volitionally conscious being is a moral agent, *by causal necessity*. Man is a moral animal, *unavoidably*, as the inescapable consequence of prior volitionally initiated causes. The motive of his *every* action is the good *as he sees it*.

Now we have seen that people can try to play games with their vision, so it is obvious that what a person *thinks* is righteous need not be truly righteous, where Rectitude is held to mean "in the service of the *true* needs of the self". Nature does not forbid our minds to reason by Substitutes For Experience, and many people do just that. But even in doing it, they act upon their view of righteousness, even though they know it is based in an invalidity. What a person regards as being righteous need not necessarily be valid.

It need not even be useful. Because utility is easily measured, where righteousness isn't, it is common in the social sciences to regard utility, immediate bodily satisfaction, as the *sole* motive of action. Indeed, the entire structure of classical economics is built upon the idea of an imaginary man who *always* acts to his financial betterment, never the opposite. The neo-classical viewpoint has allowed that real people might be capable of evaluating things by some standard other than money. But even this correction still excludes from consideration such very real manifestations of being as overturned buses and torched winos...

One could go so far as to argue that righteousness is simply the utility of the self. I would dispute this on a number of grounds. For a first, utility can *never* explain Madness. It cannot admit a "self-interest" that is interested in self-destruction.

From another direction, utility cannot explain the absurd. How many times have you seen a person kick his layed-up car? What is he *doing*? Expressing his rage? To whom?

He cannot communicate with his car, nor can he repair it with a kick. So what he is doing is a Madness, is it not? Not. It *is* an SFE and he knows it, but it is "useful" to him as a matter of righteousness. By that act, he purges himself of his anger and frustration, so he can get on with getting the car repaired. He serves no logical utilitarian end, yet he benefits his ego by a small Madness, then gets on with his life.

But there is an overriding reason why I think it is important to maintain a distinction between utility and righteousness. It is this: in the absence of any Madness, there can be cases where righteousness can *only* be served by a self-destructive act. The pulse is the utilitarian standard of value, on-going life at any price. But there can be cases where that price is too high for the spirit to pay...

Understand that I am talking about *extreme* emergencies. Ordinarily, the truly righteous is also the useful, because both are *valid*. Outside the context of emergencies, True Rectitude is always that which is epistemologically correct, based in an accurate understanding of the nature of the objects considered. But there can be circumstances where the only honest act of self-preservation one can take is suicide.

The best example I can think of was provided to me by the *Kmher Rouge*, the Communists of Kampuchea. For thrills more than for anything else, these self-made monsters would play a vicious game with families. They would round up parents and children, then give the parents guns. Then they would command: "Shoot yourselves, or shoot your children..."

Now the useful thing to do in these circumstances is to shoot your children. But utility will not acknowledge the feeling you have for your children *through time*, nor will it concede that you might feel differently about yourself *after* having killed your children. I cannot speak to validity, because the "object" considered is not an object but an idea, the self. It is possible to envision a parent who would not be devastated at having caused, by his own choice, the death of his children. But it is not possible for me to envision *me* doing that - as a matter of Rectitude. If faced with that sort of problem, I would have to kill myself, because I could not live with myself after killing my children.

So, righteousness is distinct from utility, and I contend that it is the fundamental motive behind every human action. The question to ask now is the one most people never ask themselves *explicitly*: what is the truly righteous thing to do...?

Thrive.

In Exquisite Splendor...

Because if the root of motivation is ego-preservation, then self-love is the best way of achieving that end.

This is a *logical conclusion*. It is not a metaphysically foreordained "ought". It is not even causally foreordained, unlike the need of a self-aware being to judge his actions according to righteousness. What I am saying is: *taking account* that being is as it is and that *I* am as I am, self-love is the *best* way to achieve my end. I didn't have any meaningful choice about *adopting* that end; I adopted it before I knew I could refuse to. I can choose at any time to *renounce* it, but only by renouncing life as such, either in fact or in my awareness of its being. But if I *do not* renounce it, then, logically, self-adoration is the most complete expression of True Rectitude.

Understand me: there is nothing in nature that *requires* you to choose to act in such a way as to *deserve* your own self-worship. But there is nothing in nature that can permit you to experience self-worship absent its causes. If you conclude that it is not just unavoidably necessary but *good* to sustain the will to remain alive, then it follows that the best way to do this is *never* to act in such a way as to destroy that desire to live.

Rectitude...

It is the will to live... For the Sleepwalkers, it is life at the price of self-exacted penance. For us, it is the pricelessness of self-exalted souls. But *no one* can live *without* continuing to sustain his ego's desire to live. This we *must* do, without our having any choice about it, so it is Madness to rebel against it...

And Splendor to embrace life *for what it is*...

Now I can't advocate *that* kind of mental state without being in certain measure a moralist. But I am mistrustful of moralities as such, and of moralizing as a practice.

The reason is is this: it's too short a leap from morality to that All New Nine Point Program. Morality deals with *big* generalities, not the specific experiences that make up every person's unique life. At its very best, morality offers a way of *proving* those specifics, but most people do not use it in this way. Instead, they pretend that the morality tells them what to do *without* their having to prove anything.

As always, I am worrying about you doing something that you never do, but my own view of Rectitude convinces me that there is no such thing as too many disclaimers. So: *all* I am going to talk about is self-love in the broadest sense. How a person realizes

that end - and *if* he adopts it as a valuable goal - is his to work out, in the context of his own life.

With that said, what sorts of actions does self-love imply?

For one *major* thing, the quest for self-adoration completely forbids the pursuit of self-destruction in any form. That includes all Madnesses and all actions consequent upon Madnesses. That covers a lot of ground, not all of it unambiguous. Clearly, it excludes mass murder, but how about skydiving? Is the risk of death worth the thrill of the experience? It depends on what end-goal that thrill serves. If the skydiver is pleased by his ability to plan for any exigency, then he is acting in the service of his ego. But if he is thrilled by his "power" to rebel against his own metaphysically foreordained mortality, then he is acting to the destruction of his spirit no matter how many safety precautions he takes.

And there are actions self-love *requires*, too. Foremost among them, at the root of every other, is *awareness*. One cannot love one's life while looking away from it. One cannot act to *earn* one's own worship without knowing *what* one is doing - and *why*. One must define for oneself what True Rectitude is within the context of one's own life. *And one must never fail to act upon it.*

What is *most* interesting, though, is what self-love *yields*: Splendor. To Know Being Whole, To Know Rectitude Whole, To Know Your *Spirit* Whole - this is all the glory there is in life, the highest that can be reached...

I am thinking of a day a long time ago... We were walking, talking in Battery Park, an arrogant young man and his cat and a stunning young woman with hair like a veil of burnished platinum... Do you remember the trees? They were just beginning to bud and they burned with a green so pure and bright they seemed to be a light source of their own... What you are looking for is what you knew then. What *everyone* is looking for is what you knew then...

I am looking for it, too. Always...

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a god for?" Bullshit. If a man is *not* able to grasp what he reaches for, then life is nothing more than god's torture chamber. But it is not that way, as you and I have good cause to know...

I am reaching for you, Helena, and for all of the values I knew before. I am reaching not for your flesh, but for your spirit. Whether I can hold it to me again is not some imaginary god's decision to make, but *yours*...

How will you decide it? Rectitude...

5. Liberty

There have been secrets between us, and I'm sorry for that. I have been doing things that could get you in trouble with the government, if you knew about them. And so I chose to keep you in darkness about that part of my life. I can't tell you everything even now, but I can tell you this: you are free...

What we have been talking about is: what does it mean to be exclusively self-controlled? It means you are *free*. Totally unbound by other people. A sovereign soul...

Those are easy things to say, but they're harder to prove. I think it can be done, though. *Because* you are exclusively self-controlled, you'll have to decide if I've done it...

Until now, the best of the philosophers of Liberty have simple *assumed* that man is free. Some began with a religious conviction that the spirit belonged to god, not to any aggregate of men. Others simply asserted freedom without any sort of justification at all. All of them have been ground to bits by thinkers who have nothing true to say, but who say it voluminously. The unanswered question that devastated their arguments - and is now devastating what used to be known as The Free World - is: *why* is man free?

The answer is so simple that it would be amusing if the consequences were not so tragic...

This is it: man is free *because he is self-controlled*.

So, again, what does it mean to be self-controlled...?

First, it means that you are totally in control of your actions. Your spirit, guided by your idea of righteousness, initiates your volitional actions.

And, second, it means that *no one else is ever in control of your actions*. This is actually implied by the first, but I think it's better to be redundant in this case.

You are the *only* person who has the power to control your actions. We allowed earlier for reflexes and twitches, but even those originate within your person, never another. What's more, I think it's wrong to focus overmuch on biologically engendered actions, since they form such a small proportion of all actions.

Throughout this discussion, I've tended to ignore biology. My reason is simple: I don't find it revealing. There is some evidence to suggest, for example, that body chemistry through the day can have an impact on moods. There are even people who suppose that

the urge to commit crimes might be genetic in origin. I ignore all that, not because it is not interesting in its way, but because I don't think it is germane.

To see why, let's stipulate the two examples and see what happens. If someone is in a bad mood, it's because he is *choosing* to indulge that mood. His body chemistry may be contributing to his misery, but his ego is the cause. If he told himself to drop it and focused instead on something that makes him happy, the bad mood would go no matter what happened to his internal chemistry. In the same way, suppose that a person has some sort of genetic predisposition to commit crimes. *Who* is acting on that predisposition? If the person chooses to resist his urge, will any crime take place?

Now go back to reflexes. Those who would deny the culpability of volition might try to use them as a defense. But can they? People who are unconscious have fully operational reflexes. But what purposive actions do they take? Since they take none, it is obvious that reflexes do not motivate people to take purposive actions.

The motive of action is the self, and the self cannot be motivated *from the outside*...

Now this is vital. Every purposive action you take is motivated *solely* by you, *never* by anyone or anything else. Everything you do is contingent upon your own thought: observation, reasoning, decision and motivation to action. This is not only *not* subject to control by other people, it is not even *visible* to them. You are the *only* person who is conscious of your introspective being, and yours is the only being of which you can have introspective knowledge. Consequently, you are the only person you can motivate to act, but you motivate that one person *exclusively*...

Now a question that arises at this point is: what about influence? Yes, people do influence each other. But so what? The influence is not the *cause* of any attempts at emulation. If a person modifies his behavior to more closely correspond to his idea of his idol, it is still, always and *only* him who acts. In the same way, I might be influenced by a bird to whistle. Is it the bird who *causes* my whistling, or is it myself?

Another question: what about coercion? When a mugger says, "Your money or else!", is he not exerting control over your life? No, not in the most fundamental sense. You may *comply* with his demand, but it is still only *you* who initiates your actions, never the mugger. Moreover, it is never impossible for you to select "or else". If muggers actually *could* control other people, they wouldn't need guns...

But what about actions taken under duress? In the West, we have a Common Law tradition of not holding people *criminally* accountable for actions taken under threat of violence. This is quite proper, in my view. In fact, when a person initiates a crime, he

always has the option of *not* acting. But if the price of his inaction is his own life, it is unreasonable to expect him to sacrifice himself for the benefit of someone else.

But what about *moral* accountability? It's easy enough to say that a person should not be legally prosecuted for crimes committed under duress. But a person cannot escape his own awareness of his self. If he does something that *he* regards as an affront to his own idea of righteousness - even at gunpoint - then he is acting to his own self-injury. And no one can prevent or mitigate this...

Think back to our example of the murderous *Kmher Rouge*. If a parent killed his own children instead of killing himself, certainly he should not be held accountable to the law. But neither he nor anyone can deny his accountability to his *soul*...

One might expect to hear moral philosophers say, "But he had no choice!" In fact, he had. Humans are never without choice. It may be a selection between equally disastrous outcomes, but it is nevertheless a choice, and only *he* can make it.

So it would be inappropriate to say that one is not in control of oneself when one is faced with the threat of violence. The threat itself is proof that one *is* exclusively self-controlled - and that the threatener *knows* it...

I won't waste more than a paragraph on supernatural theories of motivation. As far as I am concerned, humans are *never* externally controlled. If there is someone who wants me to believe otherwise, I invite him to *show* me the devil who made him do it, or the specter that has possessed his soul, or the demon who causes him to speak against his will. To the lot of them: put up or shut up...

Humans can be *out of control*. They can be asleep, comatose, drunk, drugged or insane. Many of these will have their origin in volition, but not even those that do not are not evidence of *external* control. You can say that a person who is not self-controlled is *uncontrolled*. But you cannot say that, *because* this person's ego is not now controlling his life, someone *else's* ego is. We are simply not made that way...

The way we are made is that each of us controls his own person - and no other. And I say: *because* of this, we are each of us free of all the others...

Liberty...

Freedom Is A Being Aware.

Our *minds* are free. We can think of anything we wish, and no outside force can stop us. We can concentrate intensely or daydream or even lie to ourselves. But no other person can cause us to do this. Each person has complete and exclusive control over his own mind and his ideas. He has *no* control over any other mind, but he is solely the master of his own.

Our *bodies* are free. We can move where our minds lead us, touch what we find there. We can run or jump or climb - and recline afterward. We can build houses over our heads, skyscrapers over our houses, and loft satellites to wink at the skyscrapers. A man's mind can direct his body to do anything that *can* be done. But *only* his mind can give that direction. No outside force can either cause it or prevent it. And neither can he control any body but his own.

Each person has *total* control over himself, spirit, mind and body. And he has *no* control over anyone else.

Now we argued in the last chapter that the causally foreordained motive of every self-aware human must be self-preservation. At the time we were looking only at the ego, the self that is being preserved. We can step back a bit, looking at "self" in the more usual sense of bodily utility. The body is the means to the continued existence of the self, so actions taken in the service of bodily utility can be seen as *forms* of ego-preservation.

We can step back still further to look again at the Wildmen. What *they* do can be seen as self-preservation of this second type, even though Wildmen do not abstract the self. And from there we can take in the sweeping vista of all of life, each organism, lowest to highest, striving to secure its own life. *Each* of them is *internally* controlled, never otherwise. While alive, no organism ever lacks the power to do what it can to try to remain alive.

We can say in this way that organisms have a "right to life", but I prefer to avoid it for now. The word "right" has too many stray associations, and I want to purge all the false ones before I invoke the word. Instead, let's say that organisms have the capacity to self-defense.

Each organism has the power to try to defend its own life by whatever means it can, and no outside force can impede this internal motivation. You can kill an organism, but you can't stop it from trying to stay alive, while it is alive. The organism *itself* can stop itself, but you cannot cause or prevent that organism's self-defense.

More: self-defense is *how* organisms stay alive. Each mouth leads to a single belly, and

if that mouth isn't working, that belly won't be filled. An organism that *ceases* to act in self-defense soon dies.

Humans are organisms. We, likewise, have the capacity to defend ourselves, each individually. Since we are talking about freedom *from* other people, I should stress here that the capacity to self-defense applies to *any* peril, not just those posed by other people. A man has the power, as a metaphysically caused manifestation of being an organism, to do whatever he can to save his life from any threat, at any time, anywhere.

Man differs from animals in that he can *identify* this power, but certainly that added strength does not *cost* him anything. It is not reasonable to say, for example, "*Because* man can identify self-defense, he ought to renounce it." For a second thing, it's nonsense. But for a first, it can't possibly be done. Organisms that cease to act in self-defense die...

So: man is exclusively self-controlled and he has the capacity to defend his life by any possible means. What does that tell us...?

It tells us you are free...

Metaphysically free, as an inviolable consequence of your nature as a living being.

I must stress this: you are free *by no one's choice*. Until now, even where it is not denounced, freedom has been defended in *moral* philosophy, not in nature. We'll talk more about this later, but for now it is enough to say that every discussion of "rights" has proceeded from the author's oughts, not from a discussion of what is. Even the "natural rights" theorists argued from an allegedly "pre-existing" ought, an imaginary god.

Much more common is the mutual recognition pact, which says that your rights don't exist until I recognize them, and mine don't exist before you recognize them. This is clearly nonsense. That which is visible to you is visible to me, and it must have pre-existed our notice. But if it did, then I don't need you to acknowledge its existence *for* it to exist. It must exist even without *my* notice.

Another form of that same sort of dodge is the "Society Creates Rights" chorale. Another obvious piece of nonsense, even laying aside the idea of metaphysical "creation". Society is nothing on its own, simply a bunch of individuals considered - contra-factually - as a unit. If society has the power to create rights, then normal individuals must also have that power, since they are all the components there are of a "society".

The strident moralists, among them our old friend Ayn Rand, check in with "Rights Are Right", which had me confused for a while. What they say is that Liberty is morally righteous, that freedom is the good. This is true, but it's not compelling. There is a case to be made for freedom as a chosen ought, as a subset of the larger choice to act for self-love. But self-love is still a chosen ought, not a statement of identity.

Liberty is not an ought, but an attribute of is. You are free *because you cannot be otherwise*. Nature has shaped living beings such that each is controlled only from the *inside*, that each has the capacity to try to stay alive, and that each only *does* stay alive by using that capacity. This is as true of *you* as it is of any bird or fish. *And you have no power to change it, no matter what.*

Fact: you are alive and free, and you have the power to defend your freedom. And no one can cause it to be otherwise...

Liberty...

Let's talk some about rights, because I do want to be able to use that word.

Ordinarily, when people speak of "rights", they are talking about a "right" of or to another person. Whether they are saying, "I have a right to your time" or "I have a right to a job", what they are talking about is slavery. It has *nothing* to do with what I mean by "rights". What they are saying is, "I have a just claim *upon* you." This is factually incorrect, as we just saw. We are each of us free, and none has any unchosen claim on any other.

What that usage implies is the existence of a *contract* listing those "rights". There is nothing wrong whatever with the statement, "I paid you five dollars and I have a right to my laundry!" You *would* have a "right" in that context, a right under the contract you made with the laundryman.

But you *cannot* have *contractual* rights outside of a contract. We are each of us free, metaphysically, bound to no one. You can contract for consulting, for instance, but you cannot have a "right" to someone else's time and awareness without his consent. In the same way, you cannot have a "right" to a job or any other value that someone else must be *compelled* to create for you. Unless that person has freely contracted with you, you have no "rights" of or to him.

Now even people who catch that false idea of "rights" can get tripped up on the next

one. Your "rights" do not imply that you have the power to escape injury by other people. There are two different misconceptions at work in this corner. The first is simply the above error restated: because you are within reach of other people does not imply that you have contractual rights with respect to them. If you have not made a contract with them, than you have no "rights" under it, obviously. They have not agreed to restrain their actions toward you, so it is wrong of you to conclude that they have, or that they *must* have because they *should* have.

The second misconception is that "rights" are metaphysically creative. Before, each individual was self-controlled. But since I've started to intone monotonously the word "rights", they are now incapable of injuring me...

Both of these views are false. The first is the historical theory of the "Social Compact", an "agreement" to which "everyone" "assented" by doing nothing. The second is the political philosophy of Sleepwalkers, and it's somewhat less dignified than carrying a rabbit's foot...

So: if "rights" are not rights of or to another person, what are they?

Rights to yourself...

You have a right to your person. Your body is a dominion over which you alone are sovereign. You are exclusively self-controlled.

You have a right to self-defense. You have the capacity to defend your body and your mind from any peril. And no other person can contravene this capacity to try to remain alive.

You have a right to ownership over any property you make or improve by your own effort.

You have a right to your thoughts, memories, musings. To your speech and other forms of expression - on your *own* property. You have the right to induce any belief you want in your brain, and to try to persuade anyone *who agrees to listen* of its truth...

You have *no* "rights" of or to another person, but your right to *yourself* is absolute. Every right you have you *already* have, without any of them coming from other people. You would have every one of those rights *in isolation*. You have *no* "right" not-to-have-your-rights-violated, but you have the right that is the root of every right, the right to self-defense...

Liberty. You are free...

Now comes the scary part...

What sort of politics is required by absolute metaphysical Liberty...?

Anarchy...

Yes, that stark, nightmarish terror invoked by schoolteachers and politicians everywhere. The wanton bloodshed, the mass carnage, the continuous turmoil of the warfare of all against any... That's how they speak of it, isn't it?

But that's not how it is...

Think about it: when the schoolteachers and politicians speak of their belief in the disastrousness of Anarchy, they are speaking of something else *in contrast*, are they not? What is it that they are talking about...?

Nothing. Period.

Because there is no contrast to exclusive self-control... A human either controls himself or he is uncontrolled, but he is *never* controlled by another person or thing...

Understand me: when people talk about government they are talking about *Nothing*. We'll have a *lot* more to say about government later, but for now it is enough to note this: *there is no such thing as a government*.

None, period. Not anywhere, now or ever. All there have ever been are various Madnesses by which groups of people seek to convince themselves that their own free exercise of self-control is not caused by themselves...

The only thing that controls human behavior is self-control. This is a matter of fact. There is no basis anywhere for disputing it. When people invoke the idea of a government, they are doing so to *avoid* acknowledging their own responsibility for their actions. They seek a god to absolve them for doing things they *knew* were wrong when they did them. And they seek a government to license them to do those same things again...

Anarchy is all the "government" there ever is, the only possible means of interaction among people who cannot be other than free. Make no mistake: I am not saying that

people have not *tried* to come up with substitutes for self-control. They try it all the time, and someone is always coming up with new twists. But no one has ever succeeded, and no one ever will. Why? For the simple reason that an entity cannot be what it is not.

No, they have *tried* very hard. Some of the best minds in history have tried to come up with the magic recipe that will yield a human who remains human, yet loses the power to control his own actions. None have succeeded, because they were trying to violate the nature of being. But still they have tried...

And to their credit: I have had the good fortune of living most of my life in their best attempt so far, America. It's the best attempt - or was - because the men who started it corrupted it with the *least* amount of Madness of which they could conceive. Take notice: the best places to live are always also the most free. This is no accident. The less the residents of that place try to pretend that humans are *not* self-controlled, the more room there is for the *expression* of exclusive self-control...

Thoreau said this first, but I wish I had: if the government that governs least governs best, then the best government is no government...

Absolutely true: the Madness of government corrupts the minds of the people who try to uphold it. The more they invoke it, the more they *need* to invoke it, both "practically" and spiritually. The more a man tries to convince himself that he does not control his life, the more control he will pretend to *forfeit*...

But that's for later. For now, we need to ask ourselves three questions. First, *why* is Anarchy the politics required by our nature? Second, *what* is Anarchy, at its roots? And, third, *how* would an Anarchy work?

We'll take the first first, just because it's easiest. I've already done all the work... (grin)

For it is simplicity itself to understand that a being who is exclusively self-controlled is never *other* than exclusively self-controlled. Acknowledging that, it's easy enough to see that everything people have ever called "the government" is and has always been a product of the imagination. There is no such entity as a government. There are simply vast numbers of people who wish to ascribe their self-control to something or someone other than themselves.

Do you see? When I refrain from murdering you, it is not my fear of some cop or some judge that accounts for my restraint. No, it is my own idea of righteousness. If I thought that it *would* be righteous to murder you, which is absurd, no cop or judge could stop

me. Being Janio Now: I have first-hand proof of this... (brave grin)

Try this: say, "I advocate Anarchy", to anyone you happen to bump into. See if you do not hear in short order these words: "But what would prevent...?" Prevent murder or arson or rape or theft or whatever happens to be that person's private terror...

Now, the way to answer such questions is: "What prevents it *now*?" This idea that the government somehow "prevents" self-control is the essential Madness behind statism. It is obviously false to fact. If it were not, the "preventionists" would have nothing to talk about, since the topics of their conversations would have been "prevented" prior to their discovery that they are possible...

Do you see? Crime is *never* impossible. Another wild charge Sleepwalkers fling at Anarchy is that it does not itself prevent injury... Now consider how silly this is: your way is no good *because* it doesn't prevent injury; my way is good *even though* it does not prevent injury... There is no impediment to *non sequiturs* when awareness and reason have been abandoned...

No, obviously Anarchy does not prevent injury. Humans remain exclusively self-controlled no matter what they think or do about it. Moreover, this is the wrong way to look at Anarchy - or statism - since it is predicated in an ought, that it is good to live free of injury. It *is* good, but an argument validated in an ought is never true in the absence of that ought...

Whereas, an argument validated in *Is* is true no matter what oughts a person might adopt. The truth is always the truth. Period.

And the truth is that men have *never* been other than self-controlled, and, hence, there has never been a form of social interaction other than Anarchy. The Madnesses men call governments have committed some dreadful crimes. But *each* of those crimes was committed by an individual who controlled no one but himself. In many cases, the acquiescence of his victims was required, and that cooperation was initiated by the victims, each of whom controlled only himself.

Humans are always self-controlled. Ideally, they should deal with one another *only* by mutually voluntary agreement, by contract. But even when they do not, they are not something *other* than self-controlled. This is interesting from both the metaphysical viewpoint and the "practical" perspective: it shows why those who attempt to live by the sword die by the sword...

But that's another chapter, too. For now it is enough to say that Anarchy is the social

system required metaphysically by man's nature. There is no ought in this at all. Humans *are* exclusively self controlled. Period.

But what *is* Anarchy...

A pretty useless word, the way it is usually understood...

Anarchy means "no state". This implies that the state is the normal condition, and that Anarchy is something contrived by the mind of man. In fact, the exact opposite is true. The state is the creature of imagination, and Anarchy is the way things work out where no one tries to stand in their way.

Other terms are perhaps less confusing. I myself often use an equivalent, Anarcho-Capitalism, and I have friends who call themselves Agorists. Truly, it does not matter, so long as we understand that we are describing *something*, not the nothing that "no state" implies.

What is that something? It is the means by which self-controlled beings interact. The *only* means by which humans *can* interact. Do you see? Every person totally controls himself, and no one else. He is capable of initiating actions, including actions aimed at self-defense. When he comes into contact with another person, there is nothing that prevents him from acting to the injury of that person. And there is nothing that prevents him from defending himself, if that person acts to *his* injury.

This is the way things are, and it is the *only* way they are. This illusory idea of an entity that "prevents" crime is *Madness*. *It does not exist*. Like any Madness, it fails by yielding the outcome *opposite* the one sought, but that's a side issue. The main issue is: when two people come into contact, self-restraint is the only thing that *prevents* the initiation of injury, and self-defense is the only thing that *responds* to it, if it is initiated.

So, to the above questioner: what "prevents" rape, arson, murder and theft? Self-restraint. And *nothing* else...

Now we said before that the causally foreordained, *sine qua non* motive of each person will be his own idea of Rectitude. But we *also* said that a person's idea of self-preservation may not be valid with respect to the actual needs of the self. Where does that leave us? Here: *any* person is *capable* of crime, but *no one* is capable of escaping the *consequences* of crime, both practical and spiritual. Most people recognize this in the logic behind their oughts, which is why so few people commit dreadful crimes.

But like everything else, they understand it only vaguely, as a thing so obvious they haven't thought about it since childhood. Consequently, they're easily confused about what it is that is so obvious...

Consider: people who own their own homes are *far* less likely to brawl than those who rent. Why do you suppose that is? If you talk to a Sociologist, he'll name all sorts of reasons: greater wealth and education, longer-range view of time, less alcohol consumption, different social settings, etc. These are all true, but they are not compelling. There is a reason much more comprehensive, but not even it is compelling. That reason is: every person who owns a home knows he can lose it in a lawsuit. In general, homeowners are more likely to think of the future consequences of brawling, compared to people who rent. They have more to lose...

But the *compelling* reason that homeowners don't brawl, as a general rule, is the self-love that got them their houses in the first place... They not only don't want to lose their homes, they don't want to lose their self-respect, of which their houses are a trophy.

From there we can see that a *correct* understanding of self-preservation implies self-restraint. We can recognize that crime is not *right*, in every way we defined that word. It is invalid, in contradiction to the true nature of the object considered. It is contra-utilitarian, since other people *never* lack the capacity to self-defense. And it is *unrighteous*, damaging to the true interests of the ego. There will be *much* more on this later. What we need to understand now is that it is possible to recognize that crime is the opposite of self-preservation.

Nature does not command a man to make that recognition, but neither does it empower him safely to ignore it. But if he *does* recognize it, as most people do, he will act to the best preservation of his ego by refraining from committing crimes. It is not the cop or the judge who stop him from injuring others, but *himself*.

Having lived in New York for so long, I suppose I have an easier time understanding this than other people. In Fun City, you *know* you are on your own. You know the Madnesses of the criminals are of the most vicious sorts. And you know that that Madness called government is completely ineffectual. When two people come into contact - as, for example, on the bus - they will size each other up and reach a sort of tacit contract: "I won't start anything, but I will defend myself if *you* start something."

In fact, this element is present in every first encounter, but people are less likely to notice it when the peril posed by other people is more remote. What people call faith in The Law is really faith in the self-restraint of others. The Law cannot bring you back to life, if another person murders you. It's hard to confuse oneself on this point when self-

restraint is in noticeably short supply...

There are reasons New York is the way it is, and we'll come to them in time. For now, it is needful to note that *normally* self-restraint is *not* in short supply. Where they are not prevented from doing so by criminals, most people normally act to their own self-preservation, which means they refrain from committing crimes. It is for this reason, not because of The Law, that there is so little crime.

Do you see why this is significant? The schoolteachers and politicians insist that, without The Law, immediate uncontrolled criminality would *automatically* ensue. This is one of the poetic meanings of Anarchy, omni-destructive chaos. But what *causal* basis is there for holding this view?

None. Are we to suppose that our homeowners would suddenly run out and burn down their own houses? Why? Their neighbors' houses? At the risk of blazing retaliation? This view not only does not make sense, it is an *insult* to humanity. It says that the *true* interest of the ego is rape, pillage and plunder, from which it must be restrained. *Is* that the true interest of the soul? Is *that* the thing that builds skyscrapers and satellites, writes sonatas and mathematical proofs, and sings majestic of its beauty, grandeur and power...?

No. Self-control is the source of crime, and self-control is the source of peace. Self-preservation is the *motive* of peace, and there is no reason to suppose that people will not *identify* the value of peace *where they are not prohibited from doing so*.

The last words are signal: in the most restrictive sense, an Anarchy is a place where people are not prohibited from identifying their own interest in peaceful coexistence...

An Anarchy is a place where every person controls and defends himself, and no *overwhelming* force tries to interrupt this natural process. An overwhelming force need not be a government, so called. It can be any form of organized crime. Even in an organized criminality as oppressive as the Soviet Union, self-restraint is still the only actual means of social interaction. But it pays us to think of an Anarchy as a place *devoid* of overwhelming organized crime.

An Anarchy is a place where *most* people correctly identify the relationship between self-restraint and self-preservation. It is a place where social transactions are mutually voluntary, and where *any* that are not are regarded as crimes.

An Anarchy is a place where most of the people choose to *recognize* what is true whether they recognize it or not: that you are free...

Liberty...

I can't tell you everything even now, but I can tell you this: true Liberty *is* possible.

That's a vital point, because the last thing the schoolteachers and politicians will tell you is that Anarchy cannot be made to work. Even supposing it's *not* irredeemably repulsive, they'll say, Liberty is *impractical*...

Now like every manifestation of a Madness, this is revealing. For one thing, it says that things cannot be the way they are. For another, it reiterates the above insult to humanity. And, for a third, it insists that self-preservation is not something that people would want to practice...

For if Liberty is not *practical*, then *life* is not practical. Self-control is *unavoidably* the means and end of life. If it cannot be made to work *in practice*, then human life isn't really happening...

Nonsense, the lot of it. That "impractical" dodge is the last gasp of people who know they can't steal your cake if you don't bake it...

Practical can mean two things, and both are true of Liberty. First it means "capable of being practiced", which is better referred to as "practicable". And second it means "useful to achieving an end goal". Every end goal implies an ought. What sort of goal insists that that which cannot fail to be so is not capable of being practiced? What kind of viewpoint upholds an end goal *contrary* to the one required to live...?

A Madness...

Understand me, I *don't* think they are evil. The urge to organized crime that is *endemic* to Sleepwalkers *is* a death-pursuing way of life. But death is not the *motive* of Sleepwalkers. As always, they are not trying to cease existing, but to exist as they are not. When they say, "Anarchy is impractical", they are saying that life *as it really is* is impractical. They are telling you *nothing* about reality, and *everything* about the insides of their own souls...

But Liberty *is* practical in both senses. It can be made to work, and it is the *best* method of assuring the life of the individual in a social context.

So: how does an Anarchy work?

However the people who make it up *agree* to make it work...

This is *not* a cop-out. I can envision any number of ways for people to get along with each other without crime. But I have no power to impose my vision *upon* those people. As soon as I do that, *I* am committing a crime. So before we talk about specific forms of Anarchy, let's acknowledge that anything I say is a guess. And that the way things actually work out will be the product of millions of choices by free individuals, *none* of whom is bound by my guesses...

What we are talking about are *noncoercive* means of resolving disputes. Governments and other Mafia allegedly exist to resolve disputes, but they do so *by coercion*, by forbidding free trade in dispute resolution. Peaceful problem solving is a valuable trade good, like any other, and it is reasonable to surmise that it would develop into a thriving and varied market, if this were not being forbidden by force. Saying that, let's liken it to the transportation business, an industry that, for the most part, has not been monopolized by organized criminality. We can note that there are many types of transportation: cars, trains, planes, boats. But anything we say about the *next* popular type of transportation to come along will be suspect. It will be a guess. It can be a very well educated guess, but it cannot assert that it is a fact. To know *factually* which new form of transportation will become popular, we must wait and see which product people actually do patronize in greater numbers. So, in the same way, anything I say about how an Anarchy might work out is a guess. The way it actually *does* work out will depend on which forms of dispute resolution people actually do patronize in greater numbers.

So how *might* noncoercive dispute resolution be practiced...?

One very simple way is for people to stop interacting. If everyone lived in his own private hermitage, no disputes would arise. Not only that, in a lifetime the whole problem of dispute resolution would disappear, since there would be no new humans whose interests could conflict (grin).

But face it: if social interaction were not an overwhelmingly self-preserving thing to do, we wouldn't need to even *talk* about becoming hermits. We would already *be* hermits. We stand to gain a great deal from each other, so the question we have to ask ourselves is: how can we profit by our interaction without inflicting losses upon each other?

And the answer to that is simple: we must deal with each other *only* by mutual agreement. Now this again is an ought, but one retains one's right to self-defense no matter what. If someone attempts to *force* his society upon you, you have the right to

defend yourself to the extent of your ability.

To interact by mutual agreement is to trade. There will be more on that in the next chapter. Here we want to note that the only noncoercive form of human social contact is *mutually voluntary* contact. If *both* parties don't agree to interact, then a crime is taking place. For transactions involving money, written contracts are the norm. But even for the day-to-day events of one's life there are contracts of sorts in effect. You and I have a "contract" not to hurt, abuse or insult each other, for example.

So: what might people contract with each other to do? Anything! Literally. I am a steadfast opponent of the coercive monopoly state, for all of the reasons named above plus many more. But if a group of statists *contract* to enslave each other, I have no right to stop them. So long as they are acting by their own mutual agreement on their own property, it's no concern of mine. I am one of the worst enemies Socialism ever had, but if a bunch of Socialists agree to set up their own special vision of a self-destructing reciprocal theft engine, I have no objection - so long as they practice their Madnesses only on *each other*, and not on me.

Frankly, I think all variants of statism are Madnesses, but if people want to practice them, they have every right to do so - *provided* they do so by the agreement of all parties involved. So, we can envision all different sorts of statist utopias, each composed *only* of people who agree that that particular Madness is "the good". I can't imagine that such an outcome, if it came to be at all, would persist very long. But I could offer no reasoned objection to it, provided it is mutually voluntary. It would be crime for one of those communities to hold a person against his will, however. If a person changes his mind about the goodness of Madness, it would be crime to restrain him from leaving. And it would be crime to "assume" the agreement of children to the contract of the community.

Much more likely, by my lights, would be a two-pronged strategy for achieving peaceable coexistence. First, I surmise that people would seek to defend themselves from *potential* conflicts. And, second, I assume that they would support a free market court system, where disputes do arise.

Understand, contract is a consequence of contact. You do not need to make contracts with people of whom you have no contact. The more you can limit access to your person and property, the fewer conflicts you are likely to have. This is the reasoning that drives the lock business, for example. Given the technology available today, it is not that big a problem to protect yourself from all but the most inventive of criminals. And this is the *best* means of "resolving" disputes. No matter how good you are at

defending yourself, it is far better never to have cause to act in self-defense. Better than punching the other person back is not being punched in the first place.

But assuming preventive defense breaks down, my guess is that people who wish to protect their freedom will support a system of free market courts, arbitrators of disputes. When a conflict arises, the person who feels aggrieved could go to a judge and ask for restitution. The judge's *sole* stock in trade would be his reputation for fairness, so we can assume that in most cases just rulings would be delivered.

Who would enforce those rulings? Everyone who values his life. Including, I would expect in most cases, the person found *against*. It's possible that people would support a system of forcible recovery, private men-at-arms who would demand restitution by force. I would oppose this for two reasons: first, because forcible recovery must, necessarily, entail intrusions that *exceed* fair restitution. If I steal your money, you must violate both my person and my home to take it back. I have injured you, and you have a right to restitution. But you do not have the right to injure me in a way that *exceeds* restoration of your previous condition. And the second reason is that violence tends to beget more violence.

So what would I propose instead? Forcible recovery is coercive, and what we are talking about are *noncoercive* means of resolving disputes. So how would I noncoercively enforce judicial rulings?

By boycott. If every life-loving person decides that he will act upon the love of life *with respect* to those who have been judged criminal, then you have a very powerful tool of enforcement that does not entail the involuntary restraint of anyone's actions. Trade is *always* mutually voluntary. If I refuse to trade with a criminal, he has no cause to say that I am injuring him. To say it would imply that I *owe* him my thought and labor, which is false to fact.

Is it reasonable to expect large numbers of people to support boycotts? I think it is. Government clouds our vision, and we lose sight of some very important facts. First among them is the one named above: where people have something to lose, they are *far* more likely to restrain their actions. In an Anarchy *all* property is privately owned, and the true value of "ownership" of a human life is not disguised. Moreover, the people who would be *most* important to assuring the success of a boycott are the people who have the most to lose.

One could surmise that the ordinary wage-earner might not have vision of long enough range to see the benefit of boycott - which assumes the questionable point that exclusive labor contracts would continue to be formed in an Anarchy. But what about

the financial institutions? If *they* boycott a person, he has a tough way to go: he can't get currency, credit, or insurance, and he can't invest any of his ill-gotten gains. Even if the boycott were limited to the entrepreneurs, it would still be a powerful disincentive to crime.

I think in the long run virtually all people will come to recognize the need for and value of boycott as a means of responding to crime. If you're having to stretch to accept this, consider the gales of laughter with which you would have been met, if you had announced five hundred years ago that someday virtually everyone will bathe daily... People *do* act to their own interest, when they know what it is. Unlike a state, an Anarchy does not hide the value, meaning and *beauty* of human life. Taking account of that, it is reasonable to surmise that most people will eventually see the benefit of dealing with each other solely by mutual agreement, and the value of shunning any people who attempt to "interact" by force.

Nature establishes no oughts for us, but we are *free*. Free to *recognize* the truth and to act upon it. We are what we are, and we can't change that, no matter how extreme our Madnesses. We are exclusively self-controlled, never otherwise. Our own self-restraint is all that prevents crime, and our own self-defense is all that can respond to it. We can induce invalidities in our minds, but we cannot reasonably expect nature to change itself to accommodate irrational ideas.

So when Patrick Henry thunders, "Give me Liberty or give me death!," he is not simply being poetic. He is telling the exact truth: any attempt to *evade* the metaphysical necessity of Liberty is an action in the service of death. First the Madness and indifference of a deadened spirit. But later the death of innocent human beings...

Now, let's think back to the horror images of our schoolteachers and politicians. Suppose they are correct about the inherent chaos of Anarchy. I have shown that they are not, but induce their invalidities for a moment and ask yourself this question: would that be worse than the present condition, or better? There have been more than one-hundred-fifty-*million* political murders so far in this century. Those are just political murders - gas chambers and firing squads for those who hold "impractical" ideas. Millions more have died in wars and from incidental consequences of government. And *every* person has been criminally injured by the actions of government, the restraints upon trade and their attendant costs, the unjust intrusions, the time lost to bureaucratic raindances...

So ask yourself: which would be worse? Are you more imperiled by crazed individuals, or by an organized destruction machine...? Who is more likely to harm you, an

incoherent madman, or the builders of crematoria...? Who is the greater threat, a single man who is out of his wits with bloodlust, or a giant organization that upholds bloodlust as a "noble" ideal...?

Another thing Patrick Henry said that I admire is: "If this be treason, make the most of it!" I am an Anarchist. I am the thing most feared in my culture, and I am *proud* of it. I know that saying that may cost me your love, but I would not bear false witness to the truth, not for you or anyone. "If this be treason..."

I am free... I refrain from telling you everything, even now. But I can tell you this: you are free...

6. Trade

I have a photo of you. Here, I mean. It's the big portrait that sits on my dresser, taken three Springs ago. It's stored as a bitmap now, but I can "look" at it in a way that's close enough to suit my purposes. I can't hold it in my hands, the way I used to do, but I can still cherish it in my spirit.

I *own* that photo, and I always will. Not just the physical object, nor even the data stream I have made of it. I own those, but what is more I own the *meaning* of the picture. That glint of fire in your sapphire eyes, the smile that frames your lips, those are mine, mine forever. No matter how many people see it, no one will ever know it as I do. It is a trophy of *your* life first, but it is also always a trophy of mine. No one else can share my first-hand experience of the causal chains behind it. So no other person can *ever* own that photo in the way that I do. It is mine. Forever...

I can't look at it without remembering the history behind it. We had been up all night, snuggling by phone, talking about everything and Nothing. Not really doing anything purposive - just what seemed most vitally important at the time: being together in the way we could. My memories of that night are gemstones, brilliantly perfect and rapturously beautiful. What I knew then is what I have *always* sought, and I am so grateful to have found it with you, then and ever. And if there is such a thing as Splendor amplified, I find it when I reflect that *you* recall that night as clearly as I do... The next day my beloved photo was made, and you told me later that you were thinking about me when it was taken. I remember being proud then that I had made you so happy, and I was still more gloried when I saw the finished picture. It is the finest momento I have of that night. It shows not just what you are, but what *I* am, and what we *both* had to be to reach that kind of a conclusion about life. It sings in praise of not just the seriousness with which we sought the truth, but of the joy we *found* in it. For me it is a summation, at once an argument, a proof and a motive. A thrilling chorale of life, being and choosing, *rejoicing* in being and choosing...

I love the things I see in that picture. And they will always be mine *alone*, mine from you... Your future is yours alone to control. Whether I am to be a part of it is yours to decide. Your voluntary companionship can never be other than solely yours to grant or withhold. If I have lost you forever then I have lost a value I prized beyond endurance. But I can never lose that photo, not the meaning behind it. That will *always* be mine from you, no matter what happens in the future.

If we don't manage to find Communion again, I can imagine that you might give a copy to a new man in your life. If you do (and I am not being jealous of him (grin) - I know

he is worthy of you), he will treasure it for his own reasons, but he will never know why I love that portrait so much. He will look at it and see Helena At A Point, but he will never know the points before that one on the line of time. He will see your eyes and your hair and your coral lips and the spirit that lights your life. But he will not see the things only we two can know whole. He will see the beauty of your soul and love it as I do. But he will never know the night before... That will always be mine alone, mine from you...

Sorry for that. I've been trying to keep my feelings out of this. They're not persuasively valid by themselves, so I've been trying to hold this to the facts. Besides, looking at that photo now makes me more than a little melancholy...

But, still... It makes an excellent example, because it shows *everything* that is behind ownership. We're going to talk now about Economics, that dismal science.

Not just the dismal range Economists normally focus on, though. We said in the last chapter that mutually voluntary interaction is Trade. *Every* voluntary human contact is a Trade. Every voluntary contract we make to sustain our bodies, yes. But *also* every action we take with others in support of our souls...

This has happened to me dozens of times: I'll be out walking on a hot day, and I'll stop in at a convenience store to buy a Pepsi. I *value* that soda enormously, at the time. In pursuit of it, I offer my hard-won money to the bottler, his workers and drivers, to the store owner and his employees. That's a Trade, one by which *all* of us profit, me the most. When I pay for the soda, I'll normally pass pleasantries with the cashier. You've seen me talk to people this way. I enjoy it a great deal, if the person is smart enough to get my jokes. *That* is *also* a Trade, by which both of us profit.

Economics has almost always defended itself in bodily utility, so it rarely takes notice of the second type of Trade. At the extremes of the continuum, Marxism and Randism, a sort of utility-of-rectitude is invoked, but still that dismal science keeps itself dismal by deliberately ignoring all the wonderful ways people have found to trade *pleasure*. Leave them to their blindnesses. *We* can see what they overlook.

What we are about here is validating Economic freedom. We verified freedom generally in the last chapter, so this is in some senses redundant. But it pays us to examine the issue in detail. The utilitarians are right, as far as they go: it really is first a matter of life and death...

Yes, I am a moralist. And, yes, I *do* believe in the essential morality of *laissez faire*. But I *do not* believe *laissez faire* can be *validated* in morality. I can say, "Men *ought* to be Capitalists." But unless I offer a defense in validity, I had better not expect many of them to join me, and I had better not call my case proved.

The world is perishing from the Economics of morality. On one side, the soft-hearted thieves yammer that the poor "ought" to be able to steal from you. On the other, the soft-headed thieves growl that the stockholders of government contractors "ought" to be able to steal from you. In the middle the empty-headed temporizers contend that they "ought" to steal a little for both and make everyone happy. Everyone but you...

And miles away the Economist scribbles in his journal, "If people operated on a morality of utility, they would see that they 'ought' to leave each other alone, except as they see mutual profit by cooperation." He's right, of course, though not completely. And *no one* is listening to him...

Why, why, why? All the thieves of every Grand Economic Order have prostrated themselves before morality. Their motive has always been not just the *useful*, but the *good*. If, as the best of the Economists tell us, the good is the useful, why haven't the Grand Economic Order Givers *flocked* to Capitalism...?

Because, as we have observed, any particular person's idea of the good will consist of more than just bodily utility. His motive is *ego* - preservation, not just the sustenance of his body. If he has adopted an "ought" that cannot defend itself in facts, facts that contradict it will not impress him. The Economists can show him charts and forecasts all day and he will not be moved. For him, Economics doesn't exist to point the way to the Economic good, but to the *moral* good. That people would be better off if left alone does not faze him. He feels he has a "right" to impose his idea of morality on other people, and his morality is the *true* Economic good...

Understand, they don't *care* what suffering they cause. The advocates of Song In Your Heart Economics insist that it is *always* better to have a Song In Your Heart than a meal in your stomach. I surmise they would tire of their own tune after three days - or fewer - but we are not that lucky. The activists who insist that there is something "more important" than being able to have enough to eat are *always* well fed...

At the other extreme, the moralists and utilitarians of *laissez faire* demand that men "ought" to change their oughts. Indeed that should, but the demand alone is hardly efficacious. They have not proved anything by it, and they err in the opposite direction when they begin to talk about how it's *always* better to have a Meal In Your Stomach than a song in your heart...

Both of these approaches are really beside the point. Proof is always proof in Is, in the real nature of entities as they are. *Laissez faire* is the good. And it *is* useful; it is the best means of assuring that each man's bodily needs are satisfied. But *much* more importantly, Economic freedom is *valid*, it is correct with respect to the actual metaphysical nature of man.

And maybe "Economics" is a bad word to use for what I'm talking about, I don't know. From the Greek, it means, essentially, home management, housekeeping. I am using it in a much larger sense of "life-keeping", so you'll have to decide for yourself how well it fits. I'm happy enough with "Trade", so long as we understand what's behind it. Life-keeping means keeping *all* of life, not just the parts that are easy to measure...

So let's again take the measure of man, this time man the creator, the trader, the pleasurer and the "profiteer". Let's again look at *all* of life, and see what we can discover...

Imagine yourself in isolation. We don't have to contrive a "state of nature". Just imagine that you were camping-out in solitude, and your car broke down on the way back. What would you do? How would you do it?

Who would be initiating every action taken to better your condition?

You are *alone*. You have your body, your mind, and everything that you brought with you. But you have *nothing* else, and there is no one but yourself to supply you with the things you need to survive. There is no one for you to *trade* with, and so anything you need you must obtain by your own labor. In this example you have the good fortune of having traded in the past. In an actual "state of nature", you would have not so much as a pocket knife. Not even the knowledge that knives can be *made*, which is an immense value by itself.

But you have your good hunting knife and your car and your tent and your cooking gear. Your food is all but gone, but you can supply yourself with more with your fishing tackle. You can satisfy your bodily needs, but you yourself must do every bit of it, in every particular. To be rescued, you will have to walk out and *find* help. Help will not come looking for you...

You are exclusively self-controlled. You have full introspective consciousness of yourself and no one else. You cannot communicate your needs to another person

through your invisible yearnings, but only by making your desires *evident*, by making them known in words and actions. Whether you cry in the quiet of your mind or call out to the trees, it will come to the same thing. You are *alone*, and there is no one who can help you but yourself...

You are a real entity. You have a metaphysical nature that cannot be violated. You are an organism. Your continued existence is not causally guaranteed. To remain alive, you must continue *trying* to remain alive. If you do not, you will die. And you are human. You must continue to supply yourself with a *motivation* to remain alive. You must preserve your ego. And *all* of these things you must do for yourself, or they will not be done...

Now think: how is that different from living among people? Sure, you can trade things you know better than farming for food. But whom is it who knows those other things better? How did she come to know them? Who puts that food in her mouth and savors it, and who doesn't put poison there instead? Who *is* that lovely woman who thinks it so very *worth it* to keep her life so beautifully? Dearest Reader-In-Mind, are you any *less* in charge of your life in company than you are in solitude...?

I say not. In company you can trade what you know best for what other people know best. But you must still supply both the sustenance and motivation of your life. You can communicate your needs with greater ease. But still it is you who must communicate them, make them known in your words and your actions. Other people can make your life easier to earn, but it is still only you who can earn it and own it... And if you seek to own it whole in your awareness, it is only you who can know the full joy you find in it...

What a gorgeous thing that is... And yet, this is what people call Original Sin...

You are compelled by god to earn your life, say the theologians. You are not *worthy enough* to have it without having to deserve it... Bah! There is no love of life in that, none at all. The "ideal" man would be the one "entitled" to life as a hand-out, with no need to do anything of, for and *to* himself. But we are convicted of in-born sin. We erred before we had the capacity to act, which is a neat twist on causality (grin). Hence, we are imprisoned here in this awful dungeon of space and time, mass and energy, cause and effect. If it hadn't been for that feather-brained Adam and his floozy wife, them and their damned *egos*, we might know the *true* grace of life as a ghost...

Madness... But it was a Madness that held man's mind checked for a thousand years... And now a new set of evangelists of egolessness is out there. They cut god out of the cast, but the plot's the same. For the theists and the Socialists, as for everyone, life-

keeping is ego-preservation. But the doctrine of Original Sin, whether it is grounded in Adam's apple or "dialectical materialism", is an ought that seeks to *preserve* the ego *by destroying it*.

What you are is what you are *in isolation*. If it is evil that you alone must supply the substance and motivation of your life, then your life is evil, period. Because that is the *only* way your life exists, alone or in company. You are exclusively self-controlled. You can spit at that fact with a dogma, but you cannot change it, no matter what you do.

But if a person does spit at it, this is not without consequences. The Sky Pilots will sell you a simply *heavenly* afterlife, for the low, low price of your now-life. The Pity Mavens will tell you how terrible it is that you live in a jungle and *give* you an all expenses paid trip to the zoo. One way... God's pitchmen want you to have a spirit without a body. Those so very *compassionate* people with the machineguns want you to have a body without need of a spirit. *Both* of them want you to exist as you are not. This is a Madness, and all it achieves is to forbid you to exist *as you really are*...

If it is "sinful" or "terrible" or "unfair" for you to have to work for, earn and *deserve* your life, then life as such is vile. People who uphold this sort of view rarely take the next logical step, suicide. It may be cruel, but when I think of those millions of murdered innocents, all I can say is: more's the pity...

But leave Madness to the Sleepwalkers. It will not imperil us much longer... The Meek Will Inherit The Earth? You bet. When you and I go to claim the stars...

Ownership...

That's the root. What is it?

Let's go back to Helena In Isolation. Having consulted your maps, you conclude that you have two ways out. There is a large town thirty miles to the West, along the road you drove in on. And there is a small settlement ten miles to the South. There is no road South, so if you are to go that way, you will have to travel overland through the woods.

You have the Sun in the morning to show you East. And you have the stars at night to help you find North. But at Noon or on cloudy nights, you have no clear guide from nature about what direction you are facing. Since we are not talking about a "state of nature", you have the benefit of being able to learn by conceptualization of the

experiences of others. You recall from third grade science that magnetized needle trick and you set about to build yourself a compass.

You prepare the needle and pour a glass of water. You gently lay the needle atop the water. Laying flat, it's too light to break the surface tension of the water, so it "floats". Because it is magnetized, the needle will orient itself along the axis of magnetic North. You can now walk from landmark to landmark, pausing at each to reorient yourself, without fear that you are going the wrong way. You have measurably improved your ability to assure your survival.

Bravo! But tell me: who *owns* that compass...?

Who *caused* it to come into existence? If you had not built it, would it somehow have come to be anyway? Is there someone else who can come along and say, "*I caused her to make this thing. She did the work, but I supplied the motivation*"? Is that the way we are made...?

No. You are exclusively self-controlled, and if you work to bring an artifact - or any expression - into being, it is solely you who is moving yourself to act. What you have when you are done is *yours*, as much yours as you yourself are. It is a *product* of your life, and *therefore* it is your *property*.

The existence of man-made things, including man-made emotional states, is not metaphysically foreordained. The soil and rocks and forests and animals pre-exist us, but the *books* do not, the skyscrapers and roads and rockets do not. Every man-made thing, every tool and toy and idea and expression, is caused by *volition*. By *some one person's* volition. That person's choices are the *sine qua non* cause of the existence of the artifact. If you choose *not* to build your compass, it will not be built.

You own it because you caused it to come into existence. You took your knowledge and the tools you had at hand and applied one to the other to make something you didn't have before. Every step of the process was performed by you, and *would not* have been done had you not motivated yourself to do them. You employed your means in the service of your ends, and what you have when you are done is *yours*, yours by right of your free exercise of self-control.

What we're talking about are ideas of *origination* of ownership, questions about who *first* owns a trade good. Helena In Isolation is not all that far from Locke's idea of "improvement." What Locke said is that a man could claim any previously unowned natural object - as you claim the fish from the stream for your dinner - and that he owned any new artifacts he brought into being. He owned them by virtue of "mixing

his labor" with them, to make of them things they were not before he expended his effort. He owned them *because* he brought their value into being *by improvement*.

Now this is a fair rule of thumb for most circumstances, but it is not bulletproof. For one thing, it leaves wide open the question of what "value" is. For another, it offers us no way of understanding people who prefer their property unimproved. And it tells us nothing about goods that may not have value that can be traded or even transferred, but which are nevertheless extremely precious *to particular people*...

What I say is that property *originally* belongs to the person who *gives it value*...

Fine: what is value? The Classical Economists regarded "value" as strict economic utility. The Neo-Classicists (notably Mises, Hayek and Rothbard, who are recommended) understand "value" in a slightly wider context of bodily *and* emotional utility. But neither view can explain why I would not sell my photo of you for a million dollars...

Value is a product of an evaluator. The greatest contribution of Neo-Classical Economics was the recognition by Mises that things have value in trade *only* as the consequence of evaluation. Evaluation is choice, and choice is solely the product of individual people, each acting upon his own view of self-preservation.

Where I live now, gold is the sole medium of exchange. Advocates of hard money are apt to speak of gold as having "intrinsic value". This is poetry. Taken literally, "intrinsic value" means that gold would *still* be valuable in trade, even if every possible trader in gold were deceased. "Intrinsic value" means "valuable even absent evaluators", which is nonsense. Gold is valuable to those of us who trade with it because we have *discovered* by our own effort that it is more useful to serving our *chosen* ends than other substances we might use. Without this evaluation, this general aggregate of evaluations, gold would have no value.

Consider: gold has trade value nearly everywhere right now. Hard money boosters are quite correct to note that gold has lost no value against goods for hundreds of years; if anything, and *most* unlike paper money, it has *gained* in value. You can get the same value or more in goods with a gram of gold today as compared with a hundred years ago. But suppose our economy collapsed to the starvation level. *Nothing* is being traded. What is the value of a gram of gold now? If you cannot trade it for something, or eat it, or use it as a tool, what is its value? You might still derive pleasure from contemplating its luster, and gold looks lovely against your skin. But the joy you get from it would be its *sole* value. If there is no trade, then no value, no matter how precious to you, has *trade* value.

Value is more than trade value. A thing can be valuable *to you*, yet have no value in trade. The value I find in that photo of you cannot be sold to another, because it cannot even be *experienced* by another. I can sell the physical embodiment of the picture, but I cannot sell my knowledge of the spirit behind it, and of the causes leading to that representation of a moment of your life. Why would I refuse to sell it, no matter what sum I am offered? As a matter of rectitude, because the love for you I find in looking at it is *much* more valuable to Janio as an ego than the money would be to Janio as a body.

In the same sort of way, why do young bucks at the carnival spend ten dollars to win two dollar stuffed animals for their dates? Yes, there's *that*, too (grin), but isn't it part of the same thing...? From the standpoint of strict utility, they are acting in the *disservice* of their true bodily needs. Why is it that they seem to be having such a good time...?

Now go back again to those dismal woods. Suppose you decide they are not so dismal. We are stretching the causal bounds of our hypotheticalisms here, but imagine that you decide you want to stay there and live *without* improving the property around you. You will make such limited tools as you decide to, but you will not change the land around you in any way at all, not so much as building a platform for your tent, or even putting up your tent... As closely as you can, you will emulate the life of an animal, living on found objects and sleeping in natural refuges...

Do you own the property on which you reside? According to Locke, you do not, since you have not "mixed your labor" with it to make of it something it was not before. I say you *do* - to the *exact* extent you can defend it...

Do you see? You own it by giving it value, by *choosing* to regard it as valuable to your ends. You have not acted upon it by volition to make it, in whole or part, a *product* of your volition. But you have *claimed* it by your evaluation. *Here*, we have let a bit of the "state of nature" creep in; we are assuming the property was previously unclaimed. What we are looking at is how a previously unclaimed natural object can come to be owned *even if* it is left unimproved.

So, stipulating that in our formulation, if someone else came along and tried to take possession of your idyllic natural retreat, would you have the right to defend it? Yes. Your right to defend yourself and your property is exclusive. You have adopted a way of life that *I* would argue is not fully consonant with your needs as an ego, but your life is yours to do with as you choose. You have laid claim to a previously unclaimed tract of land, and the land you occupy is the means to the end of your on-going life. You have not improved it by your labor, but you have given it value *to yourself* by choosing

it, and you would be materially injured if it were taken from you. You *own it*.

Now, in a certain sense, we are also talking about how property rights are *terminated*. There will be more on this in the next chapter. For now, we want to observe that the Lockean standard of origination is lacking. That which a person improves by his effort *is* his property. But any previously unclaimed objects he may collect are *also* his property - to the extent he can defend them - whether or not he improves them in any way, and whether or not they have any value in trade.

Ownership is the unavoidable causal relationship between ego and the universe at large. Values come into existence *as the consequence* of evaluation. We are each of us self-controlled, and no outside force can cause us or forbid us to evaluate. Real values, transferable or not, are solely the *product* of the individual ego, and therefore solely the *property* of that spirit...

We own the things to which we give value, and we can exchange those we have for those we need - by Trade.

Provided, of course, that our trading partners *agree* with us about their value. We said that Trade is *mutually voluntary* social interaction. If I decide to manufacture mud pies, I might value them highly as a product of my life and time. But I cannot reasonably expect another person to value them as I do. Value is value *to an evaluator*.

But if I can make something other people *do* value, then I have found a way of supplying my life with every utilitarian value I need while producing only one. This is a powerful multiplication of my labor. What I reap would take me - personally, alone - *far* longer to produce on my own. Instead of having to produce *each* of those products, some of which I wouldn't *begin* to know how to make, I make only *one* product, and trade that for all the others I might need.

Now that's pretty neat by itself. But if we add in a trade medium, a currency, it gets even better. By specialization and barter, I can better supply my needs than I could by producing each value myself. But it's possible to imagine that the laundryman might not need my product when I need his. If instead of bartering we trade by means of a third value, one we both esteem most of the time, then we have a far greater likelihood of achieving an agreement. I can trade all of my product to one or a few specialists in that value. In exchange, I get money, which I can then trade with other producers for the things I need.

Now this is all very basic Economics, so I don't intend to go on about it at any length. If you're interested, a very good first book to read is Henry Hazlitt's *Economics In One Lesson*. What I want to emphasize is that by means of cooperation, specialization and money, each person demonstrably improves his ability to survive. Helena In Isolation is sure and perfect, but if she gets appendicitis, she will die. She can produce nearly every value her life requires, but she cannot perform an operation on herself, and there is no one present she can pay to remove her appendix.

The extremes prove the point, but so do the incidentals. In society, you can work all night, because other people have invested their time and wealth to discover how to produce cheap man-made light. You can move from point-to-point with ease, because other people are willing to trade cheap transportation for your values. You can communicate instantaneously with nearly any point on the globe - or off it. You can savor foods that grow naturally thousands of miles away and season them liberally with spices that the ancient kings quite literally *made war* to obtain... You are rich beyond the wildest dreams of the warfaring king, and the reason is the intelligence and self-interest of each of the people with whom you trade.

Trade is mutually voluntary cooperation, and I say it is *all* mutual cooperation, not just that aimed at exchanging utilitarian values. When I pass pleasantries with cashiers, I am reaping a value that is important to me, and I hope I am supplying them with a value as well. That old rascal of a Greek who sells papers and candy outside 150 Broadway is one of my favorite trading partners, even though I've rarely spent more than fifty cents at a time for his products. I used to *go out of my way* to deal with him, even though the sums involved were trivial.

Pleasure is a value, too, one Economists too often overlook. We each of us need pleasure, and we find it not just with our lovers and friends, but also with everyone we meet with whom we can get along. "Getting along" with someone is *itself* a Trade: we speak and act in ways we hope will pleasure the other person, in hopes that he will pleasure us in return. Despite its overuse, it is possible to wish someone "a nice day" and *mean* it. When you do, the other person will *know* you mean it, and will respond in kind - with kindness. Over time, you can build up wonderful relationships with your trading partners. Relationships built on mutual self-interest, to be sure. But built also on trust, respect, genuine affection and long memories of happy concourse.

Now I haven't dealt much with those who sneer at "mere" self-interest, but I want to now. Because the kind of serene and perfect joy you can know through another's company is nothing to sneer at. Peaceful coexistence with others is the most effective means to the best realization of your life. To sneer at it is to sneer at peace, wealth,

comfort, happiness, and at the Communion of spirits that is love at its highest expression. That hatred that slashes out like the claws of a crazed animal is aimed not just at the things that make life desirable, but at the desire for life itself... They will tell you that they want to stop man from chasing "the almighty dollar". What they *really* want, and all they can really achieve, is to kill the thing in man that makes him *yearn* for the rapture of an endless kiss...

"Humans would be better without ego." A Secret Schnorrer told me that, a long time ago. I sometimes regret that I resisted my first impulse: to pick up a baseball bat and offer to make him "better" (grin). Instead, fool that I am, I tried to show him why humans-without-ego would *not* be human, that ego *is* humanity. He was arguing against "mere" self-interest, but I didn't think to ask him on what motive he thought he was acting, when he drew the breaths from which to make his gusts of fevered white noise. That conversation was a Trade, too, but one from which I fear only *I* profited. He learned nothing, since those whose ideas negate the ego are effectively *without* ego, when it comes time to examine those ideas. But *I* discovered why no interest of mine is served by trying to talk to people who are not listening to me (grin)... I am better for having learned it - by means of my ego - which should certainly confound my opponent...

Every value of our lives, every bodily need we require, every physical pleasure we pursue, every spiritual joy we seek, every act, expression and trophy of our lives *is a product of self-interest*. So very far from being a stain, the fact that we are *value-seeking* beings is our greatest glory. Our glory is our power - but also our peril. We *can* recognize that each of us must create his own values *because* he is exclusively self-controlled. But nature does not force us to make that recognition. We'll talk more in the next chapter about what happens to those who *avoid* making it. Here I want to emphasize that since *value* is particular to an evaluator, in the most fundamental sense each of us must produce *all* of his own values.

We are free, metaphysically, from the nature of our being. We have the right to trade transferable values with others by their mutual consent - and no other person has the right to stop us. But before a trade can take place, each partner to it must have something *to* trade, something he brought to existence and to market by his own effort. And *much* more important than creating the values he would trade, he must Mother Into Being the values he *retains*, the desires and passions that move him, that only he can see.

In their Madness, those who claim to want to "share the wealth" do not see that what they are really trying to "share" is the *spirit* that *creates* wealth. The richness of

character that makes not just the *means* of life, but which supplies its *end*, its *motive*. The thing that makes the tools of life, but also the toys and the jokes and the kindnesses and the pleasures and joys of being alive. They want to "share" the rapture of two spirits deeply in love *as a recognition* of shared values... They claim to want the effect: wealth. But what they really want is the *cause*: self-love. But self-love is a value that can only be produced *by* a particular person, *for* himself. It is impossible to steal, and it's laughable that anyone would try...

But self-love, expressed perfectly or haphazardly, is the root of all values. A man can renounce it, but he cannot live for long *after* renouncing it. He acts upon it to make his shelter, his clothing, his food, directly or by trade. But more importantly, he acts upon it to make his *moods*, his attitudes, his expectations, his pleasures. And it is his self-love he expresses when he makes love with another person...

I have been making love with you for many days now. I have been using my self-love to craft for you the best and fullest and most true and most heartbreakingly beautiful rendering of Janio At A Point I can make. I wish I could brush my fingers so lightly over your soft skin, but in some ways this is better. With my words, I can touch your soul - from the *inside*. I can make my values more tellingly real to you than I could by any other action, because I can make them real in your *response* to them... I *glory* in my power to make love this tenderly, from this far away...

Stay With Me, Valentine, My Funny Valentine... Grant me an instant's wistfulness when I gaze at that photo, the Helena I could hold to me then, even if only by phone... The past is *mine*, and *yours*, but it's gone. The future is mine to make - *today*. And It's Happy Valentine's Day...

7. *Crime*

The first thing I want to say about Crime is that there's damn little of it...

This is fact, not fancy, despite the schoolteachers and politicians. *Very* few people identify their interest in violent confrontations with other people. *Forget* the newspapers; if you believe them, you're constantly faced with choosing among the or-else's posed by four different gunmen. Think instead of your own life: how many times have you been injured by crime? Non-governmental crime, I mean...

Despite all the press attention it gets, crime is not all that common. Such as there is tends to be concentrated where its spiritual causes prosper. So, if you moved out of New York, crime would be even *less* common in your life.

This is very important. First, it shows us that Anarchy, self-restraint, really is the source of peaceful coexistence. And it shows us that, if it were *not*, there would be no point in talking about the small amount of crime there is...

Understand, if things were as bad as the schoolteachers, politicians and newspeople tell us, they would be *irredeemable*. If every person were at heart a ravenous madman bent on no end but the immediate satisfaction of his perverse urges, *all of us would be dead by now...* The very fact that those professional protesters tell us that "something must be done about crime" is proof that something *can* be done about it. It is their recognition that the vast majority of us are *not* criminals.

There are a number of causes behind the general alarmism over crime. One is that many of the actions people call crimes are crime "by definition." No one is *unintentionally* injured by gambling, for instance. Another is that some crimes "by definition" so skew the markets that they *result* in real injuries. The best example of this is drugs: buying or selling drugs, by itself, does not injure anyone *against his will*. But criminalizing trade in drugs so drastically raises prices that addicts commit real crimes in order to get the money to buy drugs. By contrast, few alcohol addicts steal to get liquor. And a third reason is simply that too many people have too little to do with their lives. They blow infrequent incidents all out of true proportion in order to have something to talk about...

So if we throw out all that and look at Crime for what it really is, what will we see?

Madness, as you might have expected, but we'll come back to that. First, let's talk about

what Crime *is*...

I said that any social interaction that is not *mutually* voluntary is Crime. You are exclusively self-controlled. You have the sole power to initiate your actions, and no one has the right to stop you. You have the right to initiate *voluntary* transactions with others. But if another person tries to *force* his company on you, a crime is taking place, and you have the right to act in self-defense.

Because you are self-controlled, you have the *capacity* to take any self-defensive action that comes to your mind. This is the way you are built. But there is a question of "ought", here as everywhere. *I* would say that defense cannot, logically, precede offense. But a madman could conceive that other people are a threat to him *as such*. He could set about to murder all of them *before* they put him in peril. This is possible; there is nothing in metaphysical causation that prevents it. It is possible for one of our madman's potential victims to stop the bloodshed *by an act of volition*. But there is nothing *in nature* that forbids criminal actions taken in the name of self-defense.

So, when we talk about Crime, we are talking about *Is*, about what is true of the nature of the objects considered. But when we talk about how we should *respond* to crime, we are talking about oughts, about how to minimize the loss and maximize the gain. It is possible for you to take any action in self-defense. But the *best* interests of your life are served by taking only those actions that are *Just*, righteous *with respect* to the offender...

Let's take an example: you are visible. The nature of your being is such that you reflect light, and this light is in turn discernable to the senses of other people. Women as attractive as you know intimately the sorts of vulgar remarks men on the street can make. Those remarks *are* Crimes. They are involuntary social transactions, attempts to compel your company without your choice. But if you respond to them by spraying the "wolves" with bullets, I would say you are acting unjustly. You have been aggressed against, and you have every right to defend yourself. But defending yourself *that way* is all out of proportion to the crime. You are seeking not to restore your previous condition, but to injure for revenge. By my lights, that kind of "self-defense" is *also* Crime...

Near the subject: I have a friend who had a terrible problem with "wolves." One day she tried putting on a pair of headphones from a portable radio. She didn't use the radio, just ran the cord into her coat pocket. Not one remark did she hear! The "wolves" were convinced she *couldn't* hear, and so they spent their aggression on other women. If ever there was a case study of Madness, that's it...

Okay: Crime is involuntary social contact. You have the right to defend yourself from Crime, but you *ought to* defend yourself only *in proportion* to your injury. You have the right to your life and to your property, and so if some part of your time or your wealth is stolen, you have the right to *try* to restore your previous condition, as much as is possible. *While* a crime is happening, this is not such a big problem. If someone hits you, you can *try* to hit him back. If he takes your purse, you can *try* to take it back.

But what happens if you fail, or if you are not present when the crime takes place? What do you have the right to do *after the fact*? You have the *capacity* to do anything that is possible to do. But what *ought* you to do, *taking account* of all your interests, now and in the future...?

I recommend the means I suggested earlier, free market courts and market boycotts. But to make that work, we need a much more detailed definition of Crime. A leer or a rude remark *is* an aggression, as are many of the things said among friends and family members. But this does not mean a violent response would be *Just*. What we are looking for is a definition of those crimes for which self-defensive actions aimed at restitution can be justified.

I call this Politically Actionable Crime, Crime for which action aimed at self-defense can be warranted. A Politically Actionable Crime has occurred: one, when an involuntary social contact has taken place; two, when some one *real* person has been *materially* injured by that contact; and, three, when that one real person seeks redress for his injuries.

Now what do we gain by looking at things that way? First, we eliminate from view all those crimes "by definition". There is nothing involuntary happening when a person places a bet or beds a prostitute. No *third party* has any basis for claiming that *he* is injured by these transactions. There are those who will tell you that the spouse of a whoring husband is injured by his carousing. If she is, then the "injury" results from her voluntarily staying married to the bum, not from his right to engage in any mutually voluntary contact he might choose.

Second, by specifying *material* injury, we acknowledge that emotional states are caused by the person who holds them. You may be *infuriated* by those catcalls, but if you respond with anything other than words, you are acting out of proportion to the crime. After the fact, you must show not only that you chose to regard yourself as being insulted, but that being insulted in some way damaged your person or your property.

Third, by acknowledging that crime occurs *only* to *real* people, we cut from the picture all notions of "potential" crime, "imaginary" crime, and "just" restraint prior to injury.

We'll see later how much these non-crimes have to do with buttressing the idea of the state.

And, fourth, by insisting that *only* people who are injured can complain of injury, we eliminate from consideration notions of a third party's "right to punish". This is a pernicious idea we'll address in detail in the next chapter. For now, I want to stress that *if* the person offended does not protest, *you* have no power to effect his self-defense *in his place*.

Taken as a whole, the definition acknowledges the exclusivity of both self-control and self-defense. There is nothing in nature that *prevents* crimes from occurring. You have the right to defend yourself from such crimes as *do* occur. But *only* you have the right to defend yourself. You can *assign* that right, as to a security guard. But it is still your right to self-defense he is acting upon when he chases a burglar from your home. And you *cannot* have delegated your right to self-defense *without* your choice.

There are no imaginary social contracts by which you forfeit your rights, to me, without having agreed to anything. If you *choose* to delegate your rights, that's your privilege. But if I simply *assume* your agreement and set myself up in business as your "protector", then I am committing a crime against you. There can be emergency cases where I might have to intervene first and negotiate afterward. But even then I should be sure of my grounds before acting.

In New York there are people who pay to get beat up. Normally, getting beat up would be a crime, and if I saw it happening on the street, I would intervene to stop it. But if I intervene in a Sadism session, I am committing a crime. The victim *is* being injured, but he is *paying* to be injured. If I "break it up", I am interfering with the free exercise of a contract - and I deserve what I get.

To be a party to an action aimed at restitution for a crime, I must be injured by that crime. If I am not, it's none of my business. If another person *is* injured, but chooses to do nothing, it's *still* none of my business. I have no power to motivate another person, and it would be invalid to pretend that I do.

Do you see? *This* is what is consonant with man's nature. We, each of us, *can* respond to Crime, but we need not. If we *do* not, no other person can call himself injured by the crime, and, therefore, no other person can seek restitution for the crime. There is no "right to punish" a person who is in fact innocent of all wrong-doing *with respect to you...*

Ah, you say, but there's a hole in your theory! What if a person is murdered? He cannot

complain of injury then, because he cannot complain of anything. Quite true. But anyone who had contracts with that person, including his spouse and children, has been materially injured by the crime and has the right to seek restoration. The spouse could not sue for *emotional* damages, by me, because the murderer did not cause those emotions. But any person who had contracted with the victim has rights under those contracts, which were involuntarily terminated by the murderer.

But a murderer deserves more punishment than that! Is that your reaction? More punishment *from whom?* Unless you are ready to claim that the murder did some *imaginary* damage to your life, and that this fancied hurt demands redress, then the punishment cannot come from *you*. But since you are like unto every other specimen of humanity, it cannot come from *any* other person, except those who were *actually* injured, and who therefore have the right to act in *actual* self-defense. You cannot defend yourself if you have not been offended, and neither can anyone else...

But again: Ah! What about indigents? There is no one who can claim to be materially injured by the murder of a wino. Quite true. But: so what? I am not being cruel. But I *am* trying to make clear that facts are facts no matter what we might feel about them. It may displease us to think of someone "getting away with murder". But we cannot therefore craft out of Nothing an imaginary injury for which the murderer is to be held accountable to us. Each person defends himself. If he fails to do so, and if he has no contract delegating his self-defense, then it is nobody's business but his.

So, my view is that the *intelligent* thing to do, the thing one *ought* to do, is to react to crime in this way: respond to crime in kind *as it is happening*, if you choose. And respond to it *after the fact* by seeking redress through the courts, by seeking restitution for such real injuries as you sustain. In general, I would argue against responding violently even *while* a crime is happening. For one thing, any incidental damage you cause is *your* responsibility. For another, you could get badly hurt.

As I said before, I advocate noncoercive means of settling judicial claims. The reason for this is, even though you have been injured, this does not give you the right to *initiate* injuries. If I punch you in the nose and you beat me to death with a ball bat, I have committed a small crime. But *you* have committed a much larger crime. The *first* blow was self-defense. Everything after that was new injury, initiated by you. In the same way, if I swipe your purse, to forcibly recover it, you would have to force your way into my home and compel my person. Your purse is yours, and you have every right to recover it. But my house is not yours, nor is my body. The injuries you inflict upon things that are *not* your property are Crimes.

Now, why would we want to do things this way? As a matter of rectitude, as an ought chosen in the best service of the full needs of the ego. Your life is not your life *at this instant*, but your *whole* life, remembered, lived now, and anticipated. If by your actions now, you *imperil* your future, you are not acting in the best interests of your spirit. A system of noncoercive Justice best serves your need to preserve your soul - outside of the emergency situation.

You *can* respond to tiny injuries with massive retaliation. But you cannot reasonably expect to escape the consequences, still more massive retaliation. In this way, unjust responses to crime are contra-utilitarian; your life is more threatened afterward than before. Likewise, unjust "justice" is invalid. It is incorrect with respect to the actual nature of the object considered; it presumes that self-control can somehow be negated or transferred. But what is compelling is this: criminal "justice" is *unrighteous*. In the long run, reasoning by the Madnesses that have driven government *destroys* your capacity to achieve true Justice. If you wonder how a monster like Hitler could send *millions* of innocent people to their graves, your answer is here. When someone begins to argue that people innocent of any wrong-doing "ought" to be punished for potential injuries to imaginary victims, he is walking the same road...

I left one little escape hatch in there, and it's time to close it up. I said: "outside of the emergency situation". What is an emergency, and why does it deserve special consideration? An emergency is a circumstance where, if something is not done *right now*, serious and irreparable damage will result. An example is a mugging in progress. *Ordinarily*, I could not intervene in someone else's defense without that person's consent. He has the right to control his life however he chooses, and I have no right to impose my oughts on him. But if I see a mugging happening, I know that if I do not act *at once* an injury beyond robbery may eventuate. In that sort of circumstance, I can temporarily act outside the bounds of a contract, because to fail to do so would result in a worse injury. I am not morally *bound* to do it, and I should take care to assure that I am not interrupting a free if perverse trade. But I am within my rights to act that way, in a *genuine* emergency.

In the same way, if I am out boating with a friend and a storm whips up, I may have to take actions that normally would be unjust. If my friend becomes crazed by the thunder and proceeds to try to saw holes in the hull, I have every right to restrain him by any means, up to and including throwing him overboard. *Ordinarily*, that would be murder. But in the emergency situation, if I fail to take the actions necessary to defend myself *at that point in time*, then I have failed in my self defense. Do you see? Outside the context of the emergency, I could sue my friend (some friend!) for the damage done to my boat. But because we are at sea in a storm, if I don't act to restrain him *at once*, I

won't *live* to see the inside of a courtroom.

The last thing I want to say about this is this: *because* Justice is a chosen ought, there is nothing necessary about it. It makes the best sense, away from emergencies, but nature does not force man to make sense. Violations of this creed of Justice are always possible, and it is possible to conceive that they might even be warranted, as above. I would argue that, in the main, they are not *intelligent*, but I can conceive of situations where the most intelligent solution to the problem posed by a criminal would be the violation of that person's rights.

Take, for example, child molestation. Suppose we have in our neighborhood a vicious brutalizer of pre-verbal children. There are no third party witnesses to his crimes, and the children can only implicate him. They cannot give good evidence as to what actually took place. What could be done in such a situation? Where I was born, people would grab the molester, tie him to a long rope, then tie the rope to the bumper of a truck. They would drive the truck until all that was left at the end of the rope were the bloody stumps of a former child molester.

Now this is not Justice. It is all out of proportion to the crime (but not the *outrage*) and it does not compensate the victims for their losses. But it *does* solve the problem, then and forever. It would be unrighteous, and people who made a habit of this sort of "justice" would *pay* for their bloodlust. But no one who had not contracted with the molester could call himself injured by it. It *would* be a crime against the molester and anyone who has contracted with him for undelivered values. But it would not be a crime against *you*, and you would have no right to call yourself injured by it.

In fact, in *that* circumstance, you might call yourself benefitted. If the molester's contractors sue the lynch mob who killed him, you need not boycott them when they are found guilty. If you feel they responded in the only way they could to remove a peril from their lives, you *should not* boycott them.

Okay, that's Crime and Justice. Let's now take a look at a couple of things that fall out from them...

First, we said in the last chapter that property rights can be *terminated*. We said they *originate* in some one person's evaluation. How might they cease to exist?

Well, their *owner* can cease to exist. We are all mortal, we can die. Even a Sally-like consciousness can be killed, if all the nodes are killed at once. A person can *will* his

goods to another, upon his death. But if he does not, his property reverts to the domain of the unclaimed. Incidentally, though this is redundant, I don't think any "prior" claims can be asserted, absent a will or direct heirs. Some people say that "the state" has a prior claim, but I say this is nonsense. If the goods can be owned by "The People", but not *a* people, then there must be some metaphysical difference between people considered as groups and people considered as individuals. "The People" have "rights" of or to other people. This is simply creative Solipsism and there is no support for it in fact.

Another way property can become unclaimed is by being abandoned. You have no cause to call yourself materially injured if another person "steals" your trash. There is a problem distinguishing what, precisely, is trash. For example, if you leave your purse in the ladies room, have you abandoned it? If it is still there six weeks later (unlikely as that may seem), have you *still* not abandoned it? This is a problem to be worked out by case law. Most cases are clear cut, but for those that are not, there must be some arbitrary dividing line. This is the way things are done now, in this kind of case. The only difference *here* between Anarchy and statism is that we know in an Anarchy that the standard employed is seen as being Just by most people, as evidenced by their patronage of it. If you are injured, you are *as* injured on either side of the dividing line. But you cannot reasonably expect the world to hold still for you. Anyway, once a piece of property *is* abandoned, it passes into the unclaimed until some other person claims it.

There is a third way that property rights can be terminated, and it is one that may be a bit hard to swallow at first. As I said, none of us ever really gives up on that idea of "Cosmic Justice" we hold as children. Evil *ought* to be punished, right here, right now, and *severely*. We never truly cease to want that bolt of lightning to erupt from the sky and strike down the wicked. We grow up and realize that it is wrong, causally wrong. And if we are wise, we come to see that it is still more wrong to try to pretend that "causeless" "justice" is possible. But we never really do "forgive" reality for failing us in his respect. We know that Justice *cannot* be automatic, yet we still find ourselves wishing that it were...

This is the root Madness of statism, which we'll be dissecting next. But what I have to say now ought to be enough to drive the statist right out of their fevered minds...

For property rights can be terminated *by theft*.

Yes, I suffer from Spasmodic Iconoclasms (grin). But not now. Because, though it may seem paradoxical to say so, it is possible for a person to obtain good title to a stolen value...

How? We said that you own your property *to the exact extent you can defend it*. You can defend your property. But no one else can be compelled to defend it *for* you. If you fail in the defense of it, either during the crime or afterward through the courts, no uninvolved person is liable for your loss.

Let's leave theft alone for a moment and just talk about loss. One of the cliches of childhood is the ice cream cone accidentally dropped down the sewer. The patterned adult response is to give the child money for another scoop. One could argue that this is a sort of "Cosmic *Injustice*", since the child would learn to be more careful for doing without. But leaving out the adult, look just at the loss. It is a terrible thing for the child, and no doubt he is distraught. You could argue that it's not *really* his fault and I'll plead no contest. The question is: is it anyone *else's* fault? You could say the child should not be *penalized* for his inattention. Sure, but I don't think he should be *rewarded* for it, either. But should *someone else* be penalized because the child was not attending to his knowledge of causality?

Obviously not. So let's go back to theft. When a person steals your property, he has committed a Crime. He has forced his society upon your person and your values and damaged one or both materially. While the theft is taking place, if you are present, you can act to defend yourself, even unto murder in self-defense if you have cause to believe your life is threatened. If you are absent or if you do not resist, you can pursue Justice through the courts. If a judge agrees you are materially harmed, you have a claim against the person who injured you. Who *else* do you have a claim against...?

No one. Your injury was caused by *a* particular person. That person did damage you, and you have the right to have your previous condition restored. You are whole in your person, and you have a right to every bit of it. But you have *no rights of or to other people*. If you cannot manage to collect your claim from the person who injured you, you do not therefore acquire the "right" to collect it from someone who *did not* injure you. Nor do you acquire the "right" to force uninvolved innocents to "help" you collect your claim by force of numbers. You own yourself, but you do not own anyone *but* yourself.

So, what happens? Your car is stolen from a parking lot. You report it to your security service, but they can't find either the car or the thief. No stain on them: the thief drove the car hundreds of miles away. If you had bought that locator they recommended... (grin) Anyway, your car is *gone*, and, for the sake of the example, let's say it wasn't insured for theft. You are out the car for transportation, but you are also out the amount you paid for the car. This is the thief's fault - *but no one else's*...

A few days later in another town you *see* your car, driven by a stranger. You approach him, and he shows you that he has good title to the car and a bill of sale. He bought it the day before from the thief. Do you have any claim of him?

I say you do not. *He* has not injured you. He has possession of your car, but he has it *honestly*. He freely exchanged the product of his past effort for the car. He did not know he was buying it from a thief, *but he is not responsible for your defense*. You cannot claim that he *owes* you that car, because he *does not*...

The *thief* owes you that car, or its equivalent in cash compensation. The buyer is innocent of all wrong-doing and cannot be held accountable for any crime. All he did was buy a chattel on the market. You could argue that he ought to have been more careful in assuring that the seller's title was good, but this could never be more than a matter of good will. If a person is *obliged* to investigate the title to the goods he buys, then he is the uncompensated detective of everyone and anyone who might claim an injury. What is more: he is not free...

But man *is* free. He *ought* to make sure that he is not financing Crime by his purchases, but he is not injuring you or anyone if he does not. Criminals are the people who commit crimes. The people who fund them - knowingly or unknowingly - are not injuring anyone *by their actions*. Crime is injury, and you cannot claim the "right" to collect for an injury from a person who did not *cause* that injury. Truly, no one should *ever* buy stolen merchandise, since doing so hides from thieves and potential thieves the value of living as a human being, but that's for later. For now: if something that was stolen from you was sold on the market, you still and always have a claim against the thief. But you have *no* claim against the buyer. He holds good title, by trade, and you have no claim of him at all.

Now there are some interesting issues in the neighborhood. Consider, for example, intellectual piracy. The creator of a book or record or tape or film or software program *certainly* has the right to his property. He sells it only on his terms, and he has every right to complain if his terms are violated. But intellectual pirates tend not to be big behemoth organizations, easy to find. Rather, they are little one-man shops, if that. There *is* large-scale piracy of records and books, but most software piracy is just one friend copying a program for another, *one time*. Much music piracy occurs in the same way. The question is: how do producers of intellectual values defend themselves from pirates?

However they can, *provided it does not entail Crime*. If they can *persuade* manufacturers of their media to build in defeat mechanisms, good for them. If they can

convince people to boycott known brigands, that's great. But if they employ force to compel defeat mechanisms or to forbid people to trade with whom they will, then they are committing crimes. It may not be possible for them to recover their losses from casual piracy. If not, I'm sorry for them. *But I am not at fault.* I cannot justly be penalized for the crimes of other people. I'm sorry that producers of the values of the mind (and I am *one* of them) are out those sales. I'm sorry the child dropped his ice cream. But I did not *cause* either to happen, and it would be Crime to hold me accountable for them.

Very close to this is the claim of the Indigenous Peoples. There are a great many people in the world who live on land that was stolen - one or more times. If they have good title to that land, if they acquired it by trading their own honest effort for it, then they owe it to no one. To pick an example close to (your) home, the American Indians at the time of America's settling certainly had large tracts of land stolen from them. Some was purchased, but some was "purchased" by fraud, by swindling people who had no knowledge of European ideas about contracts. And a great deal more was simply taken by force.

This was Crime, and there's no disputing it. But no one *alive today* committed any one of those crimes. There is no one alive today who can *justly* be held accountable for those crimes. Moreover, there is no one alive today who can claim to be *injured* by them...

The Native Americans will tell you that land is *theirs*, theirs by right of their prior claim. This is untrue. Second, even supposing the claim could still be enforced, it is purely a matter of conjecture that the Native Americans alive today would have inherited that land from the victims of the theft. It's possible they might have sold it. But first, and compellingly, the claim has lapsed. The original claim to the land (itself suspect, since we cannot verify that the ancestors to the present claimants did not steal it from someone else) was *terminated* by its unsuccessful defense. When that land passed into the hands of a man who traded his honest effort to obtain it, he became its *owner*, its *only* Just owner.

The Native Americans now alive have no just claim to the land stolen from their ancestors. The *ancestors* have a claim, against the people who injured them. But since all of them are now dead, they will have to work it out in The Peoples' Court Of The Damned. There are *no* people now alive who were injured by those thefts, and there is no one from whom compensation can be demanded. Not even, I should add, the *heirs* of the original thieves. Their forebears might have committed crimes, and some of their prosperity may owe to gains from crimes. But they have not *themselves* injured anyone.

They cannot justly be held at fault.

You have full right to your person, to your spirit, your mind and your body. You have every right to defend yourself and the things you make with your life. But you have *no* right of or to another person. If you cannot defend your rights, you yourself or the delegates you hire, you have no right to demand your defense of others, neither as "punishment" for injuries they did not inflict, nor as a salve upon your wounds. You are free and so are *they*. They do not *owe* you anything. So if you *fail* to defend your right to your property, no one else is obliged to defend it for you, or to suffer your loss in your place. Thus can property rights be terminated by theft.

Another issue worth examining close up is "third party" damages. These are injuries sustained outside of and incidental to a Just contract. I can see no good reason not to call them ordinary involuntary interactions. They are different from what we more usually associate with Crime in that, in most cases, there is no *intent* to injure. But the end consequence is the same, whether it is intended or not: a person is injured without his consent.

The example that shows up in the news all the time is interesting: a gas station has a leak in its storage tanks. Gasoline is leaking out into the ground table and contaminating nearby wells. People are getting sick from their drinking water. This is Crime. It is a violation of the property rights of the people who own the wells. They have every right to demand that leak be repaired and that they be compensated for such real damage as has resulted.

Because Crime is injury, it does not matter what purpose the injuring action was intended to serve. If a person causes an injury by inattention, or if he causes it from the most repulsive malice - it makes no difference. No difference to the *victim*, since he is as injured either way. And it *ought* not to make a difference in judgements. The victim has the right to have his *full* previous condition restored, as much as is *causally* possible. He *deserves* no less, certainly. But he deserves no *more*, either. The monopoly state of the U.S. has traditionally rewarded "incidental" crime by failing to award damages for real injuries. Lately, it has started to *penalize* it, by awarding damages far greater than the losses sustained. Both approaches are unjust.

Crime is Crime. Period.

But *why* is Crime...?

Intentional Crime is premised in Madness. The criminal *knows* he is acting incorrectly with respect to other people. He knows that values worth trying to steal or dominate are created *only* by volition, and that volition is solely self-controlled. He knows that his actions are contra-utilitarian, that they imperil his life more than they assure it. And he knows his crimes are unrighteous, wrong with respect to the needs of his own ego.

And yet he does them anyway...

Make no mistake: Crime Does Not Pay... Criminals make about five thousand dollars a year, *average*. For obvious reasons, they tend to die young and violently. They rarely have happy family lives, and most often they will be addicted to one or more intoxicants. The mystery writers paint this portrait of the happy, rich, ebullient thief. If such exists, he is the one in a thousand among the one in thousand who choose to commit crimes. There is nothing ebullient or glamorous about the normal criminal. He can be sweet of disposition or vile. But he will usually be unclean, uneducated, unreliable and unskilled at virtually everything *including* Crime.

A criminal is an unfinished man. He is stuck at around age four, still playing those stupid "get away with it" games. He knows that he *should not* get away with the things he does, and he knows that he *does not* get away with what he claims to. He knows that his crimes make his life harder and harder to sustain, yet *still* he does them. He is locked-in by his own premises. He has habituated a way of life that, quite literally, is killing him, but he doesn't know how to stop. What he needs to do is *wake up*, acknowledge his Madness for what it is. But to do that is to admit *consciously* that he has known he was wrong all along. And this he will not do...

Not right away anyway. Some criminals eventually do learn better - if they live long enough. They tire of the constant hustles and hassles, the gearing up before and the adrenaline fits after, the never knowing how *tomorrow* is going to be paid for... I've heard it called "fortying out", because that's about the time of a criminal's life it happens, if it does.

Now it is very clear that criminals suffer terribly for their crimes. They suffer materially, in the poverty their lifestyle imposes on them. And they suffer spiritually, in the time of their life that is lost to dead ends, in the awareness, past and present, that they cannot permit themselves to take account of, in the long-term relationships destroyed for a moment's advantage... But criminals have values, too. They do nice things for people and smile at babies. *While* a criminal is being your friend, he will be a fast friend. You never know when he will turn on you, but until he does he will do his righteous best by you. They *do* have values. They're just more than especially talented

at *destroying* the treasures they find in life...

Sallykid was bugging me with a pernicious question for a while, and I thought I'd pass it along. What if you decided to commit a crime and *not* suffer for it? What would happen then...?

You'd suffer for it, I say. My first reaction to that kind of question is: tell it to Raskolnikov. Too many people think of Crime as something casual, with not much going before or coming after. This is false. There is a long history of Madnesses, before a person commits a crime of serious consequences. And before that one particular crime, there will be a long period of "psyching up", of rationalizing and re-rationalizing the crime. During and after the action, the adrenal glands will be oscillating out of control, and the criminal's pulse and blood pressure will *soar*. After he has calmed down, the criminal will go through a long acting-out ritual, as he seeks to convince himself that his action was really just, and that it didn't *really* happen in the way he *knows* it happened. If he caused a tragedy, a death or a serious injury, he will never be able to purge from his mind the screams of his victims, and yet he will never be able to stop *trying* to forget...

It is obvious that Sally doesn't have the causal preparation for that kind of life - to her credit. But suppose she decided to skip the preliminaries and get right down to business. Would she be able to work herself up to committing a crime? If she did it, would she not feel immense regret after the fact? Is there any non-ego-destructive means by which she could *avoid* consciousness of her actions? Would the crime necessarily have permanent consequences on her spirit? Not if she learned her lesson from it. But if she *didn't*, would she not suffer terribly?

The second half of the question is: what makes Crime "wrong"? We said that the standard of "right" people use is ego-preservation. And we said that *how* they decide to serve that end is a chosen "ought". Taking those two, how can we say that Crime is "wrong" *of necessity*? Yes, it is wrong with respect to the oughts most people use to guide their lives. But is it "wrong" in being...?

Yes. Crime *is* unrighteous, to both the victim *and* the criminal. It is a *lousy* way of preserving the ego. And Crime is contra-utilitarian. Obviously, from the stand-point of the victim. But *also* from the aspect for the criminal. First, he is hinging his life, the values he *must* have to live, on an unreliable source. Those goods he steals were caused to exist by someone *else's* volition, not his own. He cannot count on that person to take his needs into account, when deciding whether to make more goods, perchance to be stolen. If he has any brains, he will expect the *opposite*. Second, by his actions, he

impairs *his own* capacity to produce the values his life requires. The Madnesses he needs to commit his crimes destroy his mind... And, third, he puts his life into peril every time he commits a crime. He may "get away with it" again and again, but someday he will be caught. When he is, he may not be lucky enough to come up against someone who shares my views about equity in self-defense... Those who attempt to live by the sword, *die* by the sword. May they rest in peace. Too bad they never learned to *live* that way...

But *much* more significantly, Crime is epistemologically invalid, it is incorrect with respect to the actual, unchangeable, metaphysically foreordained nature of the objects considered. It is invalid with respect to the victim. He is exclusively self-controlled. It is incorrect to regard him as being something other. And it is invalid from the perspective of the criminal, because *he* must act upon *himself* as though he were something he is not. He must indulge the Madness that he has the power to "control" other people, either now through coercion or in the past through theft. In order to motivate himself to commit a crime, a man must induce in his mind conclusions about himself that he *knows* are false to fact...

Crime is *always* wrong, and intentional Crime is always ego-destructive. We are what we are, and we cannot be other than we are...

And *think*: these are just the small-timers, the sneakers and snatchers and barstool Napoleons. In the next chapter we'll deal with the *real* criminals, the people who claim not just your time and your property, but the "right" to control your whole *life*... What a sleazy bunch *they* must be, not...?

8. Government

I've been working for *days* to say this. You might want to take a seat. Ready?

Okay: government is *Crime*...

Crime I say, and if you haven't yet, you may wish to call me a madman now...

For I don't mean to prove that government is stupid, wasteful, inefficacious and sleazy. All those things are true, but they're incidental to the main issue. What I intend to prove is that government is *invalid*...

Wrong, *always* and *anywhere*. Not ever right, *no matter what*...

Now, we are taught to hold the state in an awe no god ever demanded, so this may be a long reach for you. Let me make it a little easier: one-hundred-fifty-*million* political murders in this century...

There is no part of the government that is good, not ever. The United States was established by the best and best-intentioned people ever to form a state, and *still* the end product is vile. Not nearly so vile as some, but a diluted poison is still poison...

And government *is* poison. It corrupts the minds of those who treat with it, and destroys their capacity to act independent of it. At its *least* criminal, it is a giant nipple that seeks to hold everyone down to perpetual infancy. It not only *does not* do the things it claims to do, it makes those very same "problems" *worse* than they were before...

Government everywhere is a giant engine of destruction. It destroys lives in its wars and gas chambers. It ravages property with its taxes and tariffs. But *much* more significantly, it obliterates human *egos*. The self is its target, the thing that thinks and wonders and aspires and attempts and *does* everything that was ever done. The thing that observes, reasons and *chooses* is what it negates with its laws, its penalties upon virtue and rewards for vice, its concealment of vital survival information. If there were such a thing as a mastermind of evil, government is the very tool he would invent - in order to assure the *extinction* of the human race...

Am I being melodramatic? Do you forget those bombs poised over your head? *This* is the final end of government, the Madness of destroying all of humanity as a means of "fighting crime"... Do you say, "Yes, they're slimy and corrupt, but they could never be *that* evil"? I wish I could introduce you to one-hundred-fifty-million people who could testify to the contrary...

That fat little man with the cigar and the pinkie ring - is it money he's after? Power...? Yes, power of a certain sort... Not over you. You're just the means to his end. No, what *he* wants is power over *causation*. He wants to bend the shape of the universe to his Madnesses. By force of arms...

Yes, there are well-intentioned people in government - but it doesn't matter. There are many nice, safe, respectable people who wouldn't *dream* of doing things too very different from their neighbors. They're Sleepwalkers, but Sleepwalkers of the least offensive sort. But that makes no difference. They share every premise of the ward-heeler. They may call it "the good", where he calls it "practical". But they are in complete agreement that they have the "right" to compel innocent people at the point of a gun. A gangster in a Brooks Brothers suit and *pince nez* is still a gangster. If anything, the ward-heeler is the better man: at least he *admits* he's a gangster...

Truly, I *hate* statism. But now that I've said all those awful things, I suppose I should back them up.

What we are trying to do is *disprove* the state, to show that it is *incorrect* with respect to the nature of humans. When you are trying to prove something, you can only do it one way - if that many (grin). But the neat thing about *disproving* something is, if it genuinely *is* untrue, you can invalidate it from any way you look at it.

Watch: what is government? Weber's definition is fine with me: a state is a social organization which claims the exclusive monopoly on the use of force in a particular place. I have friends who object to that, saying that the monopoly on force is inessential. What counts, they say, is that the state has an exclusive monopoly on *lawmaking*. Fine: let's say that a government is the social organization that claims an exclusive monopoly on lawmaking, and may also claim an exclusive monopoly on force, in a specific locale.

So: a government is a group of people who claim the preemptive "right" to restrain trade in peaceful or forceful dispute resolution. A state is people who have "rights" of or to other people. So, it is people who are *not* identical in every natural respect to non-governmental people. Which means: a miraculous process of metaphysical causation occurs when a person *joins* the government. His rights are transformed by this miracle from rights to *himself* to "rights" to other people, who are now metaphysically distinct from him. Since this is obviously not so, we have thus invalidated government.

Too easy for you? Take it from another direction. *If* a state can righteously restrain

trade in dispute resolution, then you are not free. Since we proved that you *are* free, the state cannot have the "rights" it claims as essential to its being.

Want more? The forceful restraint of trade is an involuntary social contact that results in material injury to your life and property. As I said before, government is Crime. Since we said that *all* Crime is invalid, it follows, necessarily, that the essential action of government is invalid...

Pretty neat, not? But I can do *much* worse damage than that...

Try this: every idea of government is rooted in an End-State Theory. An End-State Theory is an "ought" imposed by force, in a futile attempt to make it a manifestation of Is. It is an idea of social organization that upholds its vision of the way things "ought" to work out as the justification for forcibly preventing things from working out as they do. The textbook case is Socialism, which holds that the allegedly desirable end consequence of being able to sustain life without having to *earn* it warrants all manner of theft and destruction.

There are others: the end sought by Naziism, "the purity of the race", justified the murders of millions of innocents. The Soviets have murdered millions more in pursuit of "one-world Socialism". "The divine right of kings" - meaning god, that super-ought, wants this outcome and no other. "Liberty, equality, fraternity" - or else... Even here, among the what-would-preventionists... You don't have to talk to a statist very long before he'll tell you *why* he thinks he has the special "right" to push his neighbors around at gunpoint.

End-State Theories declare that humans are merely *means to an end*, whatever is the end-result desired. We can see from this that *all* of them are invalid. Since you are free as a property of your being, you are an end in yourself and you cannot be employed as the means to another's end *without your consent*. End-State Theories *require* involuntary social contact, and, hence, all are criminal when acted upon. All are rooted in a false idea of metaphysics: that, with the *right* ought, I can contravene exclusive self-control. This is false, and thus they are invalid that way, too.

Now, doubtless, most of the people who uphold End-State Theories are not pursuing evil as their intention. But evil is all they can achieve, because their goal is predicated in Madness. Our friend Ayn Rand's ideal end-result, free cognition, is not an *unworthy* goal. The problem is that coercion is *completely* the wrong way to go about achieving that end - as a sort of poetic obviousness, I suppose. What *all* End-State Theories *seek* is the very thing their methods of implementation *prohibit*...

What an End-State Theory *actually* seeks is for people to exhibit the *consequence* of the theorist's reasoning - without the *cause*, reasoning. The theorist wants to induce a state whereby people demonstrate by their actions that they *understand* and *agree with* his chosen ought. How does he do this? By forbidding them the knowledge and practice of any alternative. He seeks to cause other people to make evident their "goodness", by his standards, by forbidding them choice. His first error is acting as if a person can "know" something is the truth or the good *without having discovered it*. His second mistake is assuming that, where someone is prevented from doing his idea of evil, he is therefore *choosing* to do the good...

Both of these are obviously false to fact. The End-State Theorist *cannot* achieve his ends by the means he chooses. His actions are attempts to violate The Law Of Identity, to declare at pout-point that the universe *must* be what he *wants* it to be. It does not matter that the Sleepwalkers go along with him, even *cheer* him. He cannot achieve his end, and the more he tries, the more frustrated he will become. He wants to change *minds*, but he rejects free persuasion, the *only* means that can achieve *that* end. All he ends up changing are *bodies*. He changes them from alive to dead...

Okay, but suppose someone tells us that *his* vision of the state is not predicated in an End-State. Suppose he says that he bases *all* of his reasoning on the way things were *before* anyone asserted an ought. This is the State Of Nature Theory, and it, too, is invalid.

First a simple one: *what* is being discussed in a State Of Nature Theory? People, not? *Who* is it who asserts oughts? People, again. So if we are talking about the way things were *before* there were oughts, we are talking about the time before there were people. Now a theory about how people ought to interact before they exist is certainly a novelty, but it is hardly a proof (grin).

"But that's not what I mean!," the State Of Nature Theorist will exclaim, and he'll be telling the truth. He means that he is talking about a set of oughts that *pre-existed* humanity. This is a non-sequitur, but we'll let him cling to it for the moment. Obviously ideas do not pre-exist entities capable of abstracting them, but we're letting it slide. The question we ask in our intense credulity is: *where* are these oughts coming from?

Most of the State Of Nature Theorists say they come from god. A few are honest and admit that they are simply making them up. But it doesn't really matter whether a State Of Nature Theory is "god's will" or just an "arbitrary postulate", since either way it's void of meaning.

Do you see why? A State Of Nature Theory is simply an End-State Theory that claims

to pre-exist all the others. Do you doubt this? Take a look: in a State Of Nature, a man has the "right" to make contracts with others to which *he alone* explicitly consents. This is the theory of the Social Compact. If I decide that you and I have a Social Contract by which you agree not to act to my injury, that contract is binding upon you *without your consent*. Using my special powers to make "agreements" of which you have no knowledge, I can compel you to do what I want, and *you* have no say in the matter at all. This is simply a reification of Crime...

In a State Of Nature, I have a "right to punish". I have the natural right to defend my person and property to the extent I am able. But I *also* have the "right" to *penalize* criminals, to injure them *beyond* the injury they did to me. Not only that, I have the "right to punish" someone who *has not* injured me. If he has injured you, and you decide not to exercise *your* "right to punish", I can arbitrarily *declare myself* to be injured, and punish him in your place. The reasoning is the one behind "Cosmic Justice": criminals should *not* be able to "get away" with evil. So they should not, but that does not give anyone the power to violate causality. The State Of Nature Theorists are not happy with the way things must work out, operating from a correct understanding of being, so they systematize what is in fact an End-State ought in their vision of the state of things *before* there were man-made oughts.

And in a State Of Nature, I have the "right" to restrain your actions prior to injury or the immediate threat of injury. If I conceive that something you do could *potentially* injure me, I can stop you from doing it, even though it *hasn't* injured me. That is, I can hold you accountable for crime prior to any crime. I can act in "self-defense" prior to being offended...

Do you see what is being done? The State Of Nature Theorist implicitly acknowledges that the state cannot have any powers the individual does not. He sees that the government is no more than people, and it cannot have any powers or properties that do not originate with those people. But he *wants* the state to have magical mystical powers. He *wants* an End-State. So he *creates* all sorts of powers that the individual allegedly has "in nature", then uses those to justify the actions of the state.

Now this would be bad enough, but the State Of Nature Theorist does us one better. *Once* a Social Compact has been established by no one's choice, the individual *loses* all those imaginary powers... The state *retains* them, somehow, but the individual loses his special "rights" to commit crimes. The state "assumes" these powers, and so the individual loses the capacity to exercise them. This is creative Solipsism in its clearest form: we create these imaginary manifestations of being, transfer them to the state, then they somehow disappear from *our* being, yet still somehow remain in the state. *If* we

have these powers, the we *always* have them. And *if* the state has them, then it necessarily has them *from* people, since people are all that make up the state. If people *do not* have these powers, at a point in time, then the state *cannot* have them. It's a very clever dodge, but it doesn't wash...

Now all of this is Madness. I would say "obviously", but it seems to be "obvious" to very few people. *Given* Madness, it's easy to understand why that should be so. But I am then perhaps arguing from definitions, rather than from facts. You'll have to decide that for yourself. In the meantime, let's look at what I think is the *essential* Madness behind statism, the root from which every lovingly detailed End-State Theory is just a branch...

The *root* of statism is the belief that exclusive self-control can somehow be transcended, overcome, obviated. When the government passes laws, it is attempting to obliterate consciousness. When it compels people against their will, it is trying to negate self-motivation. When it rewards idleness and taxes zeal, it is making war on self-esteem and self-preservation. There is no one who upholds the idea of a state who will *say* that this is his goal. But this is what it is, no matter what he says. What the statist seeks is to *create* a "Cosmic Justice" system - *by volition*...

It *does not matter* what *form* that "Cosmic Justice" takes. It can be Peoples' Socialism or Stockholders' Socialism or just plain old ordinary Gangsters' Socialism. What *every* form of statism seeks is a consequence without a cause, a "value" that did not have to be earned, a "justice" that did not have to be achieved *by choice*. Madness to the very core...

What Peoples' Socialism seeks is the *consequence* of creation, without the *motive*. Its champions wish to invoke their mystic secrets and metaphysical powers to remake man as an automatic production/consumption engine. A thing that creates values without having to *conceive* of them and without any end of his own in view. They want a man who will produce values without seeking to profit by his efforts, and who will consume only what he is "supposed" to.

"Stockholders' Socialism" is perhaps a bit unfair. Recently, business has been as frenzied as any other hog at the welfare trough, but that has not always been the case. And that is not what business seeks *first* from government. What they want even more than subsidies, loans, monopolies and juicy contracts is "automatic" crime prevention. Understand me, I'm very much an advocate of *laissez faire*. What I object to are alleged businessmen who "survive" by demanding a free ride from taxpayers. A beggar is not a

producer, no matter how much he paid for his suit...

But that's beside the point. What those people who talk about "Law And Order" want is "Law And Order" *absent* their causes. They really do want that bolt of lightning to come crashing down. Since it doesn't, they set about to invent a substitute. They "create" properties for mankind that he *does not* have in being, then proceed to act as if their volition were metaphysically causative. They concoct "rights" to punish and to restrain, then insist that they have somehow "prevented" crime. They assert that they have a "right" not to be injured, then do everything they can to avoid discovering that their assertions are binding on *no one*...

Now ordinary Gangsters' Socialism seems almost *sane* by comparison. This is the form of "government" that has dominated the globe throughout history. This "state" is the Mafia of superior force in a given area, nothing at all more. All government is organized crime, but the forms of it that originated after the Enlightenment are, for the most part, crime organized in the pursuit of an ideal. Gangsters' Socialism does not delude itself. It acknowledges that Crime is Crime, no matter what its intent, and acts upon it for what it is.

We can observe the avarice and hedonism of the Gangsters and say, "This must be their goal." But I say that would be incorrect. Gangsters *do* try to steal much more wealth than they can use, and they *do* indulge themselves in tasteless excess. But this is just a shield, a defense erected by the Gangster to protect him from his own self-awareness. He can look upon his crimes and say, "Yes, I have done evil, but I was tempted by the money." But this is not his *real* motive. If it were, he'd retire and escape the enormous risk as soon as he had enough wealth to support his disgusting habits. No, his motive is Madness, an attempt to defy *his own* belief in his inadequacy. He is "smarter" than the people who *create* wealth, because he has it without having to create it. He is more "powerful" than other people, because he can dominate them by force of numbers and force of arms. He is so "powerful" that he has acquired the capacity to escape what he *knows* is his unchangeable nature. It is not the power and the wealth that he cannot give up, but this Madness. To acknowledge it for what it is is to *admit* that he has wasted his entire life and destroyed countless others...

One could argue that these are in a sense "Cosmic *Injustice*" systems, since what they seek, for the most part, is not to punish unjustly the people regarded as "wicked", but to reward unjustly those regarded as "good". The Sleepwalkers see around them a universe in constant motion and they demand that it *stand still*. What they seek to "outlaw" is causality, the causality they *know* will not permit them to sustain their Madnesses indefinitely. Since they have *no* power over metaphysical causation, they

seek to erect their "Cosmic Injustices" by means of volition, while telling themselves that it is not choice but being they are acting upon.

Does man produce only for his own benefit? Then we will *make* him produce for our benefit by pointing a gun at his head. By our choice to wield a gun, have we changed nature? Have *we* motivated our victim, or is he still, always, and *only* motivating himself?

Is Crime always possible, and is it only held checked by self-restraint? Then we will promulgate millions of words of incomprehensible verbiage and *make* them restrain themselves. Is man any different after we spew out our waste paper than he was before?

Is man a sovereign soul, whole unto himself and independent. Then we'll *make* him *need* us, by crushing him to the poverty level then monopolizing every value he needs to survive...

Is man really changed by any of that? No? Then what's the point...?

Madness...

(And I so admire elegance in integration that everything I say should be held suspect... (grin))

A Madness that claims to seek "peace" and "security", yet produces only crime and suffering...

For government does not "prevent" crime, yet it *does* stand in the way of the only effective response to it. By monopolizing "self-defense", the state not only forbids *effective* crime prevention, it steals the money for which sound defense could be paid. Worse, it uses that "defensive" power *against* the "defended", to sustain itself. And still worse, it puts *everyone's* defense egg in the same basket, which is how we may all come to glow together... You, Too, Could Be A Star (grin)...

At the same time, the state *does* prevent the exercise of cognition. By forbidding free contracts of dispute resolution, the government denies to people wiser than those who make it up the benefit of their reason. Every theory of statism presupposes the metaphysical "ability" to supplant or preempt consciousness. We are "permitted", in most places, to *think* of alternatives to the state. But we are forbidden to *act* upon them. The state is "right" by virtue of being a state, and no one is permitted to contest this in any meaningful way. This is not without consequences, as we shall see...

Just Madness, no more. As perverse and twisted as that that afflicts the mind of any Sleepwalker. But no more so, really. The difference is, few ordinary Sleepwalkers control armies, bombers and nuclear weapons. Most ordinary Sleepwalkers are satisfied with destroying only *themselves*...

We have looked at a number of the obviously tragic consequences of government, but there are others of which we can take account that are not so obvious. You can call it "beating a dead horse" if you want, a Madness. So be it. I want to make sure that horse *stays* dead...

All of these non-obvious effects are the result of what I call Information Hiding. We can easily see that government *commits* crimes: it taxes, regulates, conscripts, murders - all in a day's work. And there is no barrier to our noticing that the state is *lousy* at keeping Crime from occurring and recovering losses. What is not so easy to notice is the way the government, by its crimes, *contributes* to non-governmental crimes...

This is no absolution. The man who wields a gun *deserves* to be shot. If he is misled by the state into thinking that this is an intelligent solution to the problem of survival, it is still only *he* who is in charge of his brain. It is still only *he* who motivates himself to *pick up* that gun. No matter what "egged him on" and how, it is still only *he* who is acting. If he commits a crime, he is at fault.

But it is worthwhile to look to the actions of government, to see if they do induce people to commit crimes. I say they do, and, moreover, that the actions of government tend to dilute the value of self-preservation and self-love. Beating a dead horse though it may be, I say that the idea of government is at war with human life as such, *in retaliation for being what it is*. The "secret weapon" in that war is Information Hiding...

And again and again I protest that I *do not* think they are evil. I don't believe anyone *intended* any of this. The Gangsters and their brothers under the sheepskin *do* intend to commit crimes. But they don't intend to create a self-accelerating self-destruction engine. That happens as an unintended consequence. There is no "conspiracy" to send the world to hell in a handbasket. It's just rolling that way from the causal forces acting upon it, which no one is trying to stop...

Government is Madness. Like any Madness, it achieves the opposite of its intended consequence. And like any Madness, it can only be checked by the recognition that it *is* a Madness. That it cannot work and that it is wasteful of the precious time of a finite life to continue to try to *make* it work... This they are not yet ready to do - and don't

hold your breath...

Okay: so what is Information Hiding? It is action that distorts or disguises the information content of causal events. It is not just government that does this. When the adult buys that child a second ice cream cone, he is "hiding" the lesson the child *could have* learned from his error, that it is wise to be careful with values one prizes. But government, by virtue of its being a "Cosmic Injustice" engine, hides information *epidemically*...

Here's an easy example: currency inflation. There have been few governments in history that have resisted the urge to despoil the trading medium. They pump out paper money as though it were toilet paper, and soon enough toilet paper is worth more in trade. By this action, the state "hides" the value of personal savings. In a paper economy, cash is constantly losing value against goods. If you exchange it for goods as soon as you get it, you realize more than you would at any later time. If instead you bank your cash, it diminishes in value through time. If you leave it there for long, it will lose *all* of its trade value. You will still have the same *quantity* of cash, or even more, allowing for interest. But the quantity of goods you can *buy* with that money will have shrunk drastically...

Similarly, government bankruptcy laws hide the value of fiscal restraint. If you can kiss-off on your debts at any time, you have no good reason to take them seriously. Now, thank goodness, there are some fairly effective *market* restraints on credit fraud, notably the credit rating system. But the government, by arbitrarily and *criminally* "forgiving" debts owed to others, encourages those people who *already* suffer from an irrational view of the future consequences of present actions to *further* shrink their range of vision.

Now a question you might ask at this point is: how would an Anarchy deal with personal bankruptcy? I can't dictate what choices people should make, but I can envision a system that would be Just to all parties: indenture. A person who is strapped with debts he cannot cover could sell his future labor to a bankruptcy contractor. This person would pay the debts, then provide bed and board for the debtor and keep the full value of his labor, until the debt is repaid. It's hard to imagine that bankruptcy would be even as small a problem as it is now, since there would be no arbitrary restraints on credit reporting.

The bankruptcy laws are forms of liability limitation, of which every variation is an Information Hiding crime. Another type is the limited liability corporation. When a proprietorship or partnership causes an injury, the owners are liable for the *full*

damages, to the extent of their assets. But when an *incorporated* business commits a crime, it is liable only to the extent of the assets *of the business*. The other assets of its owners remain untouched. This is simply an arbitrary fiat of law, but it is not without consequences. First, it tends to reward incorporation and to penalize other ways of organizing businesses. It may be, as some of the Conservatives say, that free trade is *necessarily* large-scale industrialism. But their argument is skewed by this and other types of laws that tend to reward large organizations at the expense of smaller ones. Second, it *dramatically* hides the consequences of Crime from the owners of corporations. A proprietor can lose not just his business, but also his *house*. Consequently, he is *much* more apt to be careful than the owners of a corporation, whose houses are artificially protected by the law. In an Anarchy, I would expect that the principle of full restitution would hold, the restoration of the previous condition as much as is causally possible. People would be liable for the full consequences of their crimes, *irrespective* of their assets.

Another form of liability limitation is the way the state responds to unintentional injuries. If you cause a traffic accident that results in a death, you will have to pay the full damage to both cars through your insurance premiums. You may be fined, and you may have your driver's license revoked. But you *will not* be held liable for the death you have caused. You will not be liable to the people who have standing contracts with the deceased and you will not be obliged to compensate those contractors for their losses. If you wonder why there are so many people who *do* drive, but *shouldn't*, here is your answer. They are not held accountable for their errors, and hence they have no utilitarian reason to seek the truth.

Welfarism is Information Hiding of a similar sort. So, incidentally, is the *voluntary* support of mendicants. By rewarding people for doing nothing, the state - or the "soft touch" - conceals from those people vital survival information. It hides the bodily and spiritual consequences of idleness and discounts the future value of the pursuit of righteousness. The state does this for a reason - to buy votes. But the people who allow themselves to be "bought" in this way are immeasurably damaged by it. For hand-outs *also* distort awareness of the true value of *values*, having them and fidelity *to* them. A life that does not have to be *earned* is of no value - to *anyone*, including the person living it. If the needs of ourselves and our children are to be provided without our having to *produce* them, there is no reason at all to educate our children to be independent, self-sufficient individuals. If you wonder why ghettos are such filthy, crime-infested places, here is your answer. By imposing itself between people and the awareness that error causes pain, the state hides from those people the *disvalue* of error. Now this is bad enough by itself, but what happens when the Cosmic Nipple dries up, as it eventually must? Many, many people who never "bothered" to learn how to live

will starve to death...

"Free" "education" is a hand-out of which most Americans avail themselves - at their peril. Statist education is *always* propaganda, carefully contrived and ritualized lies about the greatness, beauty and virtue of organized crime. But there is information hiding as well as deceit in public education. For example: at its very best, it is lousy. Because it loudly advertises itself as being "free", while quietly stealing its funds, public education deeply discounts the utility of pursuing alternatives to itself. The United States has not yet forbidden alternatives to government education. But by means of this trickery, it "persuades" people to submit their children to twelve years of victimization, brutalization, and *damn* little education, instead of seeking a product of higher quality.

Because everything it does is arbitrary - because it *does not* act as a real person acts, using his own resources toward his own chosen ends - *everything* a state does distorts information. I could name examples endlessly. The Neo-Classical Economists have done some remarkable work on the information content of the market price and how it is skewed by taxes, regulations, subsidies and price supports. One need only think of those news films of dairymen dumping milk in the rivers to see what can happen. In the same way, the concept of "public" ownership is the source of the so-called "paradox" of "The Tragedy Of The Commons". As an example, consider that bison, which cannot be privately owned, are near extinction, where cattle, which *can* be owned, are more numerous than ever. The garb of patriotism in which the state wraps itself, the songs and stories and myths taught in the state's schools, disguise the *disvalue* of warfare. If you have ever talked to a young man *eager* for the chance to get himself killed in the defense of some Gangster, you know what I mean...

It goes on and on. The state's willingness to use "Cosmic Injustice" to mitigate politically favored crimes hides the disvalue of Crime. Taxes and other penalties on virtue discount the value of virtue. Forbidding effective self-defense and peaceful dispute resolution discounts the value of non-coercive social interaction. In general, the Information Hiding that is an unavoidable consequence of government obscures the value of *life*...

We can look at the history of civilization as the gradual realization, in the minds of individual people, that life is *precious*, that being alive is a value for which *very* few others ought to be traded. We can observe this process through the spread of literacy, hygiene, aesthetic appreciation, etc. Even through the spread of *constitutional* government, to give the devil his due. But government is never other than a Madness in the pursuit of the value of life. It is a less-threatening Madness than those that preceded

it. In a tribal system, few babies live long enough to be threatened by "the bomb" or the IRS. But it is still a Madness, and it is still a very dangerous peril to life.

First and always because of the force it wields - and here the tribes come out ahead; by their very inefficiency they lack the capacity to commit assembly-line murder. But second because its "Cosmic Injustices" discount the *future* value of being alive. Those skittish youngsters who want to get killed in order to prove they are "men" are the perfect example... We noted that people who own homes are more likely to consider the future consequences of their actions than those who rent. Would not the same sort of relationship hold with respect to *life* as a value? Wouldn't the person who treasures his life be less likely to commit acts with potentially injurious future consequences than the one who doesn't...?

Now think of The Man Who Wielded The Gun... I'm not exonerating him and blaming the state. Only he controls his actions, and only he is at fault for the crime. But who was it who taught him to hold his life in such low esteem...?

The last thing I want to deal with are the so-called "legitimate" functions of a state. I contend that government is *always* an invalid idea. But it is worth our while to look at what the state does that is actually or potentially valuable, and show how these ends would be served in an Anarchy. Served *better*, I say, but that's for you to decide.

I intend to talk about only four things, the police, the law courts, the legislation process and national defense. The preemption of these services by force is, of course, criminal. But unlike other government actions, the motive of these four is justice, rather than the injustice to which the state normally devotes itself. For once, we'll assume the best about government. We won't take notice of the injustice and corruption arbitrary force brings to every contact. Instead we'll act as though every employee of a monopoly justice system were the very model of virtue - sane, intelligent, competent and ever faithful to his ethics...

The policing function can be divided into three parts, prevention of crime, response to it, and detection after the fact. We can observe easily enough that prevention is virtually non-existent, where people choose not to exercise self-restraint. The best cops can hope to do is *delay* crime by their presence. They don't *deter* a person who is committed to a criminal action. In an Anarchy, the cost of prevention would be borne by each person *with his full knowledge*. Moreover, he is not compelled to fund the state's method *even though* it doesn't work. So it is reasonable to presume that he would pursue alternatives that work better, such as access-limiting structures and security

systems, alarms and automated evidence gathering systems, etc. If this seems far-fetched, ask yourself this: which protection of your car would you sooner give up, the police or the shunt-key and security systems...?

The state's *response* to Crime is completely criminal, in every regard. Arrest is coercion, subpoena and jury-duty are slavery, and the victim's just compensation is withheld from him. *In real time*, the state's reaction to Crime is insanely violent, to the point of injuring innocents. While *any* self-defensive response is *possible* in an Anarchy, I surmise that most people would avoid violence where any alternative can be pursued. There are two reasons for this: first, one can be very seriously injured in a violent confrontation, even unto death. And second, your violent response can cause injuries to uninvolved parties, for which you alone are liable. In general, we can say that *where* people value life, they will not go out of their way to put it at peril if any alternative means of achieving the same ends is available.

The detective's job probably won't be all that different in an Anarchy. He will be privately employed, and he will lack the "power" to "persuade" by crime and the threat of persecution. But the basic function of collecting and presenting evidence will probably work out the same.

The courts and the legislature would be merged in one in an Anarchy. The Law Of The Land would be the Common Law, the rules of evidence and procedure that evolve through free trade in judicial services. This is of course the *original* source of the Common Law, which still to this day serves as the backbone of criminal law in every monopoly state worth living in.

Because Common Law is the product of myriad individual commercial transactions, there is no way of predicting what form it will take. Any End-State claims that The Law must include this or that are void of meaning. One cannot say such things, given our understanding of humanity, without saying, "Humans *must* choose this whether they want to or not," which negates volition by invoking it.

In the same way, there is no assurance that the Common Law will be uniform over a region. It is the product of individual commercial transactions, and people in different places can and do evaluate things differently. We can expect a fair degree of uniformity to develop *through time*. But still, the world never stops moving. It is conceivable that *new* ideas in the law will emerge faster in some places than in others.

Now this is in itself interesting, because it shows how much better an Anarchy is than a state at responding to change. Our friends in Economics can offer a great many reasons why private enterprise is immeasurably better than government at reacting to changing

circumstances. There is no reason to suppose that this would be *less* so of the courts and the Common Law. We need only envision a peril *not previously known to be injurious* to see the value of this approach. Statist legislatures and courts would take years to respond to the threat, assuming they didn't try to hide it or call it a "free benefit". But a free market court system could react as soon as injury is *demonstrated*.

There are people who insist that The Law *must* be uniform over a geographic region. This is the magical mystical chosen-without-a-choice dodge again. It is an assertion of metaphysically foreordained volition, a contradiction. And it would be criminal *in practice*, a compulsion to a Social Contract. Advocates contend that it is too inconvenient for them to make mutually voluntary contracts, and so they abstract for themselves a "right" to make *involuntary* "contracts". Now it is certainly open to question whether or not it is "convenient" to have people waving guns around. But even stipulating that it is (which is a *very* long reach for me), this point of view is still void of meaning. It may be "inconvenient", but free, mutually voluntary agreement is the *only* way contracts can come into being. Everything else is Crime, and it is certainly invalid to seek "justice" by means of injustice...

You don't have to be an Anarchist long to hear the question, "What about national defense?!? You might have an answer for everything else, but how would you defend the nation?"

The way I answer this question causes apoplexy in most listeners: I say, "What nation...?"

It is the nation-state that creates the *need* for a "national defense". In an Anarchy, there is no nation. This is significant, because, consequently, there is no Quisling who can surrender the whole population of a region to an invader. Any potential invader would have to fight *house-to-house*, with *no one* having the power to surrender anyone but himself. It is likely that this exigency alone would make invasion by nation-states that continue to exist contra-utilitarian.

What is more, because there can be no just restraint of trade, there is nothing that prevents a person from owning whatever weapons he feels he needs to protect himself. That *includes* nuclear weapons. You see why this is so, do you not? You can call yourself injured if your neighbor uses a weapon on you, or threatens to. But you cannot say that you are injured by his *possession* of it. Anyway, if, as the statists tell us, publicly owned nuclear weapons deter invasion, then there is no reason to suppose that they would not do the same if privately owned.

There are a number of other factors we could consider in detail but won't. Briefly: the

best strategy against an invader is to cut off his head. If the officer class of the the invading army is assassinated, soon enough the only people who will volunteer to those posts will be the people who are *least* competent to manage them. Moreover, the fidelity of the troops to "the cause" is by no means assured. A free society would be a sore temptation to a young man from a slave state, so we can expect mass defections. And there is no reason we could not carry the invasion back to the aggressor, through violent retaliation and propaganda. This would have to be voluntarily funded, but there is no reason to suppose that funds would be lacking.

But suppose all that is not enough. I think it would be, especially the lack of a Quisling to surrender the whole population, then "manage" them afterward for the empire. But what if it is not? Well then, people could *voluntarily* form whatever defensive agencies they think are necessary. Supposing that an army really is needed to defeat an army, people could freely form one. The same is true for naval and air forces, and for organized nuclear deterrent forces.

But then we run up against "The Tragedy Of The Commons"... Or do we? It can be argued that the risk to one's own security resulting from *not* supporting a defense system is so slight that one would be a fool to volunteer to pay for it. I counter that the people who think of things in this way are themselves fools, but that lends me no proof.

Take it apart: assuming that you need some form of contractually organized defense against invaders, then you need it *whether or not* anyone else does. If you have that much at risk, then you would indeed be a fool *not* to pay for the defense of your values. Other people might get a "free ride" at your expense. But it is an expense you must make *irrespective* of what other people do. It is conceivable that *individuals* might decide to take the risk, but what about businesses? The more a business or institution stands to lose, the more likely it will be to support organized defense, *even if* individuals opt not to volunteer their support.

From all this we can see that the issue of "national defense" is a canard. There is no reason for supposing that a state would be better at resisting invasion than an Anarchy. A state invites attack, by being easy pickings, where an Anarchy does not. A state can only respond in one way, where an Anarchy can respond in any way conceived of by the people who make it up. A state can surrender unilaterally, where an Anarchy cannot. A state has a pre-existing machinery of dominance for the invader to co-opt, where an Anarchy doesn't. And a state is composed of people who are *used to* being pushed around by thugs with guns, where an Anarchy is not...

So we can see that Anarchy is not only practical and practicable, but also *better* at

doing those functions of a state that can lay any claim at all to value. Not only is Anarchy the most *Just* means of social interaction, it is also the most *useful*...

9. *Redemption*

Things Have Changed...

Yes, and we never really know until we find out, do we...?

This has worked for me. When I began, soon after the shooting, I was like a patient in the intensive care ward. Though I felt nothing physically, still I felt as though my being had been gored, as if all my bodily organs had been scooped out and I was managing to survive only by an adamant *refusal* to die...

It was you, Darling One, always and only you. I knew what I had to do and why I had to do it, why I can have none of the things I want in life without this. But I hadn't planned on you...

I knew reluctance before..., before this. Not just the reluctance to "die", but much more importantly the reluctance to leave you - to take a chance on *losing* you. I have known the price of passing this up for nine *years*, yet I knew the nearly unendurable yearning to pay it, to let my goals go and hold you to me endlessly.

I could not do it, because I know the future too well. I know what is coming for the people of the earth, my children among them if I remain here. And I know what would come of *us*, if I renounced my values. I did what I set about to do, but not without trepidations. And not without agony afterward...

I did not know how *much* I would miss you. I knew I would, but I didn't know it would feel as though my flesh had been torn from me. For a time after the shooting, all I could do was *ache*, drift in and out of sleep with my mind looping endlessly on you, on the Helena I learned to love best only after I had lost her...

During that time I had a dream that I was walking in New York. I was making evangelist jokes in the quiet of my mind, something I often do for amusement. But then one of the jokes turned on me, and I found myself saying, "Preacher, *convert* thyself. Egovangelist, *motivate* thyself..."

That was the beginning of this, my third and final try. I recovered the values that have always been the root of Being Janio and embraced them to me in the way I could at the time. I had to force myself at first. The hurt was just too deep and the threat too menacing. But the alternative, the death of my spirit's longing, held no appeal at all. And I needed *something* to take my mind off my loss...

So I did this and found Splendor in it, more than I expected to know... I have tried to make my thoughts and values as lovingly real as I could, to tell what I try to show in my every action. I have done well by myself, I think, and I *know* this has been therapeutic for me.

I Love You, still, always, with an unbearable passion. I still long for you and *yearn* for your tender caress. But I can bear it now. I can stand to think of you without knowing pain, without torturing myself with the thought that, by my free choices, I may have lost you forever. I can stand up to that now, where I couldn't when I began...

If I *have* lost you, that is very bad. But it is not the worst that could happen to me - or to you. Janio Still Is, and while he is, there is no real barrier before his goals. If I must live without you, then I will - In Divine And Exquisite Splendor. Those treasures were mine long before you were, and it was them I could not renounce when I had the choice of staying or going...

I may not be the *last* Man In Your Life, but I will always be the *first*. And I will always be the *only* man to send you a sixty-thousand word Love Letter... About *philosophy*...!

So let the future come as it does. I am healed, and there is work besides this to be done. I have had my Gesthemane and my Calvary. Now I shall have my Redemption...

Redemption...

It means a lot to me. I have known it twice in my life, and now I find it again for a third time. The Future Is The Only Thing Open To Change... The past may have held hurts, but it is *gone*. The future can be better, *but only if I make it better*...

Egouvangelist, *motivate* thyself. And, yes, Redeemer, *redeem* thyself...

For I *Am* The Life Divine, and I *Am* The Light. I am all that I have, and all that I can be is what I have worked to become. I am the man who worships himself as a god, and to do that, I must be worthy of my self-love. I must *earn* it in the only way I can, by producing the values my self-love requires, by *never* acting in *knowing* error and by correcting - and *learning from* - errors I discover after I have made them.

I am an *Egoist*. I uphold Self-Interest. Not the sliced-up micro-utilities of the academic disciplines, but *the interests of the self*, the *whole* self, throughout life. I contend that, even though I have no real-time experience of it, there really *was* a yesterday, and there really *will* be a tomorrow. And a day after that. When I could talk, I would prowl that

stage and *demand* that people acknowledge that their past has shaped their present, and that their present will shape their future. That the most self-loving thing to do is *admit* that this is true, and to act upon that self-awareness always.

Is my truth any less true for myself? Can I fail to redeem the errors of my past without erring in my present? Would not this Madness destroy my future, as every Madness does and must? And *most* importantly, could I betray my ego in the present and still adore it in the future...?

Redeem thyself... And Being Janio Built, I redeem myself with redemption. I baptize myself anew at the font of my own paradise, rejoicing in my power to rejoice... Indeed, I *am* the Egovangelist, because I Make Myself Real by making "Make Myself Real" real, a value that can be known only in solitude, yet still can be *shown*...

I do admire integrity, the deed that is the perfect complement to the thought. It cannot stand as any sort of proof for anyone but myself, but I am very glad I have done this, in the *way* that I have done it. Janio Built is "Janio Built" built, and that is a poetic beauty that transcends even wonder by being *true*... I am the god who writes his own apocrypha, then sets about to *prove* it...

Truly, I am the man who has torn the lid off Joy, and I am Joyous in my work.

Praise Janio! Yes, but also: Praise Helena! Though I am talking about myself - I am never *not* talking about myself on *some* level - I am also talking to and about *you*... About every man-made aim and value, and about *destiny*, yours, mine...and *everyone's*...

In a way, I am just out here Ringing Them Bells. Pardon me, ma'am, but I have a whole bag full of Splendor here, and I'd sure like to sell you some... (grin)

But in a different way, I am doing every last thing I can to preserve and protect *my* values, *my* life, *my* destiny. I am a physician who can admit to needing a taste of his own medicine from time to time. But I am first and always a doctor who seeks to infect the world with *health*... For *my own* benefit...

And I *am* preaching to you, which *is* an insult. I acknowledge it for what it is, and I claim no absolution when I say it is necessary, if we are to go on from here. I am doing what I think I *must* do, to remain who I am and to retain what I have. If I am injuring you, I am sorry, but I *will* Press On Regardless. I am redeeming the Madnesses of our past together by at last standing naked before *you*, by finally letting you know Janio fully and whole. I am trying to *persuade* you with facts, but I can never stop trying to

enrapture you with loving words...

I am selling the Splendor of truth, true. But I am also selling the Splendor of Janio. *Because* I would reap the Splendor of Helena. I have a stake in this, too, and you would do yourself an injustice to forget it...

Because I am "selling" a value that cannot be sold: Redemption. And Janio Built Is A Plague, Maybe...

I would have people know what I know about the Joy life can hold, if one seeks it. But there is no way I can make it known that does not obscure the truth and value of what I have to say. I cannot make it known without making it evident, but doing that both defrauds and misleads. There is *no* All New Nine Point Program, nor could there ever be. There is no short-cut to rapture, not anywhere. There is no way for you to experience my being *first-hand*. And it would be the worst sort of Madness for you or anyone to adopt my ends *in place* of your own, to attempt to supplant your own ego with mine. You *could not* know my Splendor, but you could - and *would* if you persisted - lose the desire to pursue Splendor in your own life.

I can't help that, but I can acknowledge it for what it is. This I must do for my own Redemption, and to redeem all that has gone before. If I seduce you *instead* of persuading you, then I have done myself an injustice. I have to accept that risk.

And then there is the possibility that I am *wrong*... Then I am The True Poison at its very deadliest, because I can give people words for things they have always yearned for, but didn't know how to pursue. If those yearnings are evil, then I am The Angel Of Death embodied...

Now, still and always, it is for you to decide. I think I am right, but I have thought so even when I have later proved to myself that I was wrong. In behalf of *my* self-love, I insist that *yours* demands that you prove the truth *to* yourself, *for* yourself, *by* yourself. I cannot stop you from doing otherwise, but I cannot *encourage* you to take me on faith *and* love myself...

"I've lost faith in you..." I know you remember those words. And I know you would take them back, if you could, given what happened minutes later...

One of the unavoidable tragedies of causality is that we can never know if the words we say to a person may be the *last* words we say to him. I have an advantage here, by

explicitly acknowledging that these *could* be the last words I will be able to say to you. I can craft them with that possibility in mind and shape them to the ends I seek.

But those words of yours are *not* the last you will say to me - at least I hope they are not... And *much* more importantly, from what you knew, you were *right*.

I would redeem our last moments together for *my own* benefit, but also for yours. Second, because they are the last we can have, at least for now. But *first*, because there is no profit at all in self-flagellation...

And now I am *really* intruding, because I am exposing the secret heart of your being. I have *watched* you punish yourself, and I have known it for what it was *while* it was happening. If Helena has a Madness, it is holding herself to a false standard of perfection, then mortifying her spirit when it fails of that standard.

It is wrong of me to say that, and yet it must be said. I *must* permit you to choose as you would, but if I could I would *forbid* you to *cheat yourself* of your happiness by declaring yourself unworthy of it. This is Janio's Madness, wanting perfect outcomes even absent the causes of perfection. A warning is always also a threat, and a person who changes his behavior in response to a threat *has not* been persuaded.

But what I would warn you against, despite everything, is the *injustice* of self-punishment. You are human. Your knowledge is incomplete. You can err. You can strive with the strictest integrity to avoid it, but *still* you can err. If you *do*, you can act upon your error for what it is, a mistake, or you can pretend it is "proof" of your unworthiness to your values. But if you do the last, soon you will lose your values...

Perfection is not the *incapacity* to error. You can - and *ought* to - pursue your idea of moral perfection in your every action. But never will you reach a point where you are from then on *incapable* of making a mistake. If you act upon your mistakes as though they are *metaphysical* stains, proof of your innate lack of value, then you are doing *your self* an injustice. You are acting in the destruction of the very thing you need to *correct* your error, your self-love.

Moral perfection *is* attainable, but it is not causeless, an invarying constant that does not have to be produced *by choice*. Perfection is the *pursuit* of perfect understanding and perfect action. That pursuit is not a guarantee of its achievement, nor is its achievement *at a point in time* a guarantee that one will *remain* perfect, without need of further effort. Perfection is *trying* to be perfect, now and always. Failing it is not proof of irredeemable evil, but only of the nature of volition as a cause.

And I *know* you do not regard yourself as evil. But in what regard are you holding yourself, when you "beat yourself up"? What opinion are you expressing about yourself *at that time*? What claim are you making *then* about perfection and about your worthiness to pursue it...?

I remember once telling you that I consider guilt immoral. You laughed at me, saying that you didn't want to have to feel guilty about feeling guilty. But the truth is, you do not have to feel guilty *at all*. You do so only as the product of your own choice. And you can - and I say *should* - choose a different response, when you discover that you have made a mistake. There is nothing in your nature that *prevents* you from "taking it out on yourself". But there is nothing in your nature that will erase the scars of the wounds you inflict upon your ego in the name of a false justice.

Certainly you should not pretend that your errors *do not exist*. But neither should you grant them any more meaning than they deserve. If you *do* make a mistake, you should do everything you can to correct it and to compensate for its consequences. And you should learn *exactly* where you went wrong, so you will know how to avoid that error in the future. But there is no other *self-loving* action you can take. You have found a flaw in your thinking, and you have corrected it and improved yourself by it. There is no other *positive* value you can pursue from it.

You can induce guilt in your mind. You can call yourself vile names and spit at your past actions. You can mortify your ego and your flesh in self-punishment. But you *cannot* call these positive, self-loving acts. You are not *improving* your spirit, but *damaging* it. You are not acting to assure that you will not err in the future, but you *are* erring in the present...

This is as much true for anyone else as it is for you. And it is *less* true *of* you than of anyone else I've met. It is rare for you to err, so it is rare that you respond to error in a way that I say is incorrect. But you do engage in self-flagellation, I've watched you do it. And though I am intruding by pointing it out, Still I Am Sound... Injustice is not without consequences, even when it is an injustice inflicted upon yourself...

Redemption Is A Being Aware...

Redemption is finding Splendor in Rectitude. But much more importantly, Redemption Is Egoism In Action...

Egoism is the worship *of* the self *by* the self, *all* the time, *for* all time. Egoism Is A

Being Aware of who he is and what he is doing and why - *all* the time. It is the pursuit always of values and never of disvalues, always of pleasure and never of pain, always of Truth and never of Madness. Egoism is the recognition that the fullest *value* of the self is realized through the fullest *knowledge* of the self.

Egoism is knowing and *doing* the good *through time*... It is a set of ideas, but ideas devoid of meaning if they are not put into practice. One can know Splendor by taking those actions one thinks are right. But one cannot know it by merely *thinking* about what is right, without acting upon it.

Redemption Is Egoism *In Action*, in the real deeds of your real life. By your self-loving actions, you redeem the errors of your past and make of them the *achievements* of your present and future.

It is not impossible to *avoid* doing this. Most people waste their whole *lives* trying to pretend that past errors need not be corrected. But neither is it possible to avoid the consequences of failing at redemption.

The future *is* open to change, but only by choice. Any person can take what he has and make of it what he would. *If* he is willing to make the effort. But he *will not* have his desires without fighting for them, without *mothering* them into being. The soul he creates for himself is the one he *acts* to create. If he fails to act for his values, he cannot know them whole in his spirit.

This is fact. The very highest values of life *cannot* be provided by other people. To know Splendor, the enduring joy that is the acknowledgement by the self of its own glory, power and *beauty*, one must know it *alone*. There is *no one* who can cause that emotion in a man's mind, *no one but himself*. Not even *he* can cause it if he has not *earned* it. But if he has, then he has gloried himself in a way no other person could cause - or prevent. To Know Splendor Whole is the highest man can reach, but he can only reach it *by himself*...

Alone, by his own effort, in pursuit of his own reward. And *never* otherwise...

Choice is the sword on which Sleepwalkers impale themselves... It is *hard* to choose, to change, to grow. It doesn't seem so to us, because we never forgot the habits all of us learn in childhood. "But Children Are Apt To Forget To Remember"... And for those who do, it is *agony* to choose, to decide, to create, to take a stand, to change in any way at all the life they have made for themselves.

They *know* they should change. They don't *ever* feel right about their acts of Madness.

And yet they know the effort growth requires, and the risk it entails, so they reject it as "unrealistic"... As compared to *what*? Some make feeble attempts at change, but they recoil from it after the first and hardest days. Think of all the fad dieters and two-day health fanatics you have known...

In the pursuit of Redemption, you pay now and soar later, and many people won't let themselves wait for that payment. They make the same mistakes again and again, and fail to correct them by the same invalid methods, again and again. Unless you take your phone off the hook, you will hear the same sad stories over and over, from the same people, with only the names and dates changed...

Madness, truly. Because It Need *Not* Be So...

Redemption *is* possible. But only *by choice*...

No one sets *out* to become a Sleepwalker. Because of what we are *none* of us is forevermore free from the threat of Madness. *Each* of us - present company *included* - can wander into the Sleepwalker's Dead-End. How? Simple: by making a mistake and not acknowledging it.

We are born ignorant, and everything we know we know by discovery. But discovery is a *process*. It takes place *through time*. At any particular point in time, we may have to decide about something when our knowledge is incomplete. We make our choice and follow through on it, but we have not *by that means* proved the truth of our action. We can seek the truth, but if we do not, we cannot truthfully claim to have found it.

When we are faced with that situation again, we can act as we did before. We can say, "Well, it can't have been *too* wrong. Nothing disastrous happened..." And in doing that, we compound our error. And *much* worse, we act to *habituate* it. We *did not* seek proof, and now we can try to claim that we *need not*...

But nature is just. It will not accept that claim in tender for the values our souls require. In that one situation, we have cheated ourselves of our full awareness, and acted to damage our *future* awareness. We have induced a Madness in our minds, a way of "knowing" without having *discovered* the truth...

Now if you would understand Sleepwalkers, you must multiply that one case times *dozens* of Madnesses, each delicately crafted to acknowledge ignorance by attempting to deny it. In preference to being *what they are*, they frantically scamper around trying to be *what they are not*. They know the true frenzy of exigent futility as they race around trying to brace their illusions, cover their deceits, portray their

misrepresentations and hide from their doubts...

Why, why, why, why? To make things easier? Better? Faster and cheaper in cost? Yes, at first. But not at the end...

Because the Madnesses that begin as time-savers and effort-savers become *life-wasters*, infinitely draining sinkholes into which Sleepwalkers pour their time in support of their errors. Whether or not they commit any crimes, they are doing injustice. Injustice to *themselves*...

For each of us has only *one* life. Every day we let pass without pursuing our *full* desires is a day lost *forever*. The past may be lovely or hideous, but it is *gone*... The future can be *wonderful*, but only if we make it so.

How can we do it? By *redeeming* our errors, by admitting we have made them and doing what we can to make them good. By recovering any values we have lost to Madness, as many as we can. And by learning *how* we first erred, to learn how *not* to make that same mistake again.

Redemption... It *is* possible. And it *is* necessary, if one chooses to know and love oneself *whole*. It is *avoidable*, but only at the price of the *fullest* value of human life, self-adoration...

People *ought* to redeem their errors, but few do. They *can*, and they can reap the fullest value of what remains of their time alive, no matter how much they have lost to pain. But most do not...

They fear failing their values, but they fear much worse *achieving* them. Choice is demanding, challenging but risk-filled. Inertia is pointless and wasteful, but it is "safe"...

For a while, if looked at from a certain point of view, and allowing a Macro-Utilitarian Calculus Of Dollars Per Mental Increment (grin).

No, truly, inertia is not ever useful, but it can seem so at first, compared to the immediately available alternative. And in the long run, it is *devastating*... Not just to men, but to cultures, to *worlds*...

Have you ever seen a man on his way down? From drink or gambling or idleness or just plain *boredom*... It's not a pretty thing, and it is not without consequences. For every organism, life is profit. The plants and insects and fishes and birds and beasts

must produce *more* energy than that production cost them, or they will die. This is so, too, of man. If he is not making a profit he is taking a loss. If he is not glorying his values he is degrading them. No matter how much he may resent it, life is motion. If he is not moving *forward*, then he is moving *backward*...

Nature does not force *any* oughts upon man. But neither will it let a man do as he ought not *and* escape the consequences. Thus are we made.

And thus are our cultures made...

We live in a world for which Madness has nearly *always* been the dominant means of "knowing". Twice have the errors of our forebears been fully redeemed, in ancient Greece and in The Age Of Reason. We have descended back to Madness from those pinnacles of human achievement...

And we are headed for a collapse...

No man can sustain a loss *indefinitely*, and neither can any culture. Our nation states and the mental attitudes they inculcate are *killing us*... Not quickly, and not obviously, but just as surely as a drunk will hit the skids, if he does not change his course...

A collapse, a deluge of death and flames and destruction. We have spit at every value our spirits *must have* to thrive, and we will be made to pay for that error. *All* of us, whether we ourselves have erred or not. Many, many millions will die, perhaps even *billions*. And *no one* will survive unaffected...

When? I don't know. It may not happen in your lifetime. Maybe not even in the lifetime of your children. But unless the people of the Earth change their course *dramatically*, collapse is sure to come, as it has come before...

What can be done? I am doing it. I cannot tell you everything even now, but you will come to know it all in time. What I can say now is that it was for *this* reason that I left you, to avoid that fate for myself and for you, if I can. And to avoid delivering my children to a mass grave...

I cannot redeem any life but my own. I can speak as well and as truly as I can, and I can make my ideals real in my every action. But I cannot *change* any mind but my own. Sleepwalkers *can* redeem their errors, but I cannot reasonably expect them to do so before it's too late...

So, as mystifying as it may sound now, I will tell you that I am working to change the

location of my mind...

In the months to come, you'll see more of what I mean. But for now, I would have you know that there *is* a way to redeem humanity, to spare at least those whom we treasure most from the coming flood of destruction. This you will have from me, if you want it, no matter what the future may bring.

But *much* more important, this *my children* will have... Do you remember my telling you once, when we were quarreling, that what should be most important to you is not what I do or leave undone, but that I will be such a wonderful father to your children? My responsibility to the children I would father is something I *never* take lightly.

And so I am proud to have redeemed even that, no matter what may happen. For no matter *whom* you finally marry, I have *already*, with this letter, been a better father to your children than any other man could be...

Let me tell you a story. It's a love story, and it would make good fiction. Good fiction and good art, because it's so unbearably *true*...

Once there were two very smart, very lovely, very *proud* people who met and fell in love. They were *giants*, the sort of people who *always* act upon self-love, and they knew each other whole in a glance.

It was not "love at first sight", whatever that is. But when they met by chance in a park in New York, it was as though there was for once a *motive* behind chance. They saw each other for what they were and *responded* to it for that same reason.

She was bound for another place, but they spent that whole day together, walking and talking like old friends. In a sense they *were* old friends, friends neither knew they had always had - and always *needed*...

Splendor shared is Communion, and they knew it that day, each for the first time. Though they did not even kiss, both found the passionate serenity of spirit that is what is sought but rarely found in love-making. For the first time in their lives, each was able to be fully *whole*, to hold *nothing* back, to know no fear that their treasures might be defaced from malice and Madness...

That was the seed, and what grew from it was *wondrous*. And *Wonderful*! They had to live apart, but they wrote to each other almost every day. Long loving letters about everything at first. But as time passed, those letters became even longer and concerned

themselves with everything about loving. The more they came to know each other, the more each knew the total *rapture* of love, love acknowledged *for what it is*.

They became expert at pleasuring each other with their minds. And when she came back to New York for a visit, they learned to pleasure each other with their bodies. They were giants, and sex for them was *divine*, an endless troving for pleasure and fulfillment. Led by minds *fully* committed to their own value, it was a nearly *unendurable* ecstasy, a Communion of the spirits of *gods*.

They were *so* in love. Dopey-faced, heart-melted, stomach-fluttered *madly* in love, yes. But also adoring from the deepest, most serious of understandings, the knowledge *each* had to have, to be what the other needed, *before* they could love. There is no greater beauty than the love of two people *very* serious about joy. They made of their passion everything it *could* be, everything it ought always to be but so rarely is.

They continued to write and to see each other when they could. In time they began to plan for the time they would spend together when she was free to join him. Both *yearned* to be together always, to know rapture always in each other's arms. They *longed* for the day their parting would be ended...

And then it came. And it was very good, but not quite as good as either had expected. She noticed things about him she had never seen before, and he about her. Tiny things, but, still, unforeseen annoyances. They were each used to being in solitude, and neither knew quite how to handle companionship as an on-going thing. And both felt just a little bit trapped by their past together, a feeling that they were getting not quite what they had bargained for.

But *still* it was good, an enormous palace of polished steel, tainted only by the smallest mote of rust. They were giants, and they fought against the problems they understood. But they didn't understand all of them...

And so that rust spread, day by day, undermining their love. Without intending to, she began to try to manipulate him with emotions, with frowns and pouts and snappish responses. He resented her attempts to control him and took it out on himself and on his work. Both had suffered a terrible loss, the lover each knew before they came together. But neither saw this for what it was...

And both tried to save what they still *had*... Where before sex had been the *expression* of their passion, it now became the *substance* of it. They could not love fully, not without addressing those small but very real problems. But they could still *make* love, and they did with a will. In bed they were *always* in love, always fulfilled and always

serene. They did not address their problems, they did not even *see* most of them. And sex became for them a way of *escaping* those problems, of keeping what they had not continued to *earn*...

Nature Is Just... We Can Be Hit By Anything We Set In Motion Amid The Stately March Of The Stars. Hit Hard... That rust spread still further. And where before there had been a glowing castle of white light now stood a crumbling structure of dingy red, which neither could bear to look at too closely or for too long. They were giants, and they knew the Justice that is reserved for those who fail of the *highest* values...

They saw their problems and looked away. When they saw their problems *growing*, they *still* looked away. And what began as a tiny spot of rust came to consume their love. When they finally woke up to what had happened to them, it was nearly too late...

But *still* they were giants, and when they could let themselves love, they loved exquisitely. In their happiest moments, they were two brilliant children frolicking in a Summer shower, seriously, joyously *alive* and ecstatic in *being* alive. When they could love, it was the love of the fullest, most enraptured Communion, the love of gods as *equals*...

They fought for what they had in the ways they could, the ways they understood. And they were learning new ways of fighting, identifying the mistakes that had fathered their problems into being. They held onto what they had and grasped for what they hoped to regain...

And then they were parted...

That was his fault alone. He had known he would have to leave, and part of his unhappiness was his unwillingness to acknowledge that he had crafted for himself a destiny he *did not* want to follow through on. He wanted *her*, he wanted what she gave to him, in bed and out, and he did not want to give those things up. And yet he had to. And he had to go forward in *agony*, hoping that the values his choices had forced him to forsake were not gone from his life forever...

They lived as giants, those two, as beings who strive for and *reach* the greatest glories of life. The loved as giants, with the total passion of total awareness and total commitment. And when that commitment was breached, they *suffered* as giants, with a pain that dominates all of being, that becomes the substance of pulse and breath and vision and feeling. And yet they were giants still. They fought against pain and *won*, recovering every value they could...

They loved exquisitely, but still they are apart. The question now is: how does the story end? For we both know that it is *not* fiction, that it is the stuff of our own two unique lives, the thing our past choices have made of our present. *Both* of us must decide now what future we will choose...

And *this* is what philosophy is *for*. The ideas we make with our minds are *tools* first, the tools with which we make our *lives*... They are not silly toys or priceless treasures to be locked up in some dusty book. No, they are the very *substance* of our lives, The Truth And The Glory And The Meaning And The Beauty And The *Light* of our being. We are no more and no less than we have caused ourselves to become, and where we find ourselves is where we *pointed* ourselves - or failed to. It is with our ideas that we point our spirits and bodies toward our values, and it is only by means of *acting upon* our ideas that we can *achieve* our aims...

I have made my choice, and I Make It Real here. Yours is still and always yours to make. In fiction, I could make the story end as I want it to, because I control all the "souls". But I control only *this* soul in our story, so the ending is not mine to make. This letter is the best argument I can make of my *value*, and the best apology I can make for my very real *errors*... But *still* it may not be enough. There is much to be gained, but there is still so very much to be overcome, corrected, made good...

Janio Is A Being Aware. I see it all for what it is and act upon it as I can - for *my own* redemption. No matter *what* you decide, I would make of our past everything it *was* in its essence and everything it *should have been* always. I Would Have You, Helena, again and endlessly. But I will have you only *one* way, because There *Is Only One* Right Way...

I see it now and at last, and I wish I had seen it before this happened. But I did not, and the past is *gone*. The future is mine to make of it what I can, and I am *Thriving*... Janio Built Is Exquisite In His Splendor, *No Matter What*...

I do not and *cannot* "put my life in your hands". My life can only be mine to control, and I am doing it. But I *am* putting any future happiness we may find together in your control. I did not allow you *any* choice when we parted, and so I can have none in deciding if we are to be rejoined. My choice is made - it was made before I left. But it is meaningless, because we *both* must choose to seek the redemption of our love for it to be redeemed...

And what a beautiful torture *that* is!

This is what we are, every last one of us, but you and I especially. This is what nature

has made of us, the thing that makes of *himself* what he would be, the creator of his own creation, of his own private, untouchable universe... We are each of us on our own. We can reach for our treasures and grasp them to us if we are strong. But we cannot *guarantee* we will grasp them, and we cannot ever be free from the threat of *losing* them...

But Glory Is Recognizing That The Possibility Of Joy Requires The Possibility Of Pain - And Embracing Joy Anyway. And Splendor Is *Earning* That Joy In The Only Way It Can Be Earned...

By Choice...

And, boom! *There* is The Revenge Of The Neglected Ideas (grin). We can see it and even laugh at it, because we *value* our ideas, including our ideas about ourselves. But if you wonder why most people reap *Nothing* from life, your answer is here. If a person spurns the very tools he *must have* to survive a crisis, he will not survive that crisis, not whole...

And, yes, I have insulted you and intruded upon your person where I no longer have any right to. I have threatened you with ceaseless warnings and snuck up behind you again and again to beat on your brain. This is very *much* a letter from Janio, and I am not making *anything* easy for you. I am doing my best to make it as hard as possible, for the sake of *my own* rectitude...

And yet, *still* I would offer you what help I can. It's another insult and another intrusion, but is nevertheless the truth of my being. I am Making Myself Real for you at last, and I would make myself *fully* real...

So I will say this: please, My Beloved, act for *your own* Redemption...

Pursue always the values that moved you *before* you knew me. If you find me *in* them, that's wonderful. But if you find me and lose them, then I will have injured you in a way that can never be restored. Please, Darling, be what you *are* and choose for your greatest happiness. I would not mind it if you found *more* joy with another than you knew with me. But I would *hate* it if any part of what we have been through led you to seek something *less* than total Splendor, with another, but especially with *me*...

I Would Have You, Helena. But I Will Only Have You *Whole*. Because that's the only way I can have *you*, the Helena for whom I shall *always* yearn...

Janio Is A Being Aware...

By this letter I seek to redeem my life and my values. But more, I seek to redeem our love, to make of it what it might have become, had this not intruded...

I stand naked before you, vulnerable to any injury you might inflict, and say, *this* is what I am. *This* is what I stand for, and this is what I *do*. I am *not* sorry you "lost faith" in me, because I don't *want* your faith. I want your *acknowledgement*, your response to my value *as* a value worthy of your pursuit.

Truly, I want you to *leap* into my arms, when again I have them. But I want you to do it from your own free conscious choice, not because I have dominated or frightened or mesmerized you into "loving" me. I *want* your love, My Dearest Darling Reader-In-Mind, but I cannot *cause* it...

The *only* life over which I have causal control is my own. In the past, now, and ever, I strive always to make myself *worthy* of your love - by making myself worthy of *my own* love...

You were my Hilde first, and with this letter and all that is to come, I shall prove that I am still your Master Builder. But now you are The Lady From The Sea - and I can't hide it: I'm the sailor. Destiny is the mystery our choices inflict upon us, and I can't help you uncover yours. You will have to decide if what I have told you is "a firm foundation", or if all I have done is cook up another pie in the sky...

For myself, I shall *Thrive*. I have *paid* for my values, paid more than I intended. But I have *earned* them, and I shall know Splendor in watching them come to full flower. I may have lost you irredeemably. If I have, I have acted to my own injury. But I have not lost the things that *earned* me your love in the first place. And I have not lost the desire to cherish my values. Janio Is, and *while* he is, his redemption is still possible...

"Tell My Wife I Love Her *Very* Much." "*She Knows!*"

No matter what happens, Helena, know that I shall always love you. I Would Have You, and I would father your glorious children. But if I cannot, I will still know joy in the thought that you exist and that you graced my life with so much pleasure. I would have you beside me always, but if you are not, I will always have my memories of our time together, the memories I treasure in such loving detail.

I am not a man to remain celibate and childless, but I cannot conceive that there is any woman who could *replace* you in my life. You will always be unique in my experience,

Darling One, by being so marvelously unexpected - and so unexpectedly marvelous... You are the thing for which I could not have planned, but you could not have been more perfect for me even if I had. I had never *needed* another person before you, and I shall always owe you for teaching me the *value* of needing you.

I *Adore* You, Helena, And I Always Will. I may never again have the chance to express my love for you, but I shall always know it whole in my spirit. And I shall Make It Real in every action of mine that is perfect and just and true and *beautiful*. I was a glorious soul *before* I knew you, but I am *more* glorious *because* I have known you. Now and ever, I Am Yours...

We had the beginning of a very beautiful love story. How it ends remains at question, but *this* is how I am fighting for it. *This* is the trophy I have made of my life, and this is what I lay at your feet. I hope you can fight for our love the way I have. But even if you cannot, Praise Helena for being a woman so very *worthy* of this kind of devotion...

In the name of every value I seek, every pleasure I have experienced, every moment of endless *rapture* I have known through you, I remain

Yours, loving, ever,

Janio Valenta

2/19/88

PS: Sally tells me I might get a data-only hook-up to the network as early as next week. If I do, I may send this down then. Prognosis on some kind of Sally-like voicebox and a real phone is: "Very Soon". That's an upgrade from "It Won't Be Long Now", so I can't complain. Anyway, Very Soon I'll have a real phone. Call me when you feel like laughing...