

It's 16Dec86, Day #46 for Contragate, whose concealment is stretching out toward Watergate length. Reagan-Regan, Inc. claim that the media are to blame for the US foreign-policy mess. As a White House defender put it, "They (the media) never give up looking for the story behind the story in the interest of making news, rather than reporting news." How happy the powers if "news" were only the handouts to the press! But how unhappy the country!

1. I suggest, here, the geophysical analogy: Level #1 news is surface, what anybody can see on the scene or on the tube. It's like the thin biosphere in which "all (living) creatures great and small (on the earth)" live; it's the primary livingquarters of journalism. Level #2 is like the earth's 2.0-mile crust; it takes some digging to get at facts buried either inadvertently or deliberately. Level #3 is like the earth's 2,000-mile mantle; this deeper penetration requires psychosocial tools, psychosociodynamic savvy. Level #4 is like the earth's 2,000-mile core; it's the residence of gods & goddesses (Tillich's "the Ground of Being"), angels & demons, the "core" (molten/living) of meaning & value; it's where the world-story, whatever one's paradigm is, begins-continues-ends.

2. In personal & public life, we don't "get to the heart (core) of things" except under the pressures of adversity. Some adversity is objective, external: earthquake victims did nothing to cause it (except if you want to live with Thornton Wilder's THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY fallen-bridge question). Some is a more or less direct reflex from defective decisions-actions (impersonally put: personally put, divine punishment as either guidance by pain or the reestablishing of cosmic-social order). And some signals the breakdown of a particular situation-definition and the policy of which the definition is the base....Said Emerson, "Bad times are occasions a good learner would not want to miss." And Byron: "Adversity is the first path to truth." Livy: "When adversity hits us, we remember religion." Wm. Penn: "No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown." Seneca: "As gold by fire, so the brave are tried by adversity." And of course Shakespeare's "Sweet are the uses of adversity...."

3. Europe is reassured & comforted when we Americans get all torn up over revelations of dissonance between truth & "story." The idealistic, hardheaded young men who designed our democracy believed (1) that craft would be necessary vis-a-vis enemies (ie "craft" as craftiness, subterfuge & deception) and (2) that "we the people" must practice truth in all our private and internal (as opposed to foreign) affairs: the government, if democracy were to work, could practice no deceit on the people. But how, in a democracy, do you keep structures of deception & subversion (such as the CIA, 1947-) from leaking from foreign to domestic operations? How easy, once you legitimize deceit abroad, to do so at home under the banner of "national security" (Contragate, 1985-). Doubletalk, dirty tricks, coverups (denials), defensive apologies (justifications), truth as optional-decisional. Separating government from truth is an unAmerican activity, separating the people from the government in disgust & distrust. A government of men & not of laws displays contempt for "the decent opinions of mankind" and weakens America's moral witness in the world, & thus our suasive powers. "Oh what a tangled web we weave / When first we practice to deceive." But how, in this tangled world, can a nation like ours be both honest to (our) story & effective in geopolitics? OVER

3. Integrity is the honest living of one's world-story, how one "sees" the world. A political prisoner who in 1961 went blind said "I have lost my sight but not my vision." The wise of this world are the reverse: Come to power, their sight becomes more acute but their vision fades, and they delude themselves into believing they can get away with doublespeak (v. Geo. Shultz's statement, 21NW22 Dec86: "Anyone who thinks (something he's done) can be kept secret, should have his head examined.").

4. Because we live polystoriedly, in a pluralistic culture lacking any overarching story adequate to unify it, we are all sectarians, living, amid clashing world-stories, each our own story either with or without integrity--or, anarchically, with no world-story; living, parallel with the homeless of our cities' streets, without an invisible home (as so many characters in Flannery O'Connors stories). In contrast, Chaucer's chaos was contained within a single & intact world-story, the Christian mythos; and in between lies Shakespeare's mix of Christian and Renaissance-revived-ancient-pagan world-stories (supremely visible in "King Lear"--on which, a brilliant piece, 3f, Nov/86 BOOKS & RELIGION).

5. Our new-come omnisectarianism may be either reductive or augmentative. We may dismember the West's worldstory, the Christian mythos; or, taking it as the central tradition of the West, add to it what was inadvertently & what was deliberately of the West's wider heritage in Judaism & Hellenism & Northernism (Celts et al), and also add riches from the nonWest (the East et al). A story for each way:Thursday, walking through Grand Central, I checked as usual to see the current Kodak back-illuminated blowup. It said underneath (as it were), "SEASON'S GREETINGS: GOD IS DEAD." Not the words "God is dead," but the feeling I got from the dismembered photo: a public-school-children's pseudo-Christmas choir with (two) angels but--you guessed it--no baby Jesus, no creche, just a blank where one would expect the creche. But there's the problem: "One would expect," in today's America, nothing of worldstory symbolism ever anytime in the year (which is fading as BC/AD into BCE/CE ("Before/the Common Era")). The way of dismemberment is becoming normal, for our public-school establishment has for the past ½c been doing increasingly aggressive promo for it....Friday, on B'way near Lincoln Center, I came across an actual, live, three-dimensional public-school-children's Christmas-Hanukkah choir, belting out the Christmas carols with a Hanukkah stanza added to each! The way of addition competing with the way of subtraction. Imperfect solution, but preferable to designed amnesia with its horrendous side-cost of distortion (as in communist countries' public schooling).

6. But a third way, ominously worse than the other two, is gaining power among us rapidly because, hatched in the public schools, it flies immediately onto the media perches. Though it's pseudoscientific & dogmatically materialistic (matter as prior-&-basic to the immaterial, mind, spirit), it carries full mythic potency in the sense that multitudes accept it as fact. Call it "Evolutionism" or "Scientific Humanism" or whatever....the court cases are more than a reprise of the 1925 Monkey Trial. This third way, as it were from on high, views both the desert of reductionism and the jungle of augmentism as colorful, innocuous & so tolerable, archaisms, antique fictions unthreatening to the enlightened myth-fact of the modern worldstory, which as social Darwinism fits well with our increasingly misfitting American competitiveness in private, domestic-political, and foreign affairs. This myth, inadequate to carry the West's cultural-spiritual freight, threatens us with impoverishment & worse.