

AN ABCEDARY OF THREAT - MANAGEMENT ----- ELLIOTT #1767

FAITH is the panoply of protection against threat, and Ambrose Bierce--the American master of distilled satire--had none. Accordingly, he lived nakedly up against life's melancholies, whose sour songs he sang to the delight of an older contemporary, Abraham Lincoln, whose faith was strong but forever embattled by gloomy genes....This thinksheet crosseyedly views life's faith/threats through a few definitions in A.B.'s THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY..Italics are commentary by me.....Italiced entries--shaped as "threats" to the full-free living of human life--are mine. (*Mainly from this book.)*

BETRAYAL--When Eve saw her reflection in a pool, she sought Adam and accused him of infidelity....(The future is) that period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true, and our happiness is assured....When your friend holds you affectionately by both hands, you are safe--for you can watch both of his.

BOREDOM--BORE, n.: A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

ECONOMICS--The gambling known as business looks with austere disfavor upon the business known as gambling.

EGOIST, n.: A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.

FAITH, n.: Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel. *Faith is both promise and threat--the later when it takes the forms of ideology and fundamentalisms. Allied with reason, faith fights (T.S.Eliot) "passionate intensity" allied with evil ("e." here meaning whatever hinders the full-free living of life by all humans). (A.B., a Civil War hero, thereafter became increasingly cynical, and disappeared in Mexico five years before I was born.)*

GREED--HAND, n.: A singular instrument worn at the end of a human arm and commonly thrust into somebody's pocket.

MARRIAGE, n.: The state or condition of a community consisting of a master, a mistress, and two slaves--making in all two.

NUKES--CANNON, n.: An instrument employed in the rectification of national boundaries. *1983, the faith-trust level among the nuclear powers is so low that (1) threat/counterthreat is in the seat of reason, (2) fear is in the seat of hope, and (3) functionaries (clergy, educators, et al) whose social duty is to promote faith-reason-hope are promoting fear-protection-anxiety. FAITH: "underneath are the Everlasting Arms" (non-military "arms"); FEAR: underneath is the everlasting nothingness. FAITH: the Maker/Provider/Defender/Redeemer "of heaven and earth" is in charge; FEAR: why isn't anybody in charge? FAITH: "Destiny" means the denouement of God's purposes; FEAR: "Destiny" means what's going to happen to me? The nuclear nightmare (with help from the media--e.g., TV's "The Day After") is crescendoing into first-strike nervousness. FAITH: hang loose; FEAR: hang tough. FAITH: the living of shalom; FEAR: at their first campout, Boy Scouts scaring the hell out of each other with ghost stories.*

PASSION/REASON--BRAIN, n.: An apparatus with which we think that we think....

PREJUDICE, n.: A vagrant opinion without visible means of support....All are lunatics, but he who can analyze his delusion is a philosopher.

PLEASURE--DEBAUCHEE, n.: One who has so earnestly pursued pleasure that he has had the misfortune to overtake it.

POLITICS--PEACE, n.: In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

SEX--GARTER, n.: An elastic band intended to keep a woman from coming out of her stockings and desolating the country. *Run your own commentary on this one! Sex and spirituality are life's supreme threats (and, of course, promises).*