

Anger and the Road to Hell

May 23, 2016

It has been a difficult week, a strange week, a lonely week. Partly, I'm sure, because I'm recovering from a visit from an old friend¹ who spent three boisterous and volatile days with me here at my home, and I rarely have guests. I don't mean to imply that his visit upset me. Quite the contrary, I enjoyed it immensely. We smoked weed and drank a lot of beer, but mostly, we argued loudly, actually shouting at each other. He's an angry fellow, in my opinion, and a Bernie Sanders supporter and a Stephen Curry / Golden State Warrior (NBA) fan.

I'm a Trump supporter. I think Sanders is an angry, vain, delusional old fool. Also, I don't care for Curry in the least. In my opinion, there's not enough mustard in the market to cover Curry. (In other words, he's a "hot dog," which used to be, back in the day, bad, bringing attention to yourself.) The look-away shot, really? When I played basketball (a long time ago), if an opponent had done that, I'd have put him down with a forearm shiver, accidentally of course. How is Curry's behavior different than Trump's? Curry plays *a game*, basketball, a metaphor; Trump plays *the game*, life.

Anyway, so my friend leaves, and I'm alone again, watching the news and keeping up with the election. I see where President Obama names the bison as the national animal (I thought it was the eagle, but then I struggle to understand the ways of man, as in human animal, which many of my kind deny—that we humans are animals). It looks like pandering to me, to add the first Americans to his collision (oh, pardon me), I meant coalition, of voters, recognizing the old buffalo nickel with an "Indian chief" on one side and a bison on the other, as a "dog whistle"² to the Native population. And then right after, an incident happens in Yellowstone National Park where a foolish tourist with good intentions (is not the road to hell paved with good intentions?) decides to intervene in the ecosystem, which results in the park service having to put down (kill) a newborn bison calf. Social media goes berserk, steaming, spewing, and erupting like Old Faithful.

Human emotion is not unlike the nature of explosions in nature (i.e., compression and constraint make the explosion more forceful when it finally erupts) as it must. Freud was right again. I think that's where we are now, in the big scheme of things—on the verge of an eruption.

The incident in Yellowstone is an almost-perfect metaphor and so timely for what is happening around the world. It's almost as if there *is* a higher power sending signals, saying, "Wake up, wake up! Pay attention! Lest I have to remove you from the park [the planet]!" It's a hard lesson to learn, not to intervene, to let "nature [amoral as it is] take its course." We, and I include myself, think we are so smart that we can control things, that

¹ Whom, in this story, you'll soon meet—Gerry.

² *Dog whistle* is a subtly aimed political message intended for a particular group.

we can save others, that we can save the world. I'm reminded of something Don Marquis said, "The chief obstacle to the human race is the human race."

We can only know what we know. We are who we are. We are born knowing (instinct and intuition) and forget via culture and politics. We subsequently learn and adapt to the physical and cultural world we inhabit. We are influenced by the physical world but adapt to the cultural one and develop resistance to that which we were born knowing. We moan, complain, protest, and seek nourishment, satisfaction, acceptance, and validation. We *value* affiliation (the tribe) over authenticity (truth), security (safety) over freedom (self-actualization), with good reason. We are here now, neurotic at best, in the time/space physical "real" world. We do not know who we are, what we want, or what we feel. And so we rely on experts and "salesmen" (of the snake oil kind) to tell us. We acquire habits, tendencies, and patterns; and many find those inadequate. But we adapt to the situation we are born into. We develop personalities and addictions. We lose ourselves and become shadows, impressions, projections, reflections, and perceptions. We are at war—war within and war without—against others who believe differently and against our true selves. We are at war against our own father and mother, against our brothers and sisters, against our children, against our spouses, against our rivals, against our government, against them, the other, the enemy, evil, the devil. And if we can afford it, seek out therapy for validation.

We try in desperation to get what we want but get more of what we don't want, simply because that is the way it has always been. So you are angry; you repress (or suppress) your anger in the hope that you will feel better (not angry) and then get angrier, because who and what you are at that moment is *angry*! Your only choice is how angry, but you want instead to avoid the hurt, the loss, of what is at the root of your anger. You know that to get along, you must go along, because no one likes angry. Agreement is what people want. You are not permitted to be who you are, and that makes you sick. Being sick gets you some attention and care, if not always, mother's milk and warmth (nourishment and protection)—what you really want.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Wildlife biologist Imogene Davis wrote a piece for the Outbound³ about the incident in Yellowstone, which ironically/coincidentally, illustrates the conflict between humans and wildlife and the confusion of human (some) interpretation of their place on the planet. The piece speaks to human's good intention, resulting in the death of that (wildlife) which they (a human) intended to save. With this one incident, there is much to be learned.

1. The earth is a hostile, cruel, environment with no mercy.
2. The road to hell (unintended, negative, grief/pain-inducing outcomes) is paved with good intention.
3. Humans are (generally and cross-culturally) ill-educated.

³ Imogene Davis, "A Response to the Yellowstone Bison Incident from an Actual Wildlife Biologist" (May 20, 2016), <https://www.theoutbound.com>.

Anger and/or outrage has at its root:
hurt/loss/frustration/empathy/narcissism/projection/displacement—all evolved emotions selected for their survival value for the individual, so as he/she/it may pass their genetic material (beingness) forward by the process of natural selection, which has been made obsolete by technology. Talk about irony.

This is from Davis:

I spend a lot of time as a biologist talking about how wildlife don't actually need our help. They don't need to be saved from nature, and even when they do, it's not our job to save them. That may seem counterintuitive, harsh even, but wildlife conservation is about populations, not individuals.