

V.T.O.A.G.I.



BLOG NUMBER ONE

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k"ren, 10'16

SOLVITVR AMBULANDO

AVE!

As you know, dear reader,* writing can serve many purposes. Recording events and happenings, both within the world and within ourselves. Communication, again, with the world and also with the self. It helps us organize our thoughts and to form our ideas. It puts our perceptions out on display where others may judge them, either favorably or negatively, and if the latter, we may find our thoughts, our beliefs challenged. It seems to me that even - especially - in these times where so much lip service is paid to freedom of speech and freedom of conscience, people have embraced the worst form of censorship imaginable: self censorship. It's not just that they will not say what they really think; they won't even allow themselves to entertain certain thoughts. And if ever they find themselves in some verboten reverie, the moment they come to their Pavlovian senses every effort of will is made to banish such ideas into that abyss of the mind where they, one hopes, will disappear, never to surface. But as Leviathan resting in the depths, they lay, ever ready to rise and challenge us again. Indeed, any hope of overcoming them is false. It is we who have been subdued; our integrity that has been chained and drowned.

This isn't to say that there are no thoughts not worth entertaining. Many an idea has taken root in a person's soul only to leave them and their lives a wreck once it is through with them. But must we either cower before such thoughts, or allow them to push us into servitude? It is by treating them as powerful and dangerous in themselves that puts us at their mercy. If these thoughts are false then the light of reason should be shown upon them as they will dissipate like waraiths. And should they be found to bear the imprimatur of truth - or at least show themselves to be probable - would they not deserve serious reflection and investigation? Yes, there are many things that it is best not to speak of at random. The mob is easily stirred by their prejudices and the court of public opinion is often a tribunal of fools. The one trait that will protect an individual above all others is discretion. And just as there are topics that no responsible person would dare discuss in front of children, there are likewise many important things that should not be spoken about in the presence of the immature, in the knowledge that they will only misunderstand - as they do not yet have the faculties nor the experience to understand. By their ignorance they profane or mock. Or worse, they persecute.

Yet these things need speaking, they need contemplating and all responsible person's attentions. As is said, a thing may not be popular - and it may even be despised - but neither position is any reflection upon its truth or falsehood. But shamefully, the worst censors [redacted] are not the ones who

* I ask that you bear with my style of writing and of address. It is not meant to sound condescending in the least, but is a product of the literature that formed my education.

lord over us from judicial benches, nor are they the denizens of those brothels which pass for our halls of government, those creatures who would legislate us into involuntary and indentured servitude if they could (But, oh! They have, my confidante, they already have!); nor are the Worst Censors those chattering appendages that pass for the fourth estate - apes the lot of them. No, the very Worst Censor is the one that has colonized our heads. A more incorrigible Shrew than ever was conjured by the Bard.

Alas, what is to be done? Consider this. You have anonymity on this site, if you so choose. You can discuss how you really feel and think instead of what society or the cap in your head tells you that you must feel and think. A caveat: This freedom does not extend to the realm of the criminal; and by that I do not mean any of the various ~~Victimless~~ "Crimes" that litter the legislative books. As long as no one is harmed - again, I mean actual harm, not hurt feelings or offended sensibilities - and no one is threatened or coerced, feel free to roam beyond the bounds of political correctness. I will honor your right to be angry, even bitter, as long as you honor my request to not be senselessly ugly. Speak truthfully but honorably, for it is possible to state the truth in a manner that dishonors the fact.

For my part I will with all due ability remain open-minded and record my thoughts as soberly and accurately as the situation permits. I won't pretend to a level of perfect indifference, but I will as far as possible hold in check my emotions while considering anything presented or anything I wish to discuss. But after the initial reflection I will comment on whatever feelings, as opposed to thoughts, that I may have. Value neutrality during observation is fine, but ultimately one must deal with the reactions that are affected thereby. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche held that all knowing is a matter of perspective. And I wish to explore that with as self-effacing - but not sanctimonious or hypocritical - honesty as I can muster. This could get ugly.

OK, now that all that pretentious drivel is out of the way lets Kibbitz. Are my blog entries going to be like what I just put you through reading? Only when I'm feeling sadistic, which isn't often. I hear pontificating jailbirds all day. They read a few books and become authorities on Absolute Truth, mimicking Mao, or Farrakhan, or one little angry ayatollah or another. And I won't even get into the crusaders who want to save your soul. So don't expect that from me. And if ever I get delusional and start delivering sermons, PLEASE, Somebody, tell me to shut up. That doesn't apply to occasional tirades though,

As you are browsing a prisoner oriented website I assume you might have an interest in prisons, life in prisons, prisoners - their hopes and dreams and stupidities. Given the never ending series of shows and exposés on prison, (the melodramatic, the sensational and the down right silly) its a popular subject.

So, if you have questions about prison, from the laughable to the lurid, feel free to ask. Do so on the blog, or send me a note (and you don't have to put your address or name on it if you're not comfortable) and I will try to address it on the blog. I'll also occasionally post real stories or events that I have personal knowledge of or that came from someone I find trustworthy enough to tell things realistically. Some things may sound unreal, or embellished, but I'm not one for hyperbole when it comes to exposing what goes on in these places. It's crazy enough without adding flourishes. I have 15 years worth of stories (I came to prison when I was 21 years old) and I may occasionally pull something from the archive. Some are quite funny. Many are very sad. More than a few will disgust you.

Oscar Romero said that when a human being hears the cry of the oppressed, s/he "cannot but denounce the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate the misery from which the cry arises." This place is a factory for tears, but I seldom cry anymore. For better or worse I've been desensitized to the spectacle. I still feel, I hurt for others when I see what happens to them. But crying has never helped in my experience. It only gratifies the perpetrators. I'm not crusading for justice. Who knows if such a thing even exists in this world as we know it. But I will bear witness. And I will involve you if I can. I will make you drop your delusions and have you stand beside me as we peer into the unadorned face of this system. And it doesn't stop there, for this system is only the microcosm for the greater society. George Orwell said that he had seen the future. I've not just seen it, I have the trademarks of the boot sole running across my face, imprinted upon my brain. We will look at the future together as long as you can bear it.

But there is more than bootprints on faces. There is also hard won laughter, and a way of seeing the world that you perhaps lost as a child. We all take so much for granted. Perhaps I can remind you to enjoy what I no longer have the liberty to. And even if nothing comes of all this, if no justice is forthcoming, no profound revelations reached, no life changing realizations granted, perhaps it will still be enough that you took the time to look, to keep from turning away for a few moments, to observe just long enough to really see the scene before your mind's eye, to see enough to know, to really know; and with that knowledge you'll be able to hear Nero's fiddle, and we'll dance to its tune and then roast marshmallows on Rome's embers.

Thank you for your time and consideration, for being patient as I led you on this meandering path. You couldn't hear it, but we were learning to keep in time with the fiddle.

Dominus Vobiscum.
Vale!
Malcolm