

“Kill-Me-Quick”

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This particular "Confection de Mauvais Gout" (Vulgar Treat) I call "Kill-Me-Quick"

Welcome to the land of bosh - as well, unfortunately, as that of Bosch; Hieronymus, that is. For an explanation, see the cover of my book.

On my way to Hermosa Beach to pickup an item the seller had previously neglected to hand over, I was initially stymied in my quest by the simple expedient of the driver of one of the series of buses I was required to take simply refusing to open the doors and pick me up. I had just missed my bus! As was helpfully pointed out by another waiting passenger soon after the driver had pulled away.

To-day, I was able to trigger a St. Vitus' dance of sorts in a couple of their "personnel," i.e., them as have made their peace wiv' *Sassenach*. But whereas I too can be made to dance (involuntarily) to 'is tune by the judicious placement of keywords in otherwise (I'm guessing) senseless conversations in Spanish more often than English. Today I, by means of the scrolling sign I wore at chest level, a sign flogging my book, am able to make my ~~victimizers~~ victims (?) dance much as gunslingers of the Far-West made the nearby hapless "dance" by threatening their extremities with doses of acute lead poisoning. In my case, nothing so cruel required. I merely "face the music," turn toward them, point my small scrolling sign in their general direction and wait for the inevitable reaction. They twist this way and that, at times even scurrying away, anything to avoid the terrible, terrible words as they scroll by on my eBay-bought blue LED sign: "I am Bergie, hear me bitch! Buy my book and make me rich. etc., etc., etc." Mwahahahaha!

And, in other news, they are getting *ever* prettier. Fer instance, take "*Fräulein*" *verboten*, mentioned in an earlier email, with *Fräulein* now in quotes as, apparently, the designation *Fräulein* is itself now *verboten*. Almost a self-referential proposition, wot? Makes complete sense, ¿que no? Where was I... Oh, yes, the *Fräulein* in question. Said *Fräulein* had her hair done recently, a-and don't for one minute think Your Friend and Humble Narrator™ didn't immediately notice. Instead of jet black, her normal color, it's now a light chestnut brown with, I believe they're called, highlights, or some such word. Nice, very nice. Damn your eyes, *Fräulein*. Why, even some of the other nearby passengers on my various buses today seemed to whisper: "*Fräulein... Fräulein...*" Or could there be a more prosaic explanation? As in: am I, in my (florid ?) mental condition again being trifled with by dread *Sassenach*? At any rate, be still my heart!

Tehran Market in Santa Monica, today (10-2-2021). She approached me, the poor woman (likely from that large and not so mighty tribe of Desperadoes, I suspect), and began speaking in what sounded like *Lesser Obfuscese*, a language I command but imperfectly... After she switched to English, I learned she was merely inquiring as to whether I were in line. That interaction over, some minutes later, I found myself gingerly approaching her to see if she might perhaps have forgotten that I was ahead of her in the queue. At which she snapped: "the clerk is only letting me put my groceries on the counter. And you don't need to remind me." Properly chastened, I meekly returned to my place before finally completing my purchases.

Back on the street, reeling from that particular *Aktion*, I chanced to run into a young man who, briskly emerging from a nearby store, nearly colliding with me in the process, addressed me as "Brother." To which I instantly replied: "My regards to Sister Kamala." Forewarned is forearmed, wot?

Some time later, my Costco visit, generally the high point of these outings, went peaceably enough. The, by now, routine provocations notwithstanding; with me occasionally "brandishing" my LED sign where it might do the most good. Seeking visibility, I was. The more, the merrier, Eh? After checkout, as I was laboriously packing my quantity of groceries in the wheeled carrier I now bring for this purpose, having abandoned use of my bicycle, preparing for the trek home; one of the clerks, approaching, asked how I was. I instantly replied: "I'm alright, Jack." Before adding,

“Your name is Jack, isn’t it”? Betraying her puzzlement she at first said yes, before adding “my name is ...” At which I, contrite, lamented: “I’ve been misinformed.”

Later, on the way home by bus, I was made to endure a spot of poof-shaming, a practice practically unheard-of in this enlightened century. The poor creature involved must not have gotten the memo... I mean, really.

Remarquez le manège (notice the goings-on/the game)... Referring here to the increasingly frequent “coincidences,” crossing of paths, veering in my direction, people suddenly emerging from nearby doors. Sometimes flagrant, sometimes subtle, at times (rarely) even shockingly physical; by people, young and old, known by me or not, well-disposed toward me or not, here and there. Not to mention the dreaded “manifest U-turn,” a textbook example of which I was treated to this morning (10-12-2021). In the roadway as I walked back from my nearby car after checking on a solar panel, a woman chose that very moment to arrange to cross my path diagonally. But soft! In the middle of the road, just as we are close to crossing paths, she changes her mind, making a U-turn and heading back in the other direction for some obscure reason. Cars, too, with the squealing of their tires, can sometimes make for a spectacular road show as well.

Yesterday (10-4-2021), in another *Aktion*, this one inadvertently (?) illustrating the Chinese principle of “*wu wei*” (無為) or “action through inaction”; I called my local Toyota dealership, the one on Culver Blvd., looking for a quote on car repairs. To wit:

1. Replacement of airbags
2. Replacement of windshield
3. Refurbishing of seat belt tensioner
4. Replacement of turn indicators and plastic covers

One of the long-suffering (for this is not my first attempt) souls I spoke with initially suggested, with some alacrity, I take my custom to a body shop in Marina del Rey. Persisting in my quest; after a dropped connection, being put on hold(s), several transfers back and forth, and quite some confusion as to what I wanted and whether the dealership *did* this kind of work, I was eventually transferred to an extension which proved to be a recording inviting me to leave my name and number for a return call... In view of this, I will, when I call in future, immediately identify myself thus: “This is Bergendahl, but you can call me Bergie.” This early identification may get me to the right department (voicemail again?) with less *flottement*, saving everyone’s time, who knows?

Concerning the Los Angeles bus system, I have good news and I have bad news. First the good news. To-day (10-11-2021) I am pleased to report that no bus driver flipped me off. Not a one, I tell you. Now for the bad news, two or mebbe three (at the most) neglected to stop to pick me up. On one of my later rides, a fellow rider, also waiting for the bus, was kind enough to suggest (by example) that I use a flashing light to draw an oncoming driver’s attention to my plight. Worth a try. Another *Aktion* of the “*wu wei*” variety. Quite effective, really. Earlier, as I began the day’s journey, after having seen two pass me by, I decided to walk home from the nearby stop, pick up my cell phone as an aid in documenting (by taking pictures and acquiring time- and place-stamps) further such outrages committed upon my person, before returning to await the next bus.

Later, as I reached Matt’s, my final destination, struggling to exit the bus with my backpack, the computer I was delivering strapped to a small dolly as well as my cane, the driver began closing the doors just as I was making my way out. Calling out that this was my stop, she replied, somewhat heatedly, “why did you not get off sooner, you must have seen the doors were closing”? My response was to pause near her (I was exiting through the front of the bus), make a deep but silent bow and, without a further word, exit. I will say in her favor that she, too, neglected to flip me off. Not that any drivers have to date, I’m just saying.

Coming home after the day’s travails, weary and cold, it being night by then, I sat at the front of a nearly empty bus when he began. Speaking (into a cell phone ?), he (another passenger sitting in the back) started a series of barely audible uninterrupted monologues, some lasting many minutes over a period of about a half hour. Illustrating a phenomenon I first mentioned in my book: nearly subliminal noise. Speech (unlikely to have been a proper

conversation) just below the threshold of audibility, certainly too low for me to make out any words, but unnerving just the same. With occasional sudden emphases (a somewhat louder word) timed to my movements, i.e., synchronization. It went on for most of the final leg of my return to the West Adams neighborhood. A high practitioner of this art, he was. Impressive. *En voila qui ne lésinent pas sur les moyens.* (They sure aren't skimping).

“Kill-Me-Quick” was/is the nickname of a kind of South African beer; cheap, powerful and not always brewed with the *right* hygiene considerations uppermost. A bootleg product of township *shebeens* or beer halls, it apparently provided the requisite kick, perhaps making the general atmosphere somewhat bearable. And so, “... by a commodius vicus of recirculation...” we come to *Bergie “Wag ‘n Bietjie” ‘awkins “... and environs.”*

— James Joyce, from *Finnegan’s Wake* (Somewhat adapted by me)

I hope the above paragraph quite completely clears up any nagging misunderstandings you, Gentle Reader™, might have regarding the peculiar title of this piece of nonsense.

Regarding “That Hideous Strength,” the infernal machinery I stumbled into/onto (?) so early in my life and have since attempted to document and expose a corner of. Perhaps it is not too early (too late ?) to modestly propose a remedy, if I may make so bold. Maybe a process similar to that of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of post-apartheid South Africa would be salutary. Or perhaps something more along the lines of the denazification process in post-war Germany would be more appropriate...

I thought I might, at some point, begin a talk with a couple of jokes about that well-known power couple, the Ceaușescus. Say, the one about the rat found scurrying around at the 12th Party Congress (a particularly bloody affair, they say). Followed by a second joke, this one about an exchange between Nicolae and Elena, having a discussion in bed. Then on to the payload. One member of the firing squad which executed the pair reveals that ever since that day, he has had trouble with his conscience, trouble sleeping, even; and this for decades. Even though he himself was:

1. A trained soldier in the Romanian army
2. Only one of many who participated in the shooting and
3. The ones shot were, by all accounts, very, very bad people

In spite of this, the former soldier, apparently a decent, normal man; troubled by his involvement, strongly regrets participating. Given this, what conclusions can one reach concerning the gentlemen of the American *Securitate*? The ones ultimately responsible for my (and this place’s) predicament? For this is likely not the first instance of such monstrous behavior on their part, I would wager. How do *they* sleep, I wonder? And can they be considered at all “normal”? *Mama Dracului!*

Finally, regarding the atmosphere on the “home front,” i.e., my bungalow, a bit of Greek is in order here:

μαλάκας, adjective. /ma' lakas/ one who masturbates. Genitive singular form of **μαλάκα** (maláka). It has been described as "the most used Greek slang word." — from Wikipedia.

μαλακία, adjective. /ma-la-kia/ masturbation. Nonsense saying.

Subjected on a near-daily basis to the guffaws and immanent **μαλακία** of one of my next-door neighbors; the man I, for a time, called “Lord Haw-Haw II,” I have settled on this convenient Greek catch-all mild insult (much like the Spanish-language generic, *cabrón*. Perhaps the Spanish word “*cantinflada*” applies here as well) as his new handle. *Πε μαλάκα!*

Thanks for your attention.

P.S. To my sister Irene: “May our tears prove invincible.”