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Laurance Labadie
“All The World’s A Stage”
1950

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The outstanding characteristic of human beings as distinguished from other animals is their prodigious propensity to kid themselves. The studies of psychologists would seem to be manna for the cynic. For we find that, aside from the primary urges, nearly all of the intense impulses of humans stem from feelings of inadequacy, of the lack of function of the potentialities within them.

The genius is oftener than not merely an ordinary person motivated by a fear that he will not have a sufficiently important role in the drama, farce, or comedy of life (as you will) and strives to compensate his feeling of insignificance by an intense development of his potentialities, usually only one.

Your weakling will tend to formulate a philosophy of power. Your educator subconsciously suspicions his own ignorance and wants to compensate by teaching, since teaching is a profession which explicitly implies superiority of knowledge. Your religious fellow is motivated by feelings of guilt. Your all-around misfit wants to revolutionize the world, into such form as he will be secure in. None of these worthies are able to face the fact that life is a battle and to take their roles in the melee, such as it is. Your exhibitionist needs an audience;

your victim of the love-hate complex must needs have some rascality in his make-up to justify.

We learn from psychology that the infant is an unfeeling beast, a selfish brat ostensibly on the make and who cares not a whit from where he gets his sustenance. He remains such until he is indoctrinated by his elders. His parents realize that if he does not disguise his predatory instincts he will be “caught” and carefully guarded against by his peers. His teachers, puppets of the powers-that-be, naturally teach patriotism, Jove of country and God, to soften him up for use by his masters, Church and State, who intend to exploit him for all it is worth.

As we grow older, we ourselves, natural brutes tho we be, learn to dissimulate and camouflage our healthy impulses by politeness, we develop schemes of ethics and by pretense attempt to allay each other so that, when the opportune time comes, we are easier to waylay, Make no mistake that basically we care precious little about one another except for what we can get out of each other.

Stop to consider. Of all the animals man is the only one who deliberately enslaves and murders his kind for no sensible reason. You will find missionaries searching the world over for someone to convert. Christians, believers in the most monstrous conglomeration of nonsense, have been most active in this nefarious enterprise. But don't be gulled; they are only the forerunners of the military and economic exploiter. History gives no evidence otherwise.

Your reformer and zealot, who presumes to love everybody, does not hesitate a whit to slaughter anyone who disagrees with him. The love-hate complex here comes in force in all its pristine glory. People are neatly divided into down but forward-lookers, generally the rag-tag of humanity, and the devils-on-wheels who manage to grab nice chunks from the common trough.

Your military, if it were not the subservient cannon fodder for sly knaves, might play an overtly candid role in the human drama, if they divided the spoils only among themselves. But they are too stupid for this, and become mere mercenaries. They are so the world over.

Next to the list of rascals are the politicians, altho it is a moot question whether the priesthood are not entitled to this position. Indeed, it is not so certain that they shouldn't come first. But let's not quarrel over that. These gentry are the slyest of the lot, To get by by chicanery is the height of human ingenuity, and your minister of the gospel is the cream of the crop.

Your radical, of whom I happen of the number, is nine times in ten a weakling and a pathetic individual with a tremendous urge to be teacher and leader. Were he naturally such he would not have such an inordinate urge to be one. Schemes of something for nothing seem to be his especial field.

If you are an incompetent, if indeed you cannot stand on your own feet and never earned an honest sandwich in your life, aspire to be a politician. Among the saps and knaves of which this world is composed, your sailing will be easy, The way to the presidency or dictatorship is assured you,

Oh yes, psychology will be the undoing of all of us. Our roles will be dissected, the play will fall apart, yet the show must go on until the final appearance when understudies will emerge upon the scene.

“All the world's a stage and each man in his time plays many parts.” The drama, it would seem, has been written by some cosmic joker.