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Gooney Ducks and Naked Physicists

Part XXV
See Ya Later, Gladiator!

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Abstract: An allegory of modern science.

Part XXV

I still can't get the image out of my mind. If science could somehow make all men and women exactly the same, how weird would that be? Take that classic lead in to *The Maltese Falcon*:

"Yes, sweetheart?"

She was a lanky sunburned girl whose tan dress of thin woolen stuff clung to her with an effect of dampness. Her eyes were brown and playful in a shiny boyish face. She finished shutting the door behind her, leaned against it, and said: "There's a girl wants to see you..."

"A customer?"

"I guess so. You'll want to see her anyway: she's a knockout."

"Shoo her in, darling...Shoo her in."

Call me *Shallow Hal* (or *Superficial Sam*), but if I already knew what was coming through the door...sure, I couldn't judge by physical appearances, but, man, I'd have nuthin' to live for!

Tonight's date with Eva's sister? Why bother?

No more mysterious lady in blue, no romance, danger, and intrigue?

No femme fatales, Mata Haris, Eastern Jewels, damsels in distress, no more *Ladies from Shanghai* or *Reckless Romeos*? Just one standard issue, assembly

line "guy and gal"—Bogie and Bacall—everywhere you looked?



Now there's evolution for ya. What kind'a world would that be? Everybody's mother, grandmother, wife and daughter, husband and son exactly the same...Oedipus Rex Complex?

Yeah, Willy Nelson, meet Freud:

Now, many years ago, when I was twenty three, I was married to a widow, who was pretty as could be. This widow had a grown-up daughter, who had hair of red.

My father fell in love with her, and soon the two were wed...

My wife is now my mother's mother, and it makes me very blue.

Because, she is my wife, she's my grandma too...Now, if my wife is my grandmother, then I am her grandchild...I'm the strangest case you ever saw...

As the husband of my grandma, I am my own grandpa!

Everybody the same? Five feet o' snow and every snowflake the same? Boy howdy!

Sameness = Peace?

That equation doesn't work for me! True, there might not be any discrimination, prejudice, racism, nationalism, etc., but at what cost? What happens to individuality—to the human soul?

Hmm, that gives me an idea for my first (and probably last) poly-sci-fi screenplay:

BROKEN SWORD

FADE IN: EARTH – TWENTY-THIRD CENTURY

In the heart of futuristic Los Angeles, scene of peaceful, utopian bliss: stereotypes of the ideal hero and heroine—the fair and the fit, the handsome and beautiful—frolic.

CAMERA ZOOMS. (Then realization.) Everyone looks the same!

CUT TO INTERIOR: HUGE, CAVERNOUS, SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY/WAREHOUSE

In the semi-darkness, robots move slowly and methodically (with green lasers aglow), checking and rechecking row upon row of egg-shaped, translucent pods.

CAMERA TRACKS AND ZOOMS. Some pods are marked “M” and others “F”...but all are clearly labeled with a shelf life, maximum life cycle, and “termination” date!

CAMERA ZOOMS. (What’s this?!) Each pod contains an encapsulated human!

CAMERA ZOOMS CLOSER (Once again, shock!) They’re all the same! Aghhh!!!

(I know: *Logan’s Run* meets *Stepford Wives* and *Oblivion*...But wait, there’s more!)

EXTERIOR: SCENE OF DEVASTATION AND DESTRUCTION

Things have not gone well. Robots and laboratory destroyed, lying in ruins.

CAMERA PANS. Aftermath of a fierce war. In the deafening silence, crows circle.

A lone soldier stumbles out of the shadows and walks haltingly across layer upon layer of rubble and bodies strewn and piled thick upon the battlefield, as far as the eye can see.

CAMERA TRACKS AND ZOOMS. In his face, agony and despair. Then, the soldier looks down, searching the faces of the fallen. Desperately going from one to another, lifting the visors of the opponents, in horror he sees all the faces are exactly like his own. He looks deeply into the camera, eyes screaming in anguish. Then, as he looks to the sky, drops of rain begin to fall.

CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK FROM EARTH...CUE strains of Phil Collins’ “In the Air Tonight”:
“Well, if you told me you were drowning, I would not lend a hand, I’ve seen your face before my friend, but I don’t know if you know who I am...” FADE OUT: ROLL CREDITS.

THE END

Wow! See ya later, gladiator! I guess, when it comes down to it, beneath the mask, we’re all the same, and any war that breaks out, you just end up fighting yourself! Ah, that’s deep.

So, Luke Skywalker—my brother from another mother: When we lift the visor and find the enemy we face is really ourselves, what are we really fighting for?

An illusion? Someone’s desire or ideal of perfection?