

+++

Gooney Ducks and Naked Physicists

Part XXIX
We Come in Peace?

D. and S. Birks
July 2017

Editing contributions by Daniel Birks

Abstract: An allegory of modern science.

Part XXIX

It is not what they built, but what they knocked down.

It is not the houses. It is the space between the houses.

It is not the streets that exist. It is the streets that no longer exist.

Yes, you have come to the fabled lands where myths go when they die.

Well, bust my britches! I feel like I just stepped into a whole new monomyth, like I'm one step away from pulling it all together. Yeah, hand me a shillelagh...no, not that one, *the big one!* Break down the walls between science and religion; knock the blocks off the shoulders of those giant, square-headed, round-eyed, gossamer-winged dragons of misunderstanding, ignorance, and discontent that haunt the civilizations of the past! The true hero's journey—the key to science, heaven, and knowledge, what we're all really striving for—*peace?*

Now there's a new take on everything! Twist the kaleidoscope and wow, shatter my illusions! All the armies, guns, weapons of mass destruction, punji sticks, IEDs, and atomic bombs; the conflicts of the id, ego, the super ego; of good and evil, God and the devil? Could it be that the real underlying conflict of existence is just the struggle for peace? And the meaning of life: God's laboratory on Earth? Is that what it's all about—all this science, religion, and philosophy? Can the mouse find the "big cheese"? Can mankind find peace?

I know what you're thinking. "Dude's drunk too many bottles of imagination!" No argument there! But slow my roll? Nah! Pop the top on another and hang on tight! I can see it all now! *Entrez le héros, avec du rosbif, du fromage et tomates!*

The ladies flocked to him. With all his talk of the truth of existence, and the metaphysical underpinnings of the universe...they just smiled and moved closer.

I'm starting to see the draw: the temptation and bedazzling beauty of the art of the intellect—the seductive, raging danger of conceit: "Bright smoke, cold fire, sick health." "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun!" I'm beginning to understand the Tower of Babel! Build a tower to heaven: to God's world? Get a glimpse beyond the grand façade? And now, "*We come in peace?*" Peace, the real stairway to heaven? What a call to adventure! Imagine if we *could* pull it all together and create peace on earth. Maybe the sky would open up and heaven join to earth, forever! Whoa, Moondoggy! *Shove me into shallow water!* The power of peace: No more separation from the truth? But still, I feel like I'm rowing with one oar. How do we create or evolve to peace?

*Under the ruins of a walled city Crumbling towers and beams of yellow light
As I returned across the fields I'd known
I recognized the walls that I'd once made
I had to stop in my tracks for fear Of walking on the mines I'd laid

And if I built this fortress around your heart
Encircled you in trenches and barbed wire
Then let me build a bridge For I cannot fill the chasm
And let me set the battlements on fire...*

Trumpet's fanfare, knights, pennants flying? Hold on while I drop my visor, raise my lance, and kick my steed into a trot. "Let down the drawbridge! Lady Adventure beckons!"

All this time, I'd been trapped, cut off from the light of truth—taste, smell, hearing diminished, unable to feel the warmth of the sun. And then, the bubble bursts!
The dungeon doors open! In a rush, all the sensations of life come flooding back!
Leapin' Lancelot! I can see now! The ideas of the past were like beautiful medieval castles that became our prisons. We've been held captive, imprisoned by walls constructed to defend our positions—walls of our own making! Like those lines from Byron:

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould, In Chillon's dungeons deep and old...

Yeah, forsooth, M'lady! Time to break free from the prisons of the past! Drain that moat of spilt lion's milk! Walk under the ramparts of Babylon! Venture forth outside the walls, into a new, fabulous tale of mankind!

We all know the old story—the classic logic of trying to achieve peace by going to war. What a weird philosophy! "Who's got the biggest stick?" Reminds me of Saint Christopher. Legend has it, he was *a tall man in a land of tall men*—7.5 feet and fearsome! He was strong and brave, a knight of old who wanted to serve the greatest leader on earth. Hearing that the devil was the strongest, he joined his army. But one day, when the entire army detoured to avoid a humble cross by the road, Christopher realized the devil wasn't the strongest—the devil feared Christ, the Prince of Peace. So peace proved the strongest—the biggest stick of all! Now there's a new physics for ya! Weak force? Strong force? The strongest force in the universe: peace? But science trying to achieve the peace of heaven? What a headline:

PHYSICS DEFEATS ARMIES OF THE WORLD! PEACE CONQUERS WAR!

Warning: watch out for presumptuousness, devil's club, and falling angels! And hold on tight to the peace chain headin' up to Angels Landing! It's a slippery slope and a long way down!