

RIDER THEORY AND SCRATCHY COATS:

Staying the creative path, "keepin' on keepin' on"

"Well," she continued, "... these coincidences are happening more and more frequently and that, when they do, they strike us a beyond what would be expected by pure chance. They feel destined, as though our lives had been guided by some unexplained force. The experience induces a feeling of mystery and excitement and, as a result, we feel more alive." — from The Celestine Prophecy, by James Redfield

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Mr. Redfield also suggests that our seemingly chance encounters can carry important messages. Recently, as part of my seemingly eternal struggle for meaningful ducats, one of those encounters—through my book review of an anthology of short stories by Free State (New Hampshire) authors— took a turn toward such meaning: Ron Kaiser, one of the authors in this anthology (entitled Carved in Granite) asked me to review a manuscript consisting solely of his own short stories. Briefly, I read the stories, liked them, and—because Ron's publisher seems to have gone into stealth mode—I have offered to edit them. Some kind of deal looks promising (and I believe Mr. Kaiser may one day become our very own NH Jean Shepherd).

So to give you the whole sequence:

- 1) Pledged to the Free State in 2004
- 2) Then early-moved there in 2005[1]
- 3) Met NH native and Free State friend, James Maynard—author of The Light at Alexandria—at a Meet and Greet in Keene
- 4) Jim sold me on his self-publisher Lulu.com
- 5) Turned the diaries of my Free State experience into a book published by Lulu, New Pilgrim Chronicles
- 6) This opinion and review site, The Coffee Coaster, developed from my desire to have an exchange of "wholistic libertarian" ideas—especially the Sacred Nonaggression Principle—with a Free State, aka "the Freedom Rider," perspective[2]
- 7) Based on recommendation from Jim Maynard, I reviewed Carved in Granite, which led to the contact with Ron Kaiser, the performance of my first fictional (remunerated) editing work, and association with a mostly young(er) group of authors in the Free State
- 8) Thus, in addition to enabling the keeping of body and soul intact, this newfound editing connection and association with these Granite State writers, I feel, is leading inexorably to my own next act of creative output: writing of a mystery/investigative novel set in the Lake Country of SE Michigan

And the colored girls go "da da-da dah, da da-da dah..."

Rider Theory

Well, I wanted to start by suggesting that one shouldn't try to forcibly dictate exactly what one plans to do when you set off on the journey of life. My way, which is certainly not conventional by any means, is to set out in a certain direction that seems right—e.g. early moving to the Free State—and just let Nature take its course. As long as you keep moving, "keep riding," it normally works out. I've been right so far.

I call my philosophy Rider Theory or Biker Theory, because of its resemblance to having a successful day on the road, as on a motorcycle. Some days the riding is really tough, you're not sure where you are, rain and sleet can come up on you, fatigue sets in, your back starts killing you, and you begin to doubt whether the whole trip is worth it. But especially if you're riding with friends and you apply some resourcefulness in reaching the destination, invariably—based on my years of touring, anyway—you do. And not only do you reach the destination: most times, there's a friendly little bar next to the motel and a bright coffee shop for breakfast.

Of course, I suppose if you tour long enough, one day you don't make your destination for the evening, and you have to eat soggy sandwiches and sleep on a picnic table at a park in the middle of nowhere.

But seriously, I don't believe in taking any one behavioral model too seriously... as the sole answer to the challenges of life. In the case of Rider Theory, I feel its primary virtue is encouragement of a reasonable

persistence and optimism. It's also consistent with being open to whatever the road has to tell you; being open and aware—taking your reactive egoic mind out of the equation and just perceiving the "isness" of things—is something I've become increasingly attuned to through the work of Eckhart Tolle and *The Power of Now*.

And now I think I've reached an important intermediary destination on the ride of life—intermediary in terms of specific steps in my life situation, but ultimate in terms of the realization of what Tolle states in so many ways:

"The word enlightenment conjures up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, and the ego[3] likes to keep it that way, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being. It is a state of connectedness with something immeasurable and indestructible, something that, almost paradoxically, is essentially you and yet is much greater than you. It is finding your true nature beyond name and form."
—page 10

So through some reading, soul searching, and plenty of "letting go," it seems another door has opened. And it has brought me so much peace of mind already that even in my admittedly inexpert—one doesn't easily shed the trappings of a mind as reactive and prone-to-judgment as my own— moves toward acceptance and nonresistance of enlightenment, a new inner joy 'that passes all understanding' has begun to take hold. Just in time, too, because I was beginning to run out of money. :)

What is fascinating and subtly probative of Rider Theory (as well as supporting some really stimulating ideas from writers like Jon Rappaport on creativity) is that when one starts entering the Now on a regular basis, what Tolle refers to as one's life situation tends to improve. Partly, I'm convinced, because you come to realize that even if your life situation does not measurably improve, it doesn't really matter.

The Scratchy Coat Parable

Back in my Boy Objectivist[4] days, I went to work one summer for one of the most judgmental Randians I'd ever met, let's call him Joey. And let me tell you, back in the early 1970s in some circles there were dozens of such moral guardians. I was one of them. But this man also had a wicked sense of humor, which he loved to apply to the slimy mystic-altruist-collectivists (MACs) of the time.

The 70s were sometimes called the Me Decade, what with all the Baby Boomers coming into early adulthood. Accordingly, we had all sorts of self-absorbing movements to help us get our acts together... from Est, to the Primal Scream, to Swinging, to the Total Woman, to men's mythic-poetic organizations, the list is virtually endless. And you had a lot of neurotic people who bounced around from one to the other Me org, seemingly never really improving themselves. Or at least they never seemed to achieve the peace of mind and body they were after.

Well, Joey had this routine where he'd lampoon these poor souls:

Poor Soul: Man, I've got this coat I'm wearing and it's driving me nuts. It scratches and itches me all the time. I don't know what I'm going to do. I've seen every analyst in town. My wife doesn't care, and my kids laugh at me. No matter what I do or where I go or what advice I receive, I'm dying inside this coat. I've tried every nostrum known to humankind. [And Joey would go on and on, energetically, loudly... with the scratchy coat representing either a personal problem like obesity or a political problem like crime in the streets.]

Joey: [yelling] Why don't you TAKE THE FUCKING COAT OFF!

I'm reminded of that routine lately as I've been making my case for the Sacred Nonaggression Principle and for the Deaggression Movement. The ideas are out there now, and I'm glad. They will acquire a life of their own, probably eventually with an endorsement from someone of celebrity or stature who groks the ideas as I do. I'm still going to do some grooming and preparation for these children of mine—though I really think of them as offspring of the freedom-community "Village"—but they're ready to fend for themselves and make something of their lives.

Also, in the course of my arguments, I came up with an obvious \$3 trillion per year solution to our economic malaise: the so-called Big-3 Freedom Stimulus Package for Real Americans. And in these days of Wall Street's multitrillion-dollar blatant theft of wealth from Main Street, I did put quite a bit of thought into my

subject. How can it be controversial: 1) end the war on drugs, 2) end the American military empire, and 3) deprohibit agricultural hemp. Each of these delivers approximately a full \$1 trillion per year benefit to America: roughly \$10K for every person in the country.

You see everyone on the media and in the White House and in Congress just throwing up problem after problem, exclaiming how these "scratchy coats" are costing jobs, and lives, and border wars with Mexico, and how Al Qaeda is a serious threat and a reality, and how we have to throw more government money into the government school pit, and into the healthcare pit, because the quality of our (government) systems is so wretched, and they feel our pain, and they feel their own pain, and how we/they are such a pain, and they wish they could do more for all us poor schmucks who really could manage to live without them quite nicely thank you. But of course, that thought (that we don't need them) really gets them in a tizzy:

Political Class Guy: "I'm dying from this disease of statism. It hurts so much. I wish I could do something!"

Libertarian Guy: "TAKE OFF YOUR FRIGGIN' COAT OF AGGRESSION... (and under his breath) you pathetic bastard."

As someone in the freedom movement said the other day, "Just because I'm right doesn't mean I won't lose." This realization of how obvious the political and economic solutions are to human problems, particularly in America, how hiding in plain sight the fundamental fix of FREEDOM is, has caused me no end of mental suffering. But I'm letting that suffering go now. I'm no longer resisting what is; I'm practicing the Buddhist technique of acceptance.

Consider Joey's guy with the scratchy coat. Sure you feel bad for the poor slob when you realize he's down there in that den of insanity that tells him simple solutions cannot be solutions. Scratchy Coat's fundamental breach with reality is not a matter of intellect or morals: it's a matter of spirit, something on the inside that needs to be nourished so the mind can grow to practice the obvious. And on the other side of that equation, Joey's incredulous anger—and my own toward those who WILL NOT see the obvious benefits of freedom—is toxic as well. It's a reflected poison that only drives our own souls into needless suffering. No mas.

In Hans Christian Andersen's tale, the little boy stated the obvious, that the king, far from wearing spiffy new clothes, was naked. Presumably in Andersen's day, the reaction to the little boy would have been favorable, the sycophants giving up and the king's subjects yielding to the truth... perhaps even thanking the little boy. In our age it appears stating the politically obvious in public receives a nearly universal resentment for one's horrid display of poor breeding.

But the day is young. I still feel the various truth salients of the broad wholistic libertarian movement, especially indirect ones that undermine the moral legitimacy of authoritarian methods, are beginning to shake the foundation of the modern corporatist state run (for the benefit of a handful of primitive-minded "kings"). Be of good cheer.

And tell the Scratchy Coat parable, but from a place of peace and love.

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[1] By virtue of connections in the Free State Project and on the New Hampshire Underground forum, I connected with two major freelance technical writing contracts.

[2] My work on the Coffee Coaster continued to lead me toward political and spiritual discoveries of the most exciting kinds, which I do feel manifested themselves in the Sacred Nonaggression Principle and the movement launched via deaggress.org.

[3] This is not your doctrinaire Randian's definition of the concept ego.

[4] Objectivism is the philosophy of Ayn Rand.

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