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The Importance of Being Nobody: Egotism at the Vanishing Point

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING NOBODY

EGOTISM AT THE VANISHING POINT

I'm nobody! Who are you? Are you nobody too? Then there's a pair of us—Don't tell! They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody! how public like a frog To tell your name the livelong day To an admiring bog! Fresh Emily D.

Long before poets learned to punctuate their readings with flatulent pyrotechnics. Before they discovered the romance of substance abuse, the art of self-promotion or how to write grants, I like to think the sat scribbling in squalid attics and didn't expect much. There was, presumably, also a time when painters and composers had humble aspirations; before some of them began accumulating more money than GOD selling canvases and vinyl.

OH! LAWDY MAMMA! Can you possibly imagine a world without fat headed artistes? Nowadays it seems everyone can afford to dabble in megalomania. Even the poor and obscure lodged in the bowels of the BEATNIK LEAGUE find time to gaze at their reflections and whisper "C'est MOI!" How long could it before we see dilettante bag ladies? Looking around I find the unavoidable conclusion is that UNIVERSAL FABULOUSNESS HAS ENVENOPED THE WORLD! And now that EVERYBODY fancies themselves SOMEBODY where can we turn to figure our creative selves against a background of so much colorful delusion?

I, MYSELF, have spent years hiding from the ever growing hoard of PERSONAE FAVOLOZO in the hope of somehow retaining the sense that I wuz somebody. Communities of artistes arranged in trendy urban ghettos and Art Departments filled me with dread. There, I found a horrifying consistency in the ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY CLICHES employed wholesale for self-delineation. If I were cornered in a SOHO elevator and asked whether or not I was an artist, I would cringe pathetically and deny my accuser: fearing that the truth would turn me into a wall paper motif, repeating with horrible accuracy throughout the staggering lengths of humanities hallways. Soon, as a matter of psychic survival, I
B ut wait. Before we take subjective values, allow that dizzying plunge into the ink of my artistic sensibility, that my idea of artistic communion was exchanging technical tips with a jailhouse tattoo artist.

But, now at the BEATNIK LEAGUE I could spend hours flauting my psychic intricacies and indulging in the affectation of heroic postures and their attendant delusions. Indeed. I soon discovered that these common delusions were the threads holding this little bohemian tapestry together. So, it was, like, rilly fun... for about a day and a half. Then, of course I started noticing those little cliches... a bit more rough hewn than before, but believe me, compared to the TATTOO CLUB at SUPER MAX, the beatniks seemed like some serious sophisticated.

Happily, this time, my exposure to "ART WHIRLED WALLPAPER" was slightly less traumatic. You see, since I made my debut on the ENFANT TERRIBLE CIRCUIT, I have actually learned a few things! One of them is the fact that ANALYSIS, or more specifically the aspect of analysis that involves the vigorous application of CATEGORIES, is one of the most aggressive modes of being known to man. And thus it is possible, when threatened with psychic invisibility, to more or less EXAMINE REALITY into SUBMISSION. If I asserted myself by critical, categorical presence, I could figure myself against the background of creative stereotype as well as if I indulged myself in blatant displays of ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY CLICHES. (I'm not sure, one may as bad as the other)

But wait. Before we take that dizzying plunge into the ink of my subjective values, allow me to define one or two of our (my) terms. EGOTISM, here-in is not to be confused with ARROGANCE, ATTITUDE or any of the popular manifestations of NEO-FREUDIAN SELFHOOD. Noooo, HERE at (in) the BEAT CRITIQUE. "Egotism" denotes nothing less than the very mechanism of human suffering... that which permits us to draw a membrane around our thoughts and feelings and thereby assert that we are somehow discrete, unique, and separate from the world around us... the moment that we indulge ourselves in the delusion that we are independent, the gesture which seals our fates and insures the inevitability of our fall. For dimensional endpoint. An affliction quite indistinguishable from the malady referred to as P.M.S. ...actually, it's worse. More like P.M.S. multiplied by itself. So, for our (my) purposes we may apply the following formula...

Mister E.

I first began measuring P.M.S. at AS220 very early in its history. From the beginning I began to notice that each artist went through a similar self-indulgent ritual in taking over the stage. Transforming the artistic occasion into a territorial ritual of rebellion and simplicity. Although these "performances" are supposedly mere preparation for the fully fleshed "acts" I've found them more consistently intriguing than the "art" proffered for our consideration. With each new exhibit, every performance, and each new artiste to take the stage, I'm confronted with yet another setting for the same old motif...

No matter what kind of talents mount the stage it seems somehow that P.M.S. can render any performance insignificant. On many occasions I've lobbied in favor of a P.M.S. FESTIVAL at AS220 featuring the very grandest practitioners of on stage attitude. But, for the moment it is merely my own personal fantasy. In the final analysis it seems to me that the interplay between the P.M.S. factors in any one artiste determine whether or not their work functions independent of its creation or whether it exists as a prop to support their psychic pretenses. The myths of fabulousness suggest that big egos equal big talents. But the truth is... Big egos REQUIRE big talents. just to break even. Teeny egos are always preferable. Because P.M.S. is the only aspect of creative endeavor where MORE is ALWAYS LESS.

PETER JOHN BOYLE
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