The Cluetrain Manifesto

*Revisited*

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Table of Contents

AcknowledgementS……………………………………………………………………………………..1

[Internet Apocalypso Christopher Locke 3](#_Toc279688533)

[The Longing David Weinberger 5](#_Toc279688534)

[Talk Is Cheap Rick Levine 7](#_Toc279688535)

[Markets Are Conversations Doc Searls and David Weinberger 9](#_Toc279688536)

[The Hyperlinked Organization David Weinberger 10](#_Toc279688537)

[EZ Answers Christopher Locke and David Weinberger 12](#_Toc279688538)

[Post-Apocalypso Christopher Locke 13](#_Toc279688539)

[The beginning of the Journey 14](#_Toc279688540)

[“A life lived in fear, is a life half lived.” 17](#_Toc279688547)

[Taming our emotions 18](#_Toc279688550)

[Lone Rose Petals 21](#_Toc279688564)

[“Symphony of her soul” 26](#_Toc279688605)

[“Un monde de silence…” 28](#_Toc279688614)

[Emotional 31](#_Toc279688615)

[Generate 37](#_Toc279688616)

[The Criticism 40](#_Toc279688617)

[The Report 91](#_Toc279688618)

[FOUR DAYS 95](#_Toc279688619)

[THE TALE 123](#_Toc279688620)

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# Internet Apocalypso Christopher Locke

How could the internet cause destruction? I suppose the word being use to describe the article is so rigorous that I don’t even wish read it further. Anyhow, I’m expecting to have a material where I would be able to understand how the ever helpful Mr. Net can lead into something catastrophic.

I anticipate reading descriptive manifestation of Mr. Net’s pros and cons to mankind, ways to actually develop independency towards its helpfulness and where does this devastation come?

As I look ahead to these things towards the material, maybe it’s better if I do foresee something on by part also. Is it mankind who actually made the internet a nasty thing to go into? As I remember when were studying the history of computers, we come through the word Arpanet were our teacher said is the Grandfather of internet, where the major market is the students from a university and military commandos. How come something like this would essentially be an apocalypse to mankind? Where did they get this materialization? Though I know there are some instances that it actually causes turmoil to some, especially for public figures who have done something really out of the box, I guess it’s just necessary for the community to know this thing even more.

I heard some said, “We are just one click away to stardom”, Fame and the internet? How could this actually happen? Simple, make video, download it to YouTube, make a thread of friend asking, begging, pleading to watch your file. Make it a million of hits, voila! You’re a star!

*“All we need to do is…discovered this medium…using it to connect with each other, not as representatives of corporations or market segments, but simply as who we are.”*

Simply as whom we are a statement about being human and representing a trait that exceptionally said that we should be humanly by spirit and at work.

Internet as a talking market, that’s the thing that got me. The material is telling that because of technology, many are relying to the internet to get things instantly. The best case in point today is the mounting online shopping sites, even in social networks there a lot of individuals who are showcasing their products. To shoes, clothes, gadgets and even to whitening soaps, they are all there.

There are big companies whose offering this service too, consumers could visit their webpage, find the item for consumption, settle the amount and for just two to three working days, defends on the location, Voila! You got your item right on your doorstep. Also, the article state that these things might be good, but then the people ability to talk and communicate without selling is now tainted. That’s the reason why I wanted to emphasis that the internet is made to make military man commune with their love ones even if there afar. How can they communicate if a pop-out suddenly get into the way and block the reception? See, it might be convenient and effortless to buy online but does it leave you a choice to be a dynamic market?

In one click we can change the world, making our voice heard is greater than just listening and making others talk things that they only wish us to understand. We can develop ways to make our lives better but nevertheless, we must do things to make our lives even worthwhile.

I haven’t got a chance to get over this; I’d been such a moron believing that Mr. Net is a power tool, that with just one click I can communicate everywhere, anytime time and at my own choice. Well, there is a fact to these things but then I got to ask myself, have I really made my time surfing and browsing worthwhile?

It is explained that the internet was use by some companies to search for possible market who can afford to buy a Ford. See, the true essence of the internet, which is to connect and communicate with people without selling anything I presume, have been vague all this time. Investors are seeing the internet to be a marketplace this time, where a lot of advertisements start to pop out of the screen and barraging your system without you doing anything. Base on my experience, this had been a constant scenario all the time. Even when I’m just looking blankly at the screen, or looking at someone else picture, a yellow banner started to come out saying “by clicking this you’ll win USD 1, 000,000” and when you start to click it, without any intent, a Travia online something come out, and when you click it, something else come out again. It’s really frustrating; I just can’t have a valuable time without any distraction, why would these investors think of the internet as a promotion hot spot? Haven’t they realized that it’s still better if they just have it on Television?

But what is an apocalypse? Is it were paradise is hiding? The Garden of Eden use to be situated? What about the culprit who lure Eve and Adam to eat the apple? Is the Serpent still waiting for its next prey?

How does the internet be destruction? How can it make a child not study his homework? How can it devastate relationship among people and build it once more?

What is the reason behind the growth of this market? The Market by which is not a place but a group of people who relate to their needs and wants?

Is there a real online market? As of today, it does exist but how would people relate with it?

What is the actual purpose of the internet? Does it really belong to the extraterrestrial and that they are just using it to wipe out the earthlings on earth? Or the idea is just as absurd as the one whose reading it?

# The Longing David Weinberger

What is this thing that people yearn for and adopted like Hulk? Does it involve the angry or the hate that suppose to make it big or just like a duckling that turns to be a swan?

*“As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport.”*

Not all our lives we live a happy life, not every time where going to be thinking that the Fates is actually doing us a favor for being prosperous, and eventually, everything would fall off into pieces, every leaves must fall unto the ground when winters nearing, an eye must shed some tears for every burn, heartbreak, trial and miseries that we are to face. Everything would change, our friends, our pet, our jobs, our companions, our age and even our city addresses, but every time we come to this phase. We had the choice to choose and be rational.

Other things come our way, and each moment, each experience is different, each one only happens once and when we let the moment pass us by, it will be gone forever. We can’t be half alive all our lives, we have to be out with the rest of us, get hurt,  make mistakes, pick ourselves up and make it again.  Otherwise, we’re only half a human being and that’s not for us, we’re a lot more than that.

It’s just the same with Mr. Net, it become meek that needs enough attention and growth, though no one owns it, without the people who post, browse and surf it, it doesn’t have a life of its own, it become worthless, Nada, zero, nothing. It’s just the same with putting the all the dominoes together and making it fall over afterwards. For companies though they have a wide range of speculators, the seemingly fact that it’s going to fade come into view that makes them tremble to their feet and make them think as if they insist.

Though we don’t understand Mr. Net only one thing cam into our minds, it’s free and advantageous.

What is the main reason why human get attach to Mr. Net? Is it because everyone who is being poison by the fact that there are things in store for them with using the net? And that gaining knowledge about the variation makes them exceptional?

Can we build a new world with the Web? And made this world to be our own? With our own rules to obey and set, I imagine a world where I would be the catalyst of what are true and wrong I imagine it to be a life where I will be able to run and eat all the things that I wanted without anyone asking me for a tip.

But then is it important in the workplace? How can we define our own workplace? Do we have the freedom to set our own rules? Do we still have duties to follow? Or we set them to be our own? Can we create differences? And make it a better world?

# Talk Is Cheap Rick Levine

In today’s world, talking whatsoever is just a daily thing. You can shout insults to someone without having a bruise, even trash talk them on their very faces. But those these things make us feel better? Or is it another way of being monotonous? Putting thought without a great sense? Being hard-headed rubbish who always complained?

Talking is a way of life, but what do we find in talking with someone? Do we get what we wanted in response? Or is it just another piece of junk? I expected to have a material which makes me understand the candid meaning of talking and responding, of having a conversation and a dialogue, of being the best that I can be when conversing with people and relating myself with the mediums of conversation.

Also, as a challenge to myself, I’m looking forward on seeing the adversity on having a fruitful conversation, where I can relate my thought without hesitation and malice. I intended to create an environment where the people whom I’ll be talking with are comfortable and would response with enthusiasm. I anticipate having a broader consideration on my grammar and choose of words, having no errors and that everyone could relate into.

*“People in high tech take pride in their work.”*

Artistry definitely is inside a programmer or a developer, without it he can’t analyze the things that need to be done. It is on being inventive that we started to use words and talk, and it is through talking that we deal with our colleagues, friends and pets. And now that we have the ability to commune using the cyber space, nothing could be better than just sit back in the most comfortable couch and drink Rita’s coffee.

We can react, suggest and comment on someone’s exploit whether good or bad. Also, we can share our thoughts, opinion, retorts and for an answer that we can always react into. Talking is a process where somebody is a messenger and a receiver, wherein you should not be afraid to get insults and humiliation to whatsoever reason. Someone should learn to reason, make a mistake and be offended.

Today, everyone in the whole universe can be linked anytime of the day, they can share the same interest and make sense talking about it or they can be gibberish where only they could grasp. Website is bombarding the whole mankind, even on Television, somebody would tell about their products and service available in this link. Even individuals pay for domains just to say that they are linked, and that they are next to being cool. Even if the only thing that is posted on their sites is total nonsense that only their mothers would dare to check. Really, talking nowadays is a totally cheaper.

A daughter, conspicuous to learn where he came from asks his father “Daddy, how did I come into this world?” The father, without much to think of an appropriate answer said “Son, listen carefully. Mom and Dad met each other on a Cyber Café. Without any place to go into, we decided to go into the restroom. Dad connected to Mom. Mom at that moment made some downloads from Dad’s memory stick. When Dad finishes uploading we discovered that we didn’t use a firewall. Since it’s too late to cancel or delete, nine months later we ended up with a virus.” *(Anonymous, 2010).* I didn’t actually mind about what you might think about this share of thought. But then one thing is clear, our world nowadays is pull of viruses. Some are venial and a lot are just fine.

Conversation mediums are widespread; there are free chat rooms and online messengers that is just one click away to your boring day. E-mail are extensively flooding my inboxes, it may be a spam or just a document that the professor wish his students to study. See, the Web have its textbox and a search button, just type anything on the textbox, click search, Aye! You will definitely enter the future. Links are everywhere also, you can bust someone’s secret without the intent of doing so. It’s just a random thing nowadays, hit and miss.

Does our voice need to be our thoughts?How talking become cheap?How can talking leads to something big?What is a conversational view point?How are one-way list be more realistic?

# Markets Are Conversations Doc Searls and David Weinberger

Does the need of the market must be settled and understood investors?

*“Markets were…conversations between people who sought out others who shared the same interests.”*

Market are conversation, allow me to give further details about this, as I read through the article I keep on thinking how are market converse? In what ways would they actually do this? But then I remember my teacher way back in high school. If I’m not mistaken it’s in Economics, that our teacher tells us about this company who become profitable with just selling intrigues. I guess it’s on some state up north; they aren’t just paparazzi but are the employer of those stalkers. They sell scandals, news and even remarks from public figures. When I come to think of it a thought came into my mind, does anyone patronize this heck of a cloud? Does anyone fancy to know someone else mishaps? Or is it just a matter of playing getting latest?

As we see on today’s news broadcast, there are a lot of market bumming in somewhere. We don’t actually get in touch with it but we come to recognize their needs. It’s the same with conversing, we come to share our thoughts with the same people and making it known, it’s up to them whether they share the equivalent market or not. It’s never ending, market grow and fades so another will come out. It’s just a matter of choosing the right and differentiating it with the wrong. There we would be able to see ourselves starting to make sense with our inner self. We initiate progression and be absolute market holders that don’t just talk but share the same niche.

Markets aren’t just evolving with advertisements and competitors; it’s all about answering the needs of the consumers.

What composes a market? How to build conversation and penetrate a market? Is there ways to develop conversation? What does a person want? What support should infiltrate in determining the market?

# The Hyperlinked Organization David Weinberger

Without reading it, a thought came into my mind. Does this institution ever exist? What does it do? Who founded it? What ideals does it share? But then some distinct principles got me, can this happen in an organization? Having all your data to the network is good, but can it is better?

I expect to have a broader understanding on how relations build inside the workplace, is the hierarchy being implemented well or is it making employees turn into blood thirsty-brain eaters? Where they act like marionettes controlled by a network protocol? I wanted to analyze how Mr. Net helps in making workstation work and making it worse. Accordingly, is there a need for the management to evaluate their networks and ask the rank and file about their position about this? They are the ones who maneuver this set of rules daily, does it help them? Or is it just making their lives horrible? Internet is a world where people communicate and do the things that they wish. Why make it a source of trouble and misunderstanding? Can we not use it in doing surveys, questionnaire, evaluation and the like to make our workplace even stronger? Notice that many are depending on the resourcefulness of Mr. Net, even the most holy organization, named The Vatican have their own Site to enable missionaries, evangelist and power people to reach them anytime. Why does Facebook defeat Frienster in terms of the number of users? Because of Chat, that was offered in Yahoo Messenger but no one see someone’s profile. It’s on the Hyperlinked.

*“You can only have a conversation if you’re not afraid to be wrong”*

Hyperlink Organization, an institution where a network of people can access the company’s information and services offered within the internet. That’s what I understand, that when an organization is being operated and has a link in the internet, opportunity follows and become profitable.

Having my own web page in the internet, I have to limit the information that I should put on it, especially personal stuff that may relate to my destruction. Many people nowadays are so attach with this technology that they forgot to be ethical. They stalk, they put on comments that can hurt and become an issue, and they curse and become sarcastic. They wouldn’t even think twice if what they are typing and submitting is humanely acceptable. However, when the overall organization made public and let their information open, competitors could overturned there data and make it there’s, and result to larger company war. That wouldn’t be a healthy competition does it?

Conversation is widely use in the Web, you can chat to unknown people and still hide your identity, you can make friends and be witty even without thinking. We want our lives instant, that is why the internet is widely known. Even people that are being ignored now have their own share of niche who listens to what they are saying, posting and playing. The dumbest people become Mr. Know-all with the help of this information that are commonly free from the internet. It’s just a one click know how for us to understand that life is now hyperlinked.

I remember when I was in grade school, I’m afraid not being able to find my mother in the outside window of our school, I even cried when our teacher said that they must go out. I don’t even want to converse with my seatmate, I’m a total cry baby. Why am I saying this? Well, in my everyday life I’d been totally dependent to what my family offers me, to the course I’ll study in college, the choice of clothes and friends.

I haven’t tried conversing using my own thoughts and feelings, it’s only in my web page that I do, I decided what to post and whom I confirm as my friend. I ignored and reject suggestions; I play games and get caught. I’m becoming aware of the fact that in using the internet, I can do things that I wanted without anyone getting in the way.

Notice that if an institution wish to make their network public is a great risk, a risk on their part and there consumers. They would be able to find a market that will patronize them, but they can also view competitors that are waiting for them to get out of the way.

Letting ourselves attach to what the web could offer could make a lot of difference, it may cause good substance or bad bits of pieces. It’s just by managing it properly that we would be able to get what we expected to have by making our workplace hyperlink.

How does having a hyperlink institution help? What are the things to be considered? How can it be manage? Does it require any precaution? How can it be implemented to the workplace? In what approach could who implement this?

# EZ Answers Christopher Locke and David Weinberger

In a world full of uncertainty, is there still an easy way out?

*“Lead, follow, or get out of the way.”*

EZ Answer does mean effortless answer? As I put things together and integrate foe a probable cause, a thought came to me that’s says, why are you wasting your time reading that article? Does it make a difference if you try to resolve all the assonance that the material could offer? Would I bleed if I read it further? This are just some of the things that bugs me, I don’t mind try to explain it and make an educated guess because I might start bleeding.

Does the internet really help us? Or is it another creature from outer space who’s trying to invade our dream and eat our souls? You see, I learn to become hypothetical by just analyzing this material and finding uncomplicated solutions. After a week of excessive attention, from bathing, feeding, cuddling and whining would still end up to is found wandering on the streets with its leg broken. There were a lot of times that I pity this things, for they also has a feeling that need not only food and shelter but also the attention of love and care they must say. At the time of real defense, we start to manage our selves on the things beyond our control and try to obligate responses.

We need not be gurus to become expert and find the easy way out thru things that seems to be complicated and hard to resolve, we most never give up a part of ourselves just by finding the easy answers.

Answers come within the must extraordinary time.

How can we have our ideas productive?

Will we share a common sense of humor, or will we learn to laugh in new languages?

Will we make a better world answering these questions? Or will we die uneducated?

Do we always have to learn from our mistakes?

How can I develop a productive terrain?

# Post-Apocalypso [Christopher Locke](http://www.gonzomarkets.com/)

Why does this distractions result to something out of the box?

*“Ignorance is not a value you often hear extolled.”*

Wow! So there’s a post-destruction. Where could one find peace when they are stuck with the norms that people wish to comply with? As I read through the line of the last material, suddenly my mind began to procrastinate and my brain start to say gets some sleep! Notice that it doesn’t involve anything on this article, but I will tell this because I wish to pass something tomorrow. I rather make a storyline not related to the article than read it often than what my eyes wanted. I admit that having this article is a total wreck on my part, but then as I’m convulsing and started to bleed fume. It come out that I’m starting to like this, does I make any sense here? Of course not, I choose to be ignored and shred to a certain extent than be the center of attraction.

Reading through the lines of the material makes me want to puff up and get some fresh air, because the business book is starting to get humorous and it really made me ROFL, what am I thinking? Do these make sense to you? Getting the load of reviewing something that implies a relationship with workplaces in which individuals develop and be developed.

As I perish to complete the two hundred fifty words of this review, a deliberation came to and made me see, how could I become accustomed with the destruction of not being perceived and discern by people whom I wish to be with? Simple, ignorance is not admired.

Ignorance is just a matter of being a person with much understanding and limits a goal.

What cause this destruction?

How could ignorance leads to freedom?

What is the foundation of stereotypes?

Does communication help link people toward reinforcement?

How can we benefit from it?

# The beginning of the Journey

*Markets are Conversation;* does this mean a thing to me? Or does it actually involve a story of my own.

Living a life where everyone supposes to give you advices is never easy especially when this people involve those who are close to you. Sometimes it becomes bias that we never thought of giving a rational thought about it.

There are moments in my life that my heart is full of passion, that if by any chance be dazed and my secret overflow or spill in the ground like water that can never be gathered together. As none can see the wind but its effect on the trees, neither the emotions but their effects on the face and the body, most of us were obsess with our day by day jobs that we don’t even see the significance of the things around us, there were many things in our daily living that influence us that can possible be found to our family and friends, school, clothing, community and even media and music genre. These explain how people should consider how Mr. Technology does affect our daily lives, in what aspect do we have to mull over constraints that the fast phase world offer? With that, a question is raised; do we need information and Technology in our lives? Do have to assess its foundation to have productivity? Or is it just by making it do things for us do we learn?

I wanted to interpret this subject in three points. First, how can Information technology be Business? Simple, when you know something about technology you would be able to intervene with the business process. When you have the initiative to troubleshoot, code, manage a file, analyze or even just by typing into the keyboard. You can make business out of these things. Second point, Business is Information Technology when you start to create a system or a business procedure where you would be able to automate the Entire Corporation or set of people. Here, you would be able to facilitate the business needs to make the progression that they require. Lastly, the holistic indication of having I.T in a business and vice versa is that we would be able to create productivity with fewer time constraints, that we can be able to evolve with just a system supporting us to make our lives grow profitably.

Having I.T in the business really gives a lot of opportunities for individuals to develop and be advantageous of the technology. It is not enough that you know how to create procedure but also one must be aware of the competition that in the market where everyone is retailing information that’s aided by technology. In this days where technology is booming we learn to further understand the change and got to put our lives into it.

I.T as a business just exemplifies the rationality of things here on earth, and that all the things we have here are interconnected and can be intertwined. Related to this is the Law of the Universe, here when you throw a ball upward towards the sky, only one thing well surely happen and that is the fact that it well come down, and it is because of the gravity that is falling oneself is basically in here reasoning and taking chances to prove its magic.

*Markets consist of human beings, not demographic sectors*. A statement that I once heard from my Marketing professor, issuing a statement like it makes life a little strange and inconsiderate. As a child I heard my mother using the word market to indicate a place where we are suppose to buy goods that we are to eat. So when my Professor told us that a market doesn’t just indicate a place in general and actually relate it to humans, it got me.

Putting things into clear perspective, it actually resembles where we as humans suppose to meet with other human beings to trade and make connection with, there are many people to make the life on earth much easier than just letting the world immobilize us with their own concept of life in the market.

As time goes by people learn to take the life they wanted, by the aide of the new technology enveloping our world we got to learn to associate ourselves to the change and try to make it even better than what we expect to get. That is the way for us human to survive and I guess that is where the word competition originated and take place.

We as human beings have the tendency to cope with what the word could offer us and that world would actually be culminated only if there are the once who learn to acknowledge it and put pressure to it part by part. We actually don’t hesitate and put things into our hands for it only resemble weakness to our egos.

Keeping in shape a lot of aspiration in part by the different sectors of our lives, is one way to concede the ability to comprehend and realize the part of the game. Market not only resembles people and the tasks lead by them. It also require a lot of perseverance and inept have a handle on this things that is about to be learn.

*Conversation among human beings sound human, they are conducted in a human voice.*

# “[A life lived in fear, is a life half lived.”](http://roycerufine.wordpress.com/2010/02/10/a-life-lived-in-fear-is-a-life-half-lived/)

Not all our lives we live a happy life, not every time where going to be thinking that the Fates is actually doing us a favor for being prosperous, and eventually, everything would  fall off into  pieces, every leaves must fall unto the ground when winters nearing, an eye must shed some tears for every burn, heartbreak, trial and miseries that we are to face. Everything would change, our friends, our pet, our jobs, our companions, our age and even our city addresses, but every time we come to this phase. We had the choice to choose and be rational.

Other things come our way, and each moment, each experience is different, each one only happens once and when we let the moment pass us by, it will be gone forever. We can’t be half alive all our lives, we have to be out with the rest of us, get hurt,  make mistakes, pick ourselves up and make it again.  Otherwise, we’re only half a human being and that’s not for us, we’re a lot more than that.

# [Taming our emotions](http://roycerufine.wordpress.com/2010/02/10/taming-our-emotions/)

There are moments in my life, when my heart s so full of emotion, that if by likelihood it be shaken, or into its depths like chunks drops some careless word, it overflows and it’s secret, spill in the ground like water, can never be gathered together. As none can see the wind but in its effect on the trees, neither can we see the emotions but in their effects on the face and the body, most of us were obsess with our daily jobs that we don’t even see the important of our inner self, there were many things in our daily living that influence our emotion. That can be found to our family and friends, school, clothing, community and even media and music genre. These explain how people value emotion by just merely looking at the colors that can help us to improve our emotion.

Our parents are the ones who raise us and made us of what we are now, we cannot underestimate their very existence in our lives. They were the first one whom we made contact with. Each member of the family made an important role in each and every one of us that resulted for us to get our basic necessities.

I grow-up having deep connection with God, for every six o’clock in the evening we were praying Angelus and the rosary, I was lenient on my daily schedule since my grandfather was so strict, I can’t spent too much time outside our house for my grandfather would scare me that I might have elephant’s feet coming from my playmates nasty hands, that was the reason why I was spending more of my free time doing my homework and reading advance notes of our future lessons that concluded the bullies note that I was  geek,  but if they only knew the adversity that I was experiencing at least they  will have an idea how apathetic I felt every time they are making fun of me.

I have my own particular sorrows, loves and delights. But sorrow, gladness, yearning, hope, love, belong t every one of us, in all times and in all places but Music is the only means whereby I felt complimentary emotion, the greatest thing that happen to my life was when I was exposed to music, from playing in recitals and singing in choir groups in our church that time I can say that I was happy and felt contented every time I was singing.

The farther we have traveled the harder it was to navigate. We crossed roads, went around houses, and at one point even around large shopping center. Soon it became apparent that our search was hopeless, because we never learn to use our emotion properly, because ones we know where we are great about and then will see that we’ve chosen the right things and decision in our lives. That was why if nothing was ventured, nothing will be gained

Once there lived a rose and a toad. The bush on which the rose blossomed grew in a small semicircular garden in front of a country cottage. The garden was sadly neglected; rank weeds grew over the old sunken flower-beds and the garden walks, and it was long since anyone had swept them or sprinkled sand over them. The wooden fence with railings fashioned in the shape of spikelets, which had once been painted green, had cracked and crumbled, and the paint had all peeled off; the railings had been pulled out by the village boys to play soldiers with, and by peasants coming to the house, who used them to fight off the angry mongrel and the other dogs who kept him company.

But the flower-garden was none the worse for this damage. The remains of the fence were entwined with hops, large white-flowered bindweed and mouse-ear chickweed, which hung upon them in pale-green clusters of pale-lilac flowers scattered here and there. The prickly thistles grew to such a size on the rich moist soil (all around the flower-garden was a large shady orchard) that they looked almost like trees. The yellow moth mulleins reared their flowery spikes still higher. The nettles occupied a pretty large corner of the flower-garden; they stung, of course, but then one could admire their dark foliage from a distance, especially when it made a background for the pale beauty of the delicate rose petals.

The rose blossomed one fine May morning; when it opened out its petals the fleeing morning dew left several bright teardrops upon them. It seemed as if the rose was weeping. But the world around her was so beautiful, so clear and sunny on that lovely morning when first she saw the blue sky, and felt the fresh morning breeze, and the beams of the radiant sun shone through her delicate petals with a rosy light; and it was so quiet and peaceful in the flower-garden, that if she could have wept, she would have done so, not through sadness but through the sheer joy of living. She could not speak; all she could do was to nod her dainty head and spread around her a delicate fragrance, and in that fragrance was her speech, her tears, and her prayer.

Meanwhile, between the roots of the bush on the damp ground below-as if clinging to it on his flat stomach-sat afairly fat old toad, who, after having hunted worms and midges all night, had sat down towards the morning to rest from his labours, choosing for the purpose a nice damp and shady spot. He sat with hooded eyes and you could hardly tell that he was breathing; his dingy-grey, warty, sticky sides worked like bellows, and one ugly webbed foot stuck out on one side-he was too lazy to draw it in under his belly. He found no pleasure in the morning, the sunshine or the fine weather; he had eaten his fill and was going to have a nap.

But when the breeze dropped for a moment and the scent of the rose was not wafted away, the toad smelt it, and felt vaguely uneasy. For a long time, however, he was too lazy to look where the smell came from.

It was long since anyone had visited the flower-garden where the rose grew and the toad sat. It had been in the autumn of the previous year, just on the day when the toad had found a nice hole for himself under one of the stones of the house's foundation and was about to crawl in there for his long winter sleep, that the little boy, who had been sitting in the garden every sunny day all through the summer, had last been there. He had sat under the window, while his sister, a grown-up girl, had sat next to him reading a book or doing some sewing, and glancing occasionally at her brother. He was a little boy of seven with big eyes and a large head on a thin body. He was very fond of his flower-garden (it was his because hardly anyone else ever went into that desolate spot), and when he came there he would sit down in the sun on an old wooden bench, standing in a dry sandy path right near the house-the path had survived because it was used for reaching the shutters when they had to be closed—and would start reading a book which he had brought with him.

"Would you like me to throw you the ball, Rupert?" his sister had asked him from the window. "Don't you want to run about and play with it?"

"No, Masha, I'd rather sit with a book."

# Lone Rose Petals

And he would sit there for a long time, reading. When he got tired of reading about Robinson Crusoes, and savage lands, and sea pirates, he would leave the open book and make his way into the heart of the flower-garden. Here he knew every bush and almost every stalk. He squatted down in front of the thick stem of the moth mullein, which was surrounded with hairy whitish leaves, and was twice as tall as he, and watched the little ant people running up it to milk their cows-the plant lice; the ant would delicately touch the thin little tubes sticking up on their backs and collect the tiny drops of sweet clear fluid that appeared at the ends of the tubes. He watched the dung-beetle busily struggling along with his ball, the spider spreading his cunning rainbow-hued net and lying in wait for a fly, and the flat-nosed lizard basking in the sun with open mouth, the green corselets on its back gleaming; and once, towards the evening, he had seen a real live hedgehog! He had scarcely been able to contain himself from crying out and clapping his hands for sheet joy; afraid to scare the prickly little beast, he had sat there holding his breath, his happy eyes wide and shining, gazing rapturously at it as it snorted and sniffed at the roots of the rose bush with its little pig's snout, looking for worms, and working its fat bear-like little paws in a funny way.

"Rupert, you'd better come in, darling, it's getting damp," his sister had called.

Frightened by the human voice, the hedgehog had quickly drawn his coat of quills over his head and hind paws and rolled him up into a ball. The boy touched the spines gingerly; the little beast had shrunk smaller and started puffing rapidly like a little steam-engine.

Afterwards he had improved his acquaintance with that hedgehog. He was such a frail, quiet, gentle little boy that even the smallest of creatures seemed to understand it and took to him quickly. How glad he was when the hedgehog tasted the milk which the master of the garden had brought him in a saucer!

This spring the boy was unable to come out to his favourite spot. His sister still sat by him, this time not at the window, but at his bedside; she was reading a book, but not for herself; she was reading it out loud to him, because it was hard for him to lift his head from the white pillows, hard for him to hold even the smallest of books in his wasted hands, not to mention that his eyes quickly grew tired from reading. It looked as if he would never go out to his favourite spot any more.

"Masha!" he suddenly whispered to his sister.

"Yes, darling?"

"It's nice in the garden now, isn't it? Have the roses blossomed?"

His sister leaned over and kissed his pale cheek, furtively wiping away a tear.

"It is nice, dear, and very nice. And the roses have blossomed too. We shall go out there together on Monday. The doctor will allow you to go out."

The boy did not answer, and drew a deep sigh. His sister began reading to him again.

"That will do. I am tired. I want to sleep."

His sister straightened his pillows and the white coverlet, and he turned over with difficulty towards the wall. The sun shone through the window, which looked out on the flower-garden, and threw its bright beams upon the bed and the little figure that lay on it, lighting up the pillows and the coverlet and gilding the short-cut hair and thin neck of the child.

The rose knew nothing of this; she grew there outside in all her splendour; the next day she was to open out in full blossom, and the day after that she would begin to fade and shed her petals. That was all a rose's span! But short though it was, it had its full measure of fear and sorrow.

The toad had seen her.

When he saw the flower for the first time with his wicked ugly eyes, something strange stirred within him. He could not tear himself away from the tender pink petals, and he kept staring and staring. He took a fancy to the rose and felt a desire to come closer to that fragrant and beautiful creature. And to express his tender feelings, he could think of nothing better to say than these words:

"You wait," he croaked, "I'll gobble you up!"

The rose shuddered. Why was she fixed to her stem? The free birds twittered around her, fluttering and hopping from twig to twig; sometimes they flew far away, no one knew where. The butterflies, too, were free. How she envied them! If she were like one of them, she would take wing and flee the wicked eyes that pursued her with their staring look. The rose knew not that toads sometimes hunt butterflies too.

"I'll gobble you up!" the toad repeated, moving closer to the rose. He tried to speak in as sweet a voice as he could, but the effect was more sinister than ever.

"I'll gobble you up!" he repeated, staring all the time at the flower. The poor thing watched with horror as the nasty sticky paws clutched the branches of the bush on which she was growing. But it was hard for the toad to climb: his flat body could only crawl and hop about on level ground. After each attempt he looked up at the nodding swaying flower, and the poor rose had her heart in her mouth.

"Good God!" she prayed, "any other death but this!" Meanwhile the toad kept clambering up. But at the point where the old stalks ended and the young twigs began he had rather a bad time of it. The smooth dark green bark of the rose bush was studded with hard sharp thorns. The toad pricked all his feet and his belly on them, and fell bleeding to the ground. He glared at the blossom with hatred.

"I said I would gobble you up, and I will!" he repeated.

Evening set in; it was time to think of supper, and so the wounded toad slunk away to catch the insects napping. Rage did not prevent him from stuffing his belly as full as he always did; his injuries were not serious and he decided, after having had a rest, to try and reach that fascinating and hateful flower again.

He took a fairly long rest. Morning came, and then noon and the rose had almost forgotten her enemy. She had opened out to the full now and was the most beautiful creation in the flower-garden. There was nobody to come and admire her, though: the young master lay helpless in his little bed, and his sister did not leave his side or go over to the window. Only the birds and the butterflies fluttered around the rose and the buzzing bees sometimes alighted on her open corolla and flew out covered with the yellow pollen, which gave them quite a shaggy look. A nightingale flew into the rose bush and began to sing his song. How unlike the croaking of the toad it was! The rose listened to the song and was happy. She thought the nightingale was singing for her, and perhaps he really was. She did not notice her enemy, who was creeping stealthily up the branches. This time the toad spared neither paws nor belly; covered with blood, he crawled doggedly up and up-and, all of a sudden, amid the sweet tender notes of the nightingale, she heard the familiar hideous croaking: "I said I would gobble you up, and I will!"

The toad glared at her from a near-by twig. The wicked creature had only to make a single movement in order to seize the flower. The rose realized that she was lost. . . .

The little master had been lying still for quite a time. Sitting in a chair by his bedside, his sister thought that he was asleep. In her lap lay an open book, but she was not reading it. Little by little her weary head drooped: the poor girl had been sitting up with her sick brother for several nights, and now fell into a light doze.

"Masha," the boy suddenly whispered.

His sister started. She had been dreaming that she was sitting by the window, and her little brother was playing in the garden, like the year before, and was calling her. She opened her eyes, and seeing him in bed, emaciated and weak, she drew a deep sigh.

"What is it, darling?"

"Masha, you told me the roses were blossoming! May I ... have one?"

"Of course you may, darling!" She went up to the window and looked at the bush. A single but gorgeous rose was growing on it.

"A rose has blossomed just for you, and such a lovely one! I'll put it here next to your bed in a glass of water, shall I?"

"Yes, do. I'd like it."

The girl took a scissors and went out into the garden. She had not been out of doors for a long time; the sun dazzled her, and the fresh air made her slightly dizzy. She went up to the bush at the very moment when the toad was making ready to seize the rose.

"Oh, what a horrid thing!" she cried, and seizing the twig, she gave it a hard shake. The toad dropped off and his belly hit the ground with a smack. In a fit of rage he tried to jump at the girl, but he could jump no higher than the hem of her dress, and was kicked far away. He did not dare to try again after that, and could do nothing but watch the girl from a safe distance. Carefully she cut the flower and took it into the room.

When the boy saw his sister with the flower in her hand he smiled feebly for the first time in many weeks, and, with an effort, made a movement with his emaciated hand.

"Let me have it," he whispered. "I want to smell it."

His sister laid the stalk in his hand and helped him to move it up to his face. He drank in the sweet fragrance, and smiled happily, whispering, "Ah, how lovely! . . ."

Then his little face grew set and grave, and he fell silent forever.

Although she had been cut before she began to shed her petals, the rose felt that she had not been cut in vain. She was placed in a glass all by herself at the head of the little coffin. There were whole bouquets there of other flowers, but, to tell the truth, no one even looked at them. Not so with the rose. When the young girl placed it on the table she raised it to her lips and kissed it. A teardrop rolled down her cheek on to the flower, and that was the best thing that had ever happened to the rose in all her life. When she began to fade she was laid between the leaves of a thick old book and dried, and then, many years afterwards, she was given to me. That is how I know the story.

# [“Symphony of her soul”](http://roycerufine.wordpress.com/2010/02/10/%e2%80%9csymphony-of-her-soul%e2%80%9d/)

*“Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's when you've had everything to do, and you've done it.”*

There were times in our lives that we never claimed the sweetness of our world, times when we never appreciated the chirping of the birds, the melodious singsong of the insects and the glorious dances of the ocean waves. That is where something beautiful came into our lives and we don’t hold unto it, we regret ourselves for the chance that have flown away from our hands, but after sometime we’ll know that it’s just a way of God to test us that there is still a fat chance to live into with.

There are moments when our heart is so full of emotion, that if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like chunks drops some careless word, it overflows and it’s a secret, spill in the ground like water, can never be gathered together. As none can see the wind but in its effect on the trees, neither can we actually saw the emotions but their effects on the face and the body. What can be found to our family and friends, school, clothing, community and even media and music genre explains how people value emotion by just merely looking at the colors that can help us to improve it.

Every December, when people was too busy fixing their Christmas decoration in front of their houses, when children gather empty tin cans and bottle cups to made do-it-yourself drums and tambourines, when young ladies are patiently waiting for their boyfriends to date them on homecoming night, and when songs of caroling are reverberating all over town, a girl had been busy recalling the lost thoughts of someone she have forgotten all her life. Mesmerizing about a past is the only leisure that she can do, lingering on her was the memory of her utmost feat.

Spending life in school was not hard for her; she was always honored by her teachers for being diligent and bright, she even led the Student Government in their school for three consecutive terms, became an active Peer youth educator, have gone to several seminars here and outside of town that led her to made a membership to numerous organization just like Save the children that had actually modified her life. She believes that leaders aren't born, but they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work and determination is the price we all have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal. Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

When she feel that she had reach the end and that she cannot go one step further, when life seems to be drained of all purpose, she got to remember what a wonderful opportunity to start all over again, to turn over a new page. She got to learn by heart that simple bruises can’t quite harm her entire system. She’s obliged of her parents for they are the ones who raise her and made her of what she is now, she can’t ever underestimate their very existence in her life. They were the first one whom she made contact with and that she’ll never ruin their reliance. She was lenient on her daily schedule since her grandfather was an authoritarian, she can’t even spent too much time outside their house for her grandfather would scare her that she might have elephant’s foot coming from her playmates nasty hands, that’s one reason why she spends more of her free time doing homework and reading advance notes of their future lessons that concluded the bullies note that she’s a geek, but if they only knew the adversity that she was experiencing, at least they will have an idea how apathetic she felt every time they are making fun of her.

That’s the same reason why she thrashes hard to be an exemplary citizen; she volunteered to be a person of great nobility. She teaches adolescence of Reproductive health awareness (AFRHS), Life skills, Convention on the rights of a Child (CRC) and Population, Health and Environment (PHE). She learns that she’s not the only one who experience struggles in life, that many are still incisive about the goodness of themselves. And through that she gained poise to persist the things that she has started. But she cannot surmount these things without the help of Save the Children, a non-government organization that enables volunteers to flare-up their desire to be of assistance to other citizens of need. They are the ones who make her believe that she can actually make ordinary things extraordinarily well.

The farther we have traveled the harder it was to navigate. We crossed roads, went around houses, and at one point even around large shopping center. Soon it became apparent that our search was hopeless, because we never learn to use our emotion properly, because ones we know where we are great about and then will see that we’ve chosen the right things and decision in our lives. That was why if nothing was ventured, nothing will be gained.

# [“Un monde de silence…”](http://roycerufine.wordpress.com/2010/02/10/%e2%80%9cun-monde-de-silence%e2%80%a6%e2%80%9d/)

It was in the midst of the night when she wake-up unable to breath, just then she realize that she was past dreaming; Supposed you and I were sitting on a quiet room, doing nothing but staring to one another, in which we doesn’t hear any single sound in front the window overlooking the garden. We were choked by the overflowing sights that we are seeing, tempted by the different gestures and hand movements that we make them understand, but still, they are lost and think of us as an oaf, a clodpoll and a ninny, a numbskull, a lack wit and a coxcomb!, this humiliations we couldn’t hear but lingers to our souls. Kring! Kring! “Argh! When would this annoying noise stop?! I’m too sleepy to get up for zeppelin’s sake”. After a few tickling, the sound transcend, thankful that it did, She continue to her unsatisfied sleep, as she was oozing to dreamland, she was shock to hear a loud shrieks of words outside her round, as an immediate reaction, she without further ado get up, irritated as she is, open the door and stared to her mother then left the room without saying anything. She went straight down to the dining room were her favorite meal was serve, when she sat on her sit behind her father’s side, she eventually notice the new addition to there already big family, a kitten whom she knows was adopted by her youngest brother who is really fond of stingy pets, that after a week of excessive attention, from bathing, feeding, cuddling and whining would still end up to be found wandering on the streets with its leg broken.

There were a lot of times that she pity this things, for they also has a feeling that need not only food and shelter but also the attention of love and care. But what can she do about it? As far as her mother was concern, a cat, a dog, a bird or a hyena wouldn’t last in their house unless they stop aging and would learn how to seek their own food and take care of their dung’s, which by nature is impossible. She prepares herself to school for she might be expelled if she’d be late again, she still can’t force her feet to carry her entire system and even though she felt a little hazy because of lack of sleep.

She still has to move and went to her side in the back behind the six sitters’ family car. Outside the car as she was the only one inside, she saw her five year old brother cuddling the new kitten, which as she point her glance at her mother’s direction was devastatingly gruesome. On the other side, she saw her siblings busy peeking on their father’s wallet waiting for an extra allowance as it what was inside of their wallets are not enough minus their credit cards. Also, she sees their one and only nanny con maid who are busy holding a waste basket, a broom and a dust pan to her two magical hands. She sighs and thinks that this really is one of those normal mornings on their yard, still very unquiet but predictable, without taking enough effort, to open the window of the car, she glance out of it and shout to her father about her being late. As she did this, they were all startled and stupefied. After a while, she heard her mother’s screeching and regretted what she did. As her father start the engine of the car, with her mother who didn’t stop waving to them as if they’ll be away for a long period of time, she felt relieve because at last she’ll be away from the miserable house of them. At school, nothing really happens that might change her entire mood except of her scheduled Oral defense in which she didn’t exert too much effort.

At the time of the said defense, she confidently expresses herself about decreasing financial growth of the Philippines, its unimaginable debts from around hundred banks all over the globe, and the ravenous attacks of the militant group “Abu Sayyaf” on southern Philippines. As she finishes her speech, some clap their hands and many snorted and didn’t mind. Well. She really doesn’t care about this people for she had already finished her part whether pass or not. The final and most expected bell came; it’s time to left school and began her journey home, since her father’s office is too far from her school, she was force to ride Utility buses and jeepneys. As she was sitting on the long hard couch of a jeep, there where this two fat and witty couple that settled on the far end of the jeep. She didn’t take too much notice of them for they look like they can’t do any harm, even to a fly, in fact, the guy bowed and smiles at her, then she realize that something’s wrong because they keep on staring at her as if to get her attention, well, as a precaution, She didn’t look back but keep herself busy sightseeing. When she cannot obtain herself she started to pick on their side and as she expected they were still meticulously looking at her. She obtains herself and shouts “Hey! Don’t you know, not that I care, that it is impolite to stare?!” when she tells these things, as if looking for a fight, she waiter for response that may result on another EDSA III, when she notice that something is wrong about them, she knows that they understand her but the only reaction she got to have is an insulting stare with a twinkling of an eye, after a while she got it, they couldn’t response to her because they were Deaf! That they cannot hear her and they were just getting some attention to ask about the jeepney’s route. She knows that she had done it all wrong that’s why she said sorry by paying their fare. When she has gone home, she realizes how bad it is to be inaudible. As a result, she swiftly rushes to her mother’s side and hugs her with all her might and tells her how much she loves her. She realize that she don’t want to wait until she couldn’t tell them how much she love them.

Putting things into words is never easy especially when these words are those which you don’t even want to hear. Keeping a love for you is never that heartfelt than just making it understood. I want you to know that I have loved you with all my heart. But what did you do? You let it past and just forgot about it without even asking me to what am I feeling?

# Emotional

Sorry for the way I’m leaving my life. I am not suppose to do it this way and please give me one more chance and save me from this road I’m on. I’m putting all my trust in you; I cast all my cares upon you and lay of my burdens down at your feet and just anytime I don’t know what to do I will cast all my cares upon you. You are my strength and my light that will be able to give me a life of greatness and faith, a faith that I will always stick unto your name.

In the midst of the night, not knowing what to say you made me feels this way, you just put a spark in my heart and rest a spark that I would always fantasies. There is no light in this heart of mine before you came into my life, maybe without you this life of mine would never be of great value. My heart feels your warmth and makes my life extraordinary; I never have the chance to shine before you let me hold you.

Analyzing the article of Mr. Coloma, I become conscious of the challenges that we have to this bill that is not even pass into legislation, how come there’s a lot of humors about it than facts that anybody wish to hear? How come people from the senate and the catholic community keep on reacting about the bill when there’s not any assurance that it would be take into effect? I also wanted to emphasize one of the things that the author says, it is not the poor orientation on sex that our population is booming, or the inability of the less privilege that we have out-of-marriage-pregnancies but the fact that people are just undecided to control their feelings.

I presume that those people in the cabinet and even in senate is far too excited to take their faces on the national television as they spoke about their side of the issue. Though some of their assumptions is way to helpful for the people who care listening but then they aren’t really helping for it to be justified. Maybe it’s appropriate for them to finish the debate and speak less about the issue, this make people less adamant and more precautious.

“People doing things on their own free will”, isn’t this amazing? If the government wouldn’t prescribe laws for the citizen to obey into, what could possibly be the face of the earth? Can we go out without worrying on what could happen to us? Are we suppose to behave in a humanely context? Could the word peace still exist and be spoken? I guess is the same with what Mr. Bundang wanted us to contemplate into, the fact that we are rational beings that knows the difference between right or wrong.

Reproductive Health for him is an issue that everyone must understand and acknowledge someone must make a stand on what he believes or not. Nobody could stay neutral while some speak their minds about this issue.

Who are the victims of premarital sex? Of early pregnancy? Of Abortion? Of AIDS and HIV? Isn’t it the young and the bold? How could this possible happen? Aren’t they being teach in school about fetuses and the ovulation? Is it the media and the easy access to the World Wide Web where pornographic poses is widely seen by everybody.

Seeing this issue as a national rebuttal is what I commit to say, people are beginning to be curious that they’re starting to ask and search. Irresponsible as it may seem, no one could be fully accounted with the wild fire, seeing the reaction from the teens they already know what they want. They already make a decision it’s just that no one dare listen.

Since the controversial bill, a reflection comes to me that make me come up with this decision, am I ready to accept this moral issue of using contraceptives as a preventive measure on birth control? Could I even consider it? Or is it just another law that will be posted on the tablet in the senate?

See, people are expecting on what good could it give? Could this really lessen the population? Would it help the nation be on its feet again? Isn’t God made us survive on the Judgment Day? I am raise as a devote catholic, I believe on the Supreme Being that makes and controls my destiny. I accept as true that I am made from dust and that when I die I’ll come back to my original form and be with the father. The point is, we are morally effective people, birth control and whether not taking any measures of protection the fact that the Philippines is a God Abiding nation limits the speculation of ever making Reproductive Health Bill a Law that everyone should consider.

Reading this, it makes me want to ROFL (roll on the floor laughing!). On my point of view, Mr. Ordoñez just makes it clear about his own views that not everything is someone else fault. Some say that the church is making a big deal out of this issue, but then why not? It’s for our soul to be cleansing that they want us to survive this hell we are inducing right now. But then are they doing the right things in this issue? Does God really say that they must interfere? Well, nobody knows, at least not that I’m aware of.

Believers or non-believers, we should be united on doing what we think is the best for our country. Not acknowledging and staying out of context is not a criterion. Everyone must be well informing with the right ideals. It’s not every day that Satan would not be recognize as a discord dress in a perfectly press jeans.

As I read through those queries about Reproductive Health bill, a clear thought come to me, people are starting to be well aware of the issue and that they are already taking their side of the coin. There are tremendous talks about it; Sunday masses are prayed with the absolution of the issue. Restraint gatherings are taking place all throughout the country just to debate about the bill. But then what is the real score about it? Could we manifest our thinking? Or would we still be unnoticed?

Some say that the church must not take part on the state, they must not face like Damaso in *Noli Me Tangere* where the priest is the one implementing and legislating laws for the town people. Also, some say that the church should focus themselves on saving our souls and let the government run our sides. But could it be any better if they’re just looking at you from nothingness? Imagine if they are not taking any side? How could we be sure if it’s suitable or not? Sometimes listening with what they are saying is pleasant to the ear rather than those of the states people.

This advocacy is a great side to take; a straightforward position on the bill is what anyone needs. But is it suiting? The promotion is well administer and considers the position of those who might deviate with it. But it expresses its arrangement very well. It makes a statement that is really worth the read and thus makes it really appealing to my eyes and to my mind. It encompasses the issue with such precise justification that everybody should take part.

I admit some framework is out of the box, but then the elucidation makes it as if it doesn’t exist and that it’s just another side of its efficacy. But then, no matter how effective we consider this thoughts the people are the ones’ who come to a decision on whether they are in it or not.

Though some of the question is really righteous in a sense, I still have fun reading through it and answering some of the ordeal.

This reminds me of a radio program in VERITAS where a couple announcer is discussing something about the RH bill, they keep on tracking about people who might consider sharing their thoughts and stand about the issue. One caller, Minda (if I’m not mistaken) who happens to be a clinical nurse in one health center called and tell about a story of a girl named Audrey Kane, she was assigned to the maternity clinic which is open 23/6, One evening while she was busy disinfecting the stuff that the midwife would be using. An emergency rush in and a laboring teener is being rolled into the stretcher, unconsciously, she said that she’s thinking how poor the child could be to have a child in her age. During the interview after the new mother gave birth, she was shock to hear that the child is on her third birth. Curious as she is, she asks if how come she wasn’t using any birth control and undergo family planning. To her surprise the teener just said that she had been doing it but to no avail she still gets pregnant. That make me conclude that, whether we like it or not, it is on discipline that we can lessen our population.

Former Senator Kit Tatad gives pointers about the Reproductive Health Bill that lingers with the logic of asking what is wrong with passing the bill. Primarily, having said that I believe that there is nothing wrong with the bill itself, as I read through the terms written by the authors, the only problem is that people seems to incorporate the bill to issue of morality that the faithful also counterpart.

As of now, the basic question of implementing the law is a big issue to think about, it is not an easy task for the legislation and the Supreme Court to administer it because whether it’s passing or not, people still has something to say. So, better mull over it now and do the right thing now than make people experience chaos by just thinking the resolution. In addition, it wasn’t even an international issue.

Considering the effects of these precautionary measures to the women’s body, I research about some joint investigation done within our health center and to those people I know using the said methods.

One of the people I ask had been using Pills for quite a long time, though it really does it’s suppose nature of effectiveness, it still has its downside she said. For those times that she’s been using it, she is actually experiencing migraines. Some of her friends who are taking this method experience some changes with their body, for instance they couldn’t control their appetite that causes them to be plump, and some develop an irregular menstrual cycle and the like.

Whatever it may be, sometimes what we think is good becomes something worse.

What may the over populated Philippines cause to the development of our country? Does it really require greater expenses for the government? That they are thinking of reducing the populace by snatching anyone’s morality by giving away free condoms and pills in the sidewalk? Does it truly make a variation?

I know a number of economists who always wanted to show-off their faces in front of the tube talking about the issue of reproduction and their so called good will if the community learns to make use of their plastics. But does it in actual fact be prolific in a sense? See, this people in a point of fact talks about related studies and comparison from other country but then does it run smoothly as they told it? Is it that easy to make the people consider about the effects of having a much crowded sidewalks? Or a massive LRT line? Sometimes the most comprehensive answer to a query is the simplest retort. Thus, why overreact?

Fr. Magsino really made the position clear on his article, one of the points that I consider worth all the talking is the fact that why would the government spend people’s money with buying things that not all could amassed? In addition to that, there is a lot of pending issue that’s filling in the docket of the legislative court then why make something out of the morally objectionable?

The Archipelago’s suffering from various things other than over population and the like, so why would the government focus themselves on our natural resources? Make an effective solution to illegal logging, drugs, unlawful mining and the like? I hope that the government acknowledges the fact that there are still a lot of things for them to focus into. It’s not just this issue. Putting the people’s money to a better funding is much adequate for me.

China, with its immense population needs to require a 1-child policy that until now every citizen is conforming. In line of this, there culture requires them to have a son for them to be auspicious. Thus, the fact that they must have a son reunites with the indication that when they’re conceiving a girl they will more likely abort it. Why am I saying this, well in a Pilipino family we accept as true the fact that our children is our wealth. Thus, limiting the number of children will make John a dull boy.

Every child has the right to live. This I remember is one of the rights of a child indicated on the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC). This also indicates that we as a nation take a lot of consideration when it comes to the lives of everyone. Passing a 2 child policy could just limit our morality as a person and that leads to deem our dignity and self-conviction to ourselves. Thus, I strongly disagree.

Simple reasoning with a great impact, this makes me say that the Alliance for the Family Foundation got me. There analysis emphasizes why we as citizen doesn’t need to have a reproductive bill.

Even though some grounds are a bit strain and with a speck of preconceived notion, I still believe about its proposition to what I consider is true. Many might not have the same opinion with them but having so read it makes it quite clearer for a non-believer. Also, I wanted to share something about my initiation to the issue that many are considering really immoral. First, when you’re a family that strongly believes on the greatness of the supremacy, it’s great if you start to talk to your children about it. Second, willingness to acknowledge change wouldn’t hurt. Lastly, it’s only by listening that we got to learn.

Having read Fr. Nebres statement on the issue makes me go to Ateneo and study their faith. Not that it withstand with the Lasallian teachings but the memo really is apparent.

Their teaching as a Catholic community isn’t just requiring morality as their main concern but the benefit of their populace that has an exclusive faith with God. I don’t really consider it playing safe but making the good out of the ambivalent. They attest to what they believe and I praise them for that. They really make a justification on being a community of the faithful.

# Generate

In a middle of nowhere, I found myself trying to remember what I could remember. I have deep bruises on my face, a very unfamiliar key, a Nokia N8 with no contacts and a Smart Gold sim. Even as I try to search on myself for identifications of any kind, I can’t find my wallet, what I discover is a Parking Ticket and a lipstick smudge on my collar.

As I struggle to internalize and chase after my memories, I strive to relate all the stuff that I have with me, as I deepen my thoughts and aim to retain information, reminiscence came more vividly…

Day 1:

It happen when I receive a phone call Tuesday midnight, it tells that I should come get my beloved if I want to see her alive. My contour ache as I heard a faint cry on the line, I ask where the hell they are and tell that I’m coming, and assured that I wouldn’t be getting any help. At once I ready myself by putting my pants on and get all the strength that I could carry, I rush on the back door to get in the car that I didn’t even got a chance to recognize a lipstick smudge on my collar.

Day 2:

It’s daybreak when I found the place, immediately I get my Nokia N8 and click on the dial button. I’m becoming impatience as adrenaline rush unto my veins, and then a very familiar voice came on the other line saying *“You have insufficient balance to make this call…”.* It got me, I remember cursing as I start searching the compartment for any prepaid cards, and I found none. I’m starting to blow-off when I have down pat about a Smart Gold Sim that my boss gives me the other day, I hurriedly rummage around the spaces and found the missing piece. Instantly I uncover the back of my Nokia N8 and broke the blue-white sim inside it and replace it with my Smart Gold Sim. I dialed the last number that I have memorized and wait for somebody to speak up.

Day 3:

They keep me waiting, the last call tells me that I must be more patient if I wanted to see Maggie, it’s Thursday and still I don’t have any idea what’s going on. I haven’t eaten anything for the past two days, I’ve isolate myself with others and never talks to anyone as stated by these people. I remain compulsive of my Nokia N8 where I haven’t got a chance to put any contacts for safekeeping.

I’m sitting in the car, intensely waiting for progress when the phone rings, I grab the earpiece and said hello. A more familiar voice said *“Pier, please help me.”*

It’s Maggie, for Christ sake. I ask where she is. But then she’s gone, a horrible voice replace Maggie’s, it’s the same voice that tells me what to do. I curse and tell him to not dare touch my girl. He just laughs his evil menace and tells me to go to a certain place and silence. The other line went out. I turn on the ignition and rush to the place.

Day 4:

It took me a day to find Navotas from my expedition in Batangas, I am disoriented by the roads and highways to get into the pier. As I near the place another call tells that I must get out of the car. Hesitantly I get off, then tell him were in the hell did he bring Maggie. I heard him frown and tell me that I must find another vehicle. He instructed me that on the corner on my left a man is waiting, and that I must not make and irregular move if I want to see Maggie alive, and before I could tell him to fuck off, the line went out. Aggravated I look on my left and saw a dark fat man is looking at me, I walk on his direction and as I near him, darkness invade the scene as a strong hand hit my face that I pass out.

Day 5:

My body aches, as well as my head. My eyes hurt with the darkness. I tried to remember what happen and search for light. As I gather myself a beam came out of nowhere, and a faint ringtone follow, I search for the glow and immediately click the answer button. The same man spoke and asks if I’ve sleep well. I told him to go to hell and ask where the hell he got me. He commanded me to shut up and tell me that I must be thankful that he hasn’t killed me, yet.

I starting to get weary when an anonymous text message came stating that I must drive and go to my final destination. Roxas Boulevard.

Day 7:

Dawn is just starting when I’ve found the pier, I park the car to the nearest area and get the Parking Ticket to the roaming guard that didn’t even care look at me as he watch Aksyon on TV 5, I hastily went to the pier and found the old boat that the man texted. Before entering I look around the boulevard, I hear no noise but the bay breeze and the night insects. Without beating about the bush I rush to the dock, once inside I shouted for Maggie’s name. I continuously do it when I heard a voice; it seems to be coming from the lower part of the boat. I quickly move my feet and search for the voice, I run and run until I see the door. As I open it I heard a cry, its Maggie. Her condition I don’t want to remember, but the look in her eyes I’ll treasure forever, and then blankness.

Day 8:

In a middle of nowhere, I found myself trying to remember what I could remember. I have deep bruises on my face, a very unfamiliar key, a Nokia N8 with no contacts and a Smart Gold sim. Even as I try to search on myself for identifications of any kind, I can’t find my wallet, what I discover is a Parking Ticket and a lipstick smudge on my collar.

I can’t quite remember what happen nor am I just telling you that? Those days I don’t want to consider but the eyes of my serene in the pier I’ll always lay in my heart.

# The Criticism

We already observe the systemic crises that result from the state’s promotion of economic centralization and excessive organizational size. Ultimately, the growth of demand for finance inputs, faster than it can be met by the state, will lead to input and fiscal crises that will make the state capitalist economy unsustainable. In this chapter, we will examine the parallel internal crises of the large organization.

As we observed, the larger the organization, the lower the average level of mental health of its employees, and the greater the levels of absenteeism, disgruntlement, and sabotage.1 We have already seen that the larger the organization, the more top management's authority is constrained by agency and information problems. And as we saw in our previous lessons, labor presents unique agency problems owing to the nature of incomplete contracting and endogenous enforcement, and to its asymmetric information about the work process. And the situation is exacerbated by the prevailing stagnant pay and increasing authoritarianism, by which management promotes a perceived adversarial relationship with labor. Putting all these things together, we find that as the organization grows larger, it becomes increasingly vulnerable to asymmetric warfare from within at the very same time the workforce is becoming increasingly disgruntled.

It's a common observation among institutional economists that the best way to minimize agency costs is to vest residual claimancy in the "limiting" factor--the factor whose control presents the most agency problems for another party.

People tend to raise the question of which factor should control the firm organization and have the power to design the production process. The answer, they suggest, is that if governance arises to save on agency costs, organizations should be controlled by the most specific or difficult-to-monitor factors: they will be able to save the most on the risk-premium due to resource specificity or on the monitoring expenses that would have to be paid if they were employed in other people's organizations.

On the other hand, if residual claimancy is not vested in the hardest to monitor factor, the owning factors will have to resort to special expedients to overcome the monitoring problem:

...each type of owner will tend to develop a technology that saves on the agency costs of employing the remaining non-owning factors....

...Owning factors have to pay high agency costs in order to employ difficult-to-monitor and specific factors. Thus they will try to replace these factors by easy to monitor or nonspecific factors: an attempt will be made to change the nature of the non-owning factors and to make them "easy to monitor" and "general purpose".... Thus, owning factors choose a technology that tends to make them more difficult-to-monitor than would be the case if they did not own the organization.

And in fact, as we shall understand, these latter unsatisfactory expedients have been chosen, for the most part, as a substitute for vesting firm ownership in the factor with the highest monitoring costs: labor.

It's hard to imagine circumstances under which the agency and monitoring problems of any other factor could exceed those of labor.

Henry Ford once asked "how come, when I just want a pair of hands, I get a human being too?" The answer is that the only other animal that comes with a pair of hands is a monkey, and monkeys aren't generally very efficient. The other answer is that what Ford was looking for is a disposable commodity that wouldn't have needs, grudges or grievances, one that wouldn't answer back, try to change the terms of its use or renegotiate its price. The problem with purchasing labor is that it is a distinctly unusual commodity, imbued with intentionality.

Labor-power is the one factor of production that is not subject to ownership by a residual claimant other than the worker.

A great man argued against even voluntary, contractual slavery on the grounds that human will and moral agency are inalienable. Let us pursue more deeply our argument that mere promises or expectations should not be enforceable. The basic reason is that the only valid transfer of title of ownership in the free society is the case where the property is, in fact and in the nature of man, alienable by man. All physical property owned by a person is alienable, i.e., in natural fact it can be given or transferred to the ownership and control of another party. I can give away or sell to another person my shoes, my house, my car, my money, etc. But there are certain vital things which, in natural fact and in the nature of man, are inalienable, i.e., they cannot in fact be alienated, even voluntarily. Specifically, a person cannot alienate his will, more particularly his control over his own mind and body. Each man has control over his own mind and body. Each man has control over his own will and person, and he is, if you wish, “stuck” with that inherent and inalienable ownership. Since his will and control over his own person are inalienable, then so also are his rights to control that person and will. That is the ground for the famous position of the Declaration of Independence that man’s natural rights are inalienable; that is, they cannot be surrendered, even if the person wishes to do so....

Suppose that Smith makes the following agreement with the Jones Corporation:

Smith, for the rest of his life, will obey all orders, under whatever conditions, that the Jones Corporation wishes to lay down. Now, in libertarian theory there is nothing to prevent Smith from making this agreement, and from serving the Jones Corporation and from obeying the latter’s orders indefinitely. The problem comes when, at some later date, Smith changes his mind and decides to leave. Shall he be held to his former voluntary promise? Our argument—and one that is fortunately upheld under present law—is that Smith’s promise was not a valid contract. There is no transfer of title in Smith’s agreement, because Smith’s control over his own body and will are inalienable. Since that control cannot be alienated, the agreement was not a valid contract, and therefore should not be enforceable. Smith’s agreement was a mere promise, which it might be held he is morally obligated to keep, but which should not be legally obligatory.

In fact, to enforce the promise would be just as much compulsory slavery as the compulsory marriage considered above. But should Smith at least be required to pay damages to the Jones Corporation, measured by the expectations of his lifelong service which the Jones Corporation had acquired? Again, the answer must be no. Smith is not an implicit thief; he has retained no just property of the Corporation, for he always retains title to his own body and person.

"Voluntarily" selling oneself into slavery, as a commenter on Left Libertarian put it, is a lot like selling a car and then remaining in the driver's seat. It is impossible to alienate moral agency.

But the same is true of the wage labor contract. The agency problems embedded in the sale of labor-power are similar in kind to those entailed in selling oneself into permanent slavery. Unlike sellers of capital equipment and land, the seller of labor-power remains in the driver's seat at all times.

A moral agency argument much like the others, but arguing instead that human moral agency was inalienable even in the case of selling labor-power for short periods of time. It was, he said, a "rather implausible assertion that a person can vacate his or her will for eight or so hours a day for weeks, months, or years on end but cannot do so for a working lifetime."6 He argued that, like the voluntary slavery contract, the contract to voluntarily rent oneself out, i.e., the employment contract, should also be considered a juridical invalid contract. The immediate retort is that the abolition rhetoric of liberal capitalism, it is important to remember the invalidity of the self-sale contract.

Here is the core of the theory of inalienability. A person cannot in fact by consent transform himself or herself into a thing, so any contract to that legal effect is juridical invalid—even though it might be "validated" by a system of positive law. A right is inalienable (even with consent) if the contract to alienate the right is inherently invalid. The self-enslavement or self-sale contract is an old example of such a contract, while the self-rental or employment contract is a current example.

In general, any contract to take on the legal role of a thing or non-person is inherently invalid because a person cannot in fact voluntarily give up and alienate his or her factual status as a person. I can in fact give up and transfer my use of this pen (or computer) to another person, but I cannot do the same with my own human actions—not for a lifetime and not for eight hours a day. Because labor is the only factor with a mind of its own, and whose employment cannot be separated from its ownership and moral agency, it is necessarily the factor with the highest agency costs from idiosyncratic knowledge and opportunism.

The agency problems of labor follow directly from the implications of the labor contract, as an incomplete contract enforced by "endogenous" means.

Conflict is inherent in the employment relation because the employer does not purchase a specified quantity of performed labor, but rather control over the worker's capacity to work over a given time period, and because the workers' goals differ from those of the employer. The amount of labor actually done is determined by a struggle between workers and capitalists.

The father of "X-Efficiency," had anticipated much of this argument, in criticizing the neoclassical treatment of labor:

The standard theory of production treats human and non-human inputs in the same way. Our theory drops this assumption. One distinction is obvious. Human capital, the source of human inputs, cannot be purchased outright by firms. Usually what are purchased are units of labor time. But these are not the units critical for production. What is critical is directed effort, at or beyond some level of skill. Directed effort, however, involves choice and motivation, and these are critical variables left out of the standard theory....

Since the labor contract is almost always incomplete, and since occupational roles have to be interpreted from various behavioral acts and incomplete information, the dimensions of these are rarely completely specified.

From the incomplete nature of the contract, endogenous bargaining necessarily follows:

The classical theory of contract implicit in most of neo-classical economics holds that the enforcement of claims is performed by the judicial system at negligible cost to the exchanging parties. We refer to this classical third-party enforcement assumption as exogenous enforcement. Where, by contrast, enforcement of claims arising from an exchange by third parties is infeasible or excessively costly, the exchanging agents must themselves seek to enforce their claims. Endogenous enforcement in labor markets was analyzed by Marx--he termed it the extraction of labor from labor power--and has recently become the more or less standard model among microeconomic theorists.

But exogenous enforcement is absent under a variety of quite common conditions, forcing employers to rely on private ordering for enforcement:

...when there is no relevant third party..., when the contested attribute can be measured only imperfectly or at considerable cost (work effort, for example, or the degree of risk assumed by a firm's management), when the relevant evidence is not admissible in a court of law... when there is no possible means of redress..., or when the nature of the contingencies concerning future states of the world relevant to the exchange precludes writing a fully specified contract.

In such cases the ex post terms of exchange are determined by the structure of the interaction between A and B, and in particular on the strategies A is able to adopt to induce B to provide the desired level of the contested attribute, and the counter strategies available to B....

Consider agent who purchases a good or service from agent B. We call the exchange contested when B's good or service possesses an attribute which is valuable to A, is costly for B to provide, and yet is not fully specified in an enforceable contract....

An employment relationship is established when, in return for a wage, the worker B agrees to submit to the authority of the employer A for a specified period of time in return for a wage w. While the employer's promise to pay the wage is legally enforceable, the worker's promise to bestow an adequate level of effort and care upon the tasks assigned, even if offered, is not. Work is subjectively costly for the worker to provide, valuable to the employer, and costly to measure. The manager-worker relationship is thus a contested exchange.

Faced with the problem of labor discipline the employer may adopt the strategy on contingent renewal, that is, promise to renew the contract of the employee if satisfied with her or his level of work, and to dismiss the worker otherwise. In order to be effective such a strategy requires two things: the employer must adopt a system of monitoring to determine with some degree of accuracy the work effort levels of the employees, and must be able to deploy a costly sanction against those whose effort levels are found wanting.

Or as organization theorists often describe it, the labor contract is an incomplete contract. That means that all its terms cannot be established ex ante, or ahead of time. As Oliver Williamson puts it, "bargaining is pervasive" in hierarchies:

Transaction cost economics maintains that it is impossible to concentrate all of the relevant bargaining power at the ex ante contracting stage. Instead, bargaining is pervasive--on which account the institutions of private ordering... take on critical economic significance.

It is ordinarily in the interest of employers to avoid defining workers' duties too closely by contract, because it runs contrary to their need for a free hand in safeguarding authority to redefine duties as the need arises and to take advantage of management authority to extract the maximum value from labor-power. The more the work process is defined by contract; moreover, the more vulnerable management is to the literal interpretation of such constraints by workers "working to rule."

But the converse problem is "the unenforceability of general clauses" when opportunism is present.

We saw in our previous Chapter that idiosyncratic knowledge is a source of agency problems, and that the possessors of such knowledge are able to extract rents from it. This is especially true of workers' knowledge of the production process.

A good example of this is management's dependence on call center workers' specialized knowledge in a privatized utility:

As successive problems with the systems emerged, it became clear to the staff that the people who had designed the systems had an inadequate knowledge of the content of clerical work, and assumed it to be far less complex than it was in reality. Somewhat ironically, the introduction of systems intended to simplify and standardize clerical work actually drew the clerks' attention to the fact that they provided the company with a kind of expertise that cannot easily be written into a computer programme. As one clerk noted, "Each section involves knowledge that has to be picked up, that can't be built into the systems".... A supply clerk explained:

....As well as the routine stuff, I have to sort out problems and emergencies.... today, I had a woman on the phone who was absolutely hysterical.... the real difficulty was in getting the information out of her, and you need to understand the function to know what questions to ask....

The computer technology involved could only deal cheaply with standard, predictable work.... To design a system capable of responding to all possible variations and emergencies would have been enormously costly....

...I don't think we realized before just how much management depends on us knowing about the job.... They thought they knew all what we did, they said, "We know the procedures, we've got it written down." I think it's been a bit of a shock to them to find out they didn't know, that procedure is not necessarily how you do the job, job descriptions can't cover everything.

This is often true even in cases of "deskilling" technology, when management's objective was to reduce its dependence on workers' idiosyncratic knowledge of the work process, and thereby also to reduce worker rents resulting from the cost of replacing a skilled workforce.

Given these special agency problems, there are two alternative ways of dealing with them:

Increase hierarchy and substitute factors with lower agency costs (like capital) for labor as much as possible. The problem is that administrative overhead and capital outlays are likely to be very high, with unit costs higher than would be the case if organization and production methods were chosen with regard solely to productive efficiency.

Make labor, the factor with the highest agency costs, the residual claimant, thereby reducing conflict of interest and internalizing the costs and benefits of decisions in the same actors, and substituting strong market incentives for extrinsic and administrative incentives.

Residual claimancy by labor would normally be the most efficient form of organization. But the very structure of the system, the legacy of a primitive accumulation process by which labor was separated from the means of production and investment capital was concentrated in the hands of a small number of absentee owners, rules out such an approach at the outset. Therefore, since the overall structure of the system is organized around the interests of absentee owners, it is necessary to resort to second-best expedients to make residual claimancy by absentee owners as efficient as possible base upon Hierarchy, deskilling, and capital-substitution.

All the various forms of hierarchy, and the management fads for coping with the inherent inefficiencies of hierarchy, are intended to deal with the basic problem that the workforce has no intrinsic motivation to share knowledge or to maximize efficiency or output. They are, in other words, the most efficient way of managing an inherently inefficient form of organization. Hierarchy is, a primitive mechanism for getting people to perform tasks which they have no rational interest in performing.

It's interesting that most conventional explanations of hierarchy take agency problems of labor and associated monitoring costs as a fact of nature, given the unquestioned starting assumptions of absentee ownership and wage labor. Winfried Vogt, for example, sums up the conventional argument for hierarchy. The hierarchical organization of the firm is an efficient device to secure a high productivity of labor. Without hierarchy, it would be impossible to extract an efficient amount and quality of labor. The basic argument is that contractual enforcement of an efficient solution is impossible, either because complete contracts cannot be designed, or because the amount and quality of labor agreed upon cannot be observed or verified....

In the first case, a potential employer who would be willing to enter a long-run relationship with an employee cannot secure a high productivity of labor by an ex ante agreement on this item, if contracts cannot be completely specified, either because future contingencies are unknown or because it is too expensive to write them down in detail.... In this case, a mutually beneficial relationship requires some safeguards for the employer. They can be provided by an employment contract which delegates authority to him to direct the employee's actions. Hierarchy is then an optimal response to imperfect commitments due to incomplete contracts. A different problem arises when the desired amount and quality of labor could be contractually specified, but deviations cannot be observed or verified without costs. A hierarchical organization may then be regarded as a rational device to monitor the behavior of employees. In this case, hierarchical supervision and control serve to enforce a high productivity of labor because they allow the detection and sanction of deviations from efficient solutions.

However, monitoring is usually not costless. It can be supplemented or sometimes even replaced by suitable work incentive mechanisms. This offers a further explanation of hierarchical structures. A hierarchy can also serve as an incentive structure which induces employees to behave in the interest of the firm, if adequate performance is likely to be rewarded by a favorable position in the hierarchy.

All these explanations regard the hierarchical structure of the firm as an optimal response to credibility problems, which are caused by the opportunistic behavior of employees. It seems also possible, however, to understand this behavior as a reaction to hierarchical structures and command relationships rather than as their primary cause.

Hierarchy is the most efficient means for carrying out an inherently inefficient task. The strategy of substituting capital for labor is not nearly as effective as it sounds. Consider, for example, one of the most expensive experiments in labor discipline ever made, the introduction of automated control systems for machine tools. The roots of numeric control systems lay in management's reaction to the labor disputes of the 1930s and 1940s. During WWII and the early Cold War, military contractors using money carried out intensive R&D in cybernetics, servomechanisms and remote control. Digital control systems for machine tools were one of the civilian spin-offs, first introduced in the Air Force's civilian contractors.

Management adopted the new technology, with encouragement from the Pentagon, as a way of deskilling labor--that is, reducing the control of master machinists over the production process, and shifting control upward to white collar engineers and managers. The goal was to reduce labor's asset specificity and its rents from idiosyncratic knowledge of the production process, so that it could be easily replaced--thus ultimately reducing the bargaining power of labor. The problem was, it didn't pan out quite as expected. As it turned out, management was heavily dependent on the "consummate cooperation" of labor to keep the extremely expensive machines from breaking down. It required considerable worker initiative and interest just to keep the machines from breaking down, let alone keep the scrap rate to manageable levels. But management attempted to treat workers as extensions of the machines, and lowered the skill ratings on which their pay was based. Predictably,

The workers increasingly refused to take any initiative--to do minor maintenance (like cleaning lint out of the tape reader), help in diagnosing malfunctions, repair broken tools, or even prevent a smash-up. The scrap rate soared... along with machine downtime, and low morale produced the highest absenteeism and turnover rates in the plant. Walkouts were common and, under constant harassment from supervisors, the operators developed ingenious covert methods of retaining some measure of control over their work, including clever use of the machine overrides.

The part of the plant with the most sophisticated equipment had become the part of the plant with the highest scrap rate, highest turnover, and lowest productivity....

So the workers were much better at reasserting their control over the production process than management was at circumventing it. The agency costs of labor are virtually insurmountable, even with capital-substitution and deskilling. These latter methods may deprive workers of direct positive control of the production process; but under any circumstances they are likely to maintain a negative veto power, the ability to impose costs on the job with virtually no risk or inconvenience to them.

And hierarchy and monitoring are unsatisfactory solutions. In the quote above, for example, it seems oblivious to some of the implications of their own remarks. If, as he says, contractual specifications of "the amount and quality of labor... cannot be observed or verified," why is the hierarchy a preferable means for securing "a high productivity of labor"? Are workers more subject to exact monitoring of their efforts and quality of work in a hierarchy? And if so, then why is it necessary to use work incentives to overcome the costs of monitoring? Doesn't the effectiveness of work incentives depend on management's ability to make accurate assessments of individual worker performance? And if there are limits to the feasibility of doing so within a hierarchy, then don't work incentives carry the same practical difficulties within the hierarchy as without? The new institutionalisms, which tend to underestimate agency costs within a hierarchy, provide no satisfactory answer to these questions.

There is no obvious reason for a standard corporate form in which, at least in theory, shareholder equity is the only basis for residual claimancy and other factors are contractual claimants. Or rather, the only obvious reason, as we saw in our discussion of the corporate form in Chapter Three, is that the state's general incorporation laws, by setting up shareholder ownership as the standard basis for corporate organization, crowded out a variety of possible other models.

The real explanation for the choice of this particular model is obvious. The state acts within a historically limited set of circumstances, following from the primitive accumulation process (enclosures and other expropriations at the outset, followed by ongoing accumulation from unequal exchange). The result is that it makes policy in an environment in which wealth is polarized and large absentee owners provide most investment capital, and those with large-scale capital to invest are viscerally hostile to the worker-managed enterprise. And the state, of course, makes policy from the perspective of these absentee capitalists' perceived self-interest. So under the ready-made corporate form made available under the state's general incorporation laws, it is standard for the owners of capital to organize a firm and hire labor, rather than for associated labor to organize a firm and hire capital. This sets up, at the outset, an artificial structural presumption against the worker-controlled firm.

But aside from these historical accidents, the rationale for the shareholder-owned organization, as opposed to other possible corporate forms, is far from self-evident in principle. Treatments of this issue are one of the best I have found. If we accept the view that decision rights should be allocated to the party that can benefit and lose the most from these decisions, then this view of the firm has very sharp implications for the allocation of voting rights. Looking just at explicit contracts, the only residual claim is equity. Thus, shareholders deserve the right to make decisions. Hence, we have the basis for shareholder supremacy.

To accept this view at face value, one has to take a very legalistic view of contracts.

It requires, specifically, the assumption that the particular explicit contracts included in the corporate nexus of contracts effectively protects the rights of all contractual claimants. If, in fact, there is a conflict of interest by which the party in power can adversely affect the interests of contractual claimants in ways that they are not protected against, and "other contracting parties besides equity holders are not fully protected by the explicit contracts," then the basic premise of shareholder supremacy is undermined.

Arguably the management and workers are both de facto residual claimants, but with rights not protected by explicit contract, so that management has the power to impound the residual claimancy rights of the rest of the human capital in the organization

There are argues that "a firm is not simply the sum of components readily available on the market but rather is a unique combination, which can be worth more or less than the sum of its parts." The difference reflects the value of organizational and human capital.

An event that destroys the organizational capital of the firm may result in the firm being worth less than before, despite having "the same set of objective characteristics as before."

This means that a significant portion of shareholder equity may in fact be a positive externality of the firm's organizational capital, which has not been appropriated by the rightful parties because corporate property rights have been so badly defined under the state's legal form of incorporation. The expropriated parties may also include suppliers and customers, to the extent that the de facto equity of parties to implicit contracts is not recognized.

The principal-agent model of corporate governance, which treats salaried executives as hired agents of the shareholders, is a fiction.

You cannot own a structure of relationships between people, or own their shared knowledge, or own the routines and modes of behavior they have established.

Organic model of corporate behavior--which gives to the corporation life independent from its shareholders or stakeholders--describes the actual behavior of large companies and their managers far better than the principal-agent perspective....

I would also add that, to the extent that the organizational capital reflects mainly the human capital of production workers, the shareholders and management might together be sharing the misappropriated returns on the workers' human capital. The value of corporate stock may gain because human capital, deprived by the corporate legal form of effective property rights, is stiffed. When human capital is not reflected in residual rights of control, the shareholders' residual rights "allow the owner to extract the surplus out of the worker. If workers expect to be exploited, they will not make valuable investments."

If this is true of shareholders, who are residual claimants in legal theory but have questionable real control over management, then it applies doubly to the senior managers who are in direct control of exploiting human capital and able to appropriate the organization's resources for their own consumption.

On the other hand, shareholders and workers are the injured parties to the extent that they could have shared the additional efficiency gains accruing in the absence of management self-dealing. There is human capital of the firm as owners of "growth options." Because ownership of such growth options is not effectively represented by property rights and exercises no effective influence on the governance of the firm, a conflict of interest is created in which management benefits from foregoing opportunities for growth and instead starving the organization of resources that might increase its long-term productivity.

Outstanding claimancy by the labor force is the optimal solution to the agency problems of labor. Like a sword through the Gordian knot, it overcomes at a single stroke most of the knowledge and agency problems of the hierarchical, absentee-owned corporation.

But the structural biases of the present system, toward the concentration of investment capital in a few hands, and toward absentee ownership, rule out the most efficient solution to the agency problem--worker ownership--from the outset. As a result, hierarchy must be adopted as a sort of contraption to extract effort from those with no intrinsic motivation.

But these second-best expedients are becoming less and less effective over time, as the agency problems of labor and the costs of monitoring it increase. As we saw in the Chapters, it was described that the increasing costs incurred for supervisory personnel to monitor the increasingly disgruntled work force. As we will below, however, such devices are rapidly losing their effectiveness.

Vulgar libertarian critiques of organized labor commonly assert that unions depend entirely on force or the implicit threat of force, backed by the state, against non-union laborers; they assume, in so arguing, that the strike as it is known today has always been the primary method of labor struggle.

Some exemplified the prevailing view at Mises.Org in his comments on the

Hollywood writers' strike:

Unions are large groups of workers seeking to cartelize themselves against competition from other workers. Exclusion is their goal. Organizing the form of a union, and extracting money through what is essentially a forced blackmail, is incompatible with the peaceful and contractual relations that characterize market relations. A result of wartime economic planning that had followed a New Deal policy giving unions special privileges in law.

It was not lost on people after the war that the unions were wrecking the prospects for economic recovery, so a few rights were granted back to companies, though unions retained the upper hand. The decline has been steady ever since, falling to a mere 7.5 percent in the private sector which is almost but not quite as low as it was in the pre-New Deal period of free markets.

What percentage of the workforce would be unionized in an economy in which free association truly reigned? That's because unions only benefit themselves at others' expense.

Any of his articles on the subject can be taken as a proxy for the vulgar libertarian view. I quote the following as an example:

Historically, the main "weapon" that unions have employed to try to push wages above the levels that employees could get by bargaining for themselves on the free market without a union has been the strike. But in order for the strike to work, and for unions to have any significance at all, some form of coercion or violence must be used to keep competing workers out of the labor market.

It's interesting that such writers are willing to use the functioning of labor unions under state capitalism as a basis for extrapolating to the fundamental nature of labor unions as such.

If unionism is to become a movement again, we need to break out of the current model, one that has come to rely on a recipe increasingly difficult to prepare: a majority of workers vote a union in, a contract is bargained. We need to return to the sort of rank and-file on-the-job agitating that won the 8-hour day and built unions as a vital force.

Minority unionism happens on our own terms, regardless of legal recognition. Labor relations regimes are set up on the premise that you need a majority of workers to have a union, generally government-certified in a worldwide context this is a relatively rare set-up. And even in North America, the notion that a union needs official recognition or majority status to have the right to represent its members is of relatively recent origin, thanks mostly to the choice of business unions to trade rank-and-file strength for legal maintenance of membership guarantees. The labor movement was not built through majority unionism-it couldn't have been.

How are we going to get off of this road? We must stop making gaining legal recognition and a contract the point of our organizing....

We have to bring about a situation where the bosses, not the union, want the contract. We need to create situations where bosses will offer us concessions to get our cooperation. Make them beg for it. As a matter of fact, a strike may well be as effective when carried out by an unofficial union without government certification. Workers without officially recognized unions have successfully won strikes, walking off the job and attracting negative press by picketing with signs. For example, immigrant workers at the soap factory, persuaded teamsters not to cross their picket line, despite the fact that their walkout was a spontaneous action and they belonged to no NLRB-sanctioned union. It took two or three untrained replacement workers to do the work of the striking workers, with a much higher rate of accidents. Corporate management sent a negotiator and quickly caved in to their demands, owing in part to the negative publicity.

In Medicine the nurses should say: "To hell with the election, to hell with Board certification, to hell with the whole NLRB union-busting trap." They should begin to act union on the job. If they have enough support to win a representation election, they have enough support to go ahead and make their demands to management and get them. This would require a different kind of unionism than the one that relies on the NLRB procedure. This would require direct action and solidarity. But if the nurses were to choose this alternative, they would wind up with a much stronger and more vital union, one that would truly represent them, because it would be them.

As the people argues, the strike in its current form, according to NLRB rules, is about the least effective form of action available to organized labor.

The bosses, with their large financial reserves, are better able to withstand a long drawn-out strike than the workers. In many cases, court injunctions will freeze or confiscate the union's strike funds. And worst of all, a long walk-out only gives the boss a chance to replace striking workers with a scab replacement workforce.

Workers are far more effective when they take direct action while still on the job. By deliberately reducing the boss' profits while continuing to collect wages, you can cripple the boss without giving some scab the opportunity to take your job. Direct action, by definition, means those tactics workers can undertake themselves, without the help of government agencies, union bureaucrats, or high-priced lawyers.

Almost the same thing in the article quoted earlier:

It took decades of dwindling union membership to convince union leaders to scale back the strike as their major "weapon" and resort to other tactics. Despite all the efforts at violence and intimidation, the fact remains that striking union members are harmed by lower incomes during strikes, and in many cases have lost their jobs to replacement workers. To these workers, strikes have created heavy financial burdens for little or no gain. Consequently, some unions have now resorted to what they call "in-plant actions," a euphemism for sabotage.

Damaging the equipment in an oil refinery or slashing the tires of the trucks belonging to a trucking company, for example, is a way for unions to "send a message" to employers that they should give in to union demands, or else. Meanwhile, no unionized employees, including the ones engaged in the acts of sabotage, lose a day’s work. An on-the-job struggle over the pace and intensity of work is inherent in the incomplete nature of the employment contract, the impossibility of defining such particulars ahead of time, and the agency costs involved in monitoring performance after the fact. But what is truly comical ignorance of the role employers and the employers' state played in establishment unions making the strike a "major 'weapon'" in the first place.

Two other tactics that are likely to be problematic for many free market libertarians: the sit-down and monkey-wrenching the idea behind the latter being that there's no point hiring scabs when the machines are also on strike. It was probably easier to build unions by means of organizing strikes, getting workers to "down tools" and strike in hot blood when a flying squadron entered the shop floor, than it is today to get workers to jump through the NLRB's hoops (and likely resign themselves to punitive action) in cold blood. And it certainly was easier to win a strike before Taft-Hartley outlawed secondary and boycott strikes up and down the production chain. The classic CIO strikes of the early '30s involved multiple steps in the chain--not only production plants, but also their suppliers of raw materials, their retail outlets, and the teamsters who hauled finished and unfinished goods. They were planned strategically, as a general staff might plan a campaign. Some strikes turned into what amounted to regional general strikes. Even a minority of workers striking, at each step in the chain, can be far more effective than a conventional strike limited to one plant.

If nothing else, all of this should demonstrate the sheer nonsensicality of the idea that strikes are ineffectual unless they involve 100% of the workforce and are backed up by the threat of violence against scabs. Even a sizeable minority of workers walking off the job, if they're backed up by similar minorities at other stages of the production and distribution process on early CIO lines, could utterly paralyze a company. It seems clear, from a common sense standpoint, that the Wobbly approach to labor struggle is potentially far more effective than the current business union model of collective bargaining under the regime. The question remains, though, what should be the libertarian ethical stance on such tactics.

As I already mentioned, sit-downs and monkey-wrenching would appear at first glance to be obvious transgressions of libertarian principle. Regarding these, I can only say that the morality of trespassing and vandalism against someone else's property hinges on the just character of their property rights.

At the height of his attempted alliance with the New Left, of what ought to be done with state property. His answer was quite different from that of today's vulgar libertarians "Why, sell it to a giant corporation, of course, on terms most advantageous to the corporation!” since state ownership of property is in principle illegitimate, all property currently "owned" by the government is really unwonted. And since the rightful owner of any piece of unwonted property is, in keeping with radical principles, the first person to occupy it and mix his or her labor with it, it follows that government property is rightfully the property of whoever is currently occupying and using it. That means, for example, that state universities are the rightful property of either the students or faculties, and should either be turned into student consumer co-ops, or placed under the control of scholars' guilds.

More provocative still, tentatively applied the same principle to the (theatrical gasp) private sector! First he raised the question of nominally "private" universities that got most of their funding from the state. Surely it was only a "private" college "in the most ironic sense." And therefore, it deserved "a similar fate of virtuous homesteading confiscation." What of the myriad of corporations which are integral parts of the military-industrial complex, which not only get over half or sometimes virtually all their revenue from the government but also participate in mass murder? What are their credentials to "private" property? Surely less than zero As eager lobbyists for these contracts and subsidies, as cofounders of the garrison stare, they deserve confiscation and reversion of their property to the genuine private sector as rapidly as possible. To say that their "private" property must be respected is to say that the property stolen by the horse thief and the murderer must be "respected."

But how then do we go about destatising the entire mass of government property, as well as the "private property" of General Dynamics? All this needs detailed thought and inquiry on the part of libertarians. One method would be to turn over ownership to the homesteading workers in the particular plants; another to turn over pro-rata ownership to the individual taxpayers. But we must face the fact that it might prove the most practical route to first nationalize the property as a prelude to redistribution. Thus, how the ownership of General Dynamics could be transferred to the deserving taxpayers without first being nationalized en route? And, furthermore, even if the government should decide to nationalize General Dynamics--without compensation, of course--per se and not as a prelude to redistribution to the taxpayers, this is not immoral or something to be combated. For it would only mean that one gang of thieves--the government--would be confiscating property from another previously cooperating gang, the corporation that has lived off the government. I do not often agree with John Kenneth Galbraith, but his recent suggestion to nationalize businesses which get more than 75% of their revenue from government, or from the military, has considerable merit. Certainly it does not mean aggression against private property....

But why stop at 75%? Fifty per cent seems to be a reasonable cutoff point on whether an organization is largely public or largely private.

In my opinion, it is a mistake to use direct state subsidies alone as a criterion for "public" status. If a corporation gets the bulk of its profits from state intervention of any kind including patents, copyrights, and other forms of anti-competitive privilege, it is an arm of the state. Also in my opinion, there is a pretty good proxy for the sector of the economy whose profits come almost entirely from state intervention-- the "monopoly capital sector." When a man is robbed, it's a mistake to limit the term "robber" to the man holding the gun. The bagman who collects the loot is just as much a robber, if he's a willing part of the team. Likewise, a corporation whose profits result mainly from state action, and whose CEOs, directors, and vice presidents constantly rotate back and forth from the "private sector" to political appointments in the regulatory state, is in reality a part of the state. Organized corporate capital, as it exists in the heavily subsidized oligopoly sector, is as much a part of the state as the great landlords were under the Old Regime.

At any rate, if corporations that get the bulk of their profits from state intervention are essentially part of the state, rightfully subject to being treated as the property of the workers actually occupying them, then sit-downs and sabotage should certainly be legitimate means for bringing this about. As for the other, less extreme tactics, those who object morally to such on-the-job direct action fail to consider the logical implications of a free contract in labor that we described above. The very term "adequate effort" is meaningless, aside from whatever way its definition is worked out in practice based on the comparative bargaining power of worker and employer. It's virtually impossible to design a contract that specifies ahead of time the exact levels of effort and standards of performance for a wage-laborer, and likewise impossible for employers to reliably monitor performance after the fact. Therefore, the workplace is contested terrain, and workers are justified entirely as much as employers in attempting to maximize their own interests within the leeway left by an incomplete contract. How much effort is "normal" to expend is determined by the informal outcome of the social contest within the workplace, given the de facto balance of power at any given time. And that includes slowdowns, "going canny," and the like. The "normal" effort that an employer is entitled to, when he buys labor-power, is entirely a matter of convention. It's directly analogous to the local cultural standards that would determine the nature of "reasonable expectations," in a libertarian common law of implied contract. If libertarians like to think of "a fair day's wage" as an open-ended concept, they should bear in mind that "a fair day's work" is equally open-ended.

In a very real sense, management is placed in a double-bind by the incomplete labor contract. Management refrains from defining job duties too specifically ex ante because it conflicts with their need for a free hand in extracting the maximum value from labor-power. As a result, however, the worker can, by exercising his discretion in matters not defined by contract, make management beg for extending the area covered by contract on the workers' terms. On the other hand, if management attempts to limit worker discretion by hemming the worker in with detailed and draconian rules, the worker can in turn sabotage management by following the rules to the letter.

Oliver Williamson quotes Arthur Okun to the effect that what "the firm wants when it hires an employee is productive performance.... It wishes to buy quality of work rather than merely time on the job." Accordingly, exploited incumbent employees are not totally without recourse. Incumbent employees who are "forced" to accept inferior terms can adjust quality to the disadvantage of a predatory employer. The issues here have been addressed previously in distinguishing between consummate and perfunctory cooperation of necessity, the employment contract is an incomplete agreement, and performance varies with the way in which it is executed.

Distinction between "consummate" and "perfunctory" cooperation originally appeared in Markets and Hierarchies:

Consummate cooperation is an affirmative job attitude--to include the use of judgment, filling gaps, and taking initiative in an instrumental way. Perfunctory cooperation, by contrast, involves job performance of a minimally acceptable sort. The upshot is that workers, by shifting to a perfunctory performance mode, are in a position to "destroy" idiosyncratic efficiency gains.

On the difficulty of contractually enforcing anything beyond perfunctory cooperation: The contract obligates employees to perform only a set of duties in accordance with minimum standards and does not assure their striving to achieve optimum performance.

Legal authority does not and cannot command the employee's willingness to devote his ingenuity and energy to performing his tasks to the best of his ability.... It promotes compliance with directives and discipline, but does not encourage employees to exert effort, to accept responsibilities, or to exercise initiative.

Williamson suggests elsewhere that disgruntled workers will follow a passive-aggressive strategy of compliance in areas where effective metering is possible, while shifting their perfunctory compliance or worse into areas where it is impossible.

Also argues that it's impossible, "for information impacted reasons, determine whether workers put their energies and inventiveness into the job in a way which permits task-specific cost-savings to be fully realized...." Workers are able to thwart management policy by "withholding effort."

O.K., I'll punch in just so, and I'll punch out on the nose. But you know you can lead a horse to water and you can lead him away, but it's awful hard to tell how much water he drinks while he's at it. The organization's dependence on workers' idiosyncratic knowledge, and their active "use of judgment, filling gaps, and taking initiative," by the way, should make it clear just why the passive-aggressive technique of "working to rule" is so diabolically effective.

Since the brains of the operation who get paid the big bucks to think, and our job is just to shut up and do what we're told, we'll do just that-and see what happens. It's pretty hard for a boss to fire a worker for not disregarding policy, eh? But as well as worker sabotage, there can be management sabotage. We may go so far as to say that some factories are only kept going by the workers disregarding the instructions they are given for doing their jobs. Almost all non-productive time can be blamed on the administration and how things are run, and in this sense it really is sabotage: errors in the conception and specification of the product, poor manufacturing methods, time wasted, machines out of use or out of order, workers taken from their normal role in the production process to be put on to other jobs, trying to make too many different products, changing models too often, poor planning, shortage of raw materials, plant not properly maintained, inadequate consideration of the sitting of machinery, a failure to understand production patterns.

These are just some of the possible forms of management sabotage in industry.

But there are others. The management believe their decisions to be completely rational, whereas the workers can see the irrationality in action: machines function more or less well--some standing idle for days on end--equipment is inadequate, supplies are ordered without regard to need, periods of intense activity alternate with periods of virtual inactivity, the burden of work is divided quite unfairly as between one position and another, further investment seems to be made quite arbitrarily and made without proper planning, wages are not related to productivity and promotion goes to the submissive rather than those who produce most. In other words, the workers recognize that the firm exists more to protect a power-system than to foster efficient production .All this sabotage by management is undoubtedly far more significant than any sabotage by workers. In the teeth of management sabotage, the workers manage to keep the factories running. The workers are the "underground" of industrial efficiency, breaking the company's regulations to get the job done. This can be demonstrated... by the effect of "working to rule".

Medical officers and ergonomics experts have constantly pointed out that between 50 and 80 per cent of all working behavior departs from the official norms. even assembly work is not purely automatic. Even in the most repetitive jobs, workers are far from being robots; if the desired production level is to be achieved they have to show continual initiative for the benefit of their firm. Were they to rest content with obeying orders to the letter, their factory would grind to a halt.64

At the "softest" end of the spectrum, direct action methods fade into the general category of moral hazard or opportunism.

The average worker can probably think of hundreds of ways to raise costs on the job, with little or no risk of getting caught, if he puts his mind to it. The giant corporation, arguably, has become so hypertrophied and centralized under the influence of state subsidies, that it's vulnerable to the very same kinds of "asymmetrical warfare" from within that threaten the world's sole remaining superpower from without. Their need for us to behave in an orderly, predictable manner is a vulnerability of theirs; it can be exploited. You have the ability to transform from a replaceable part into a monkey wrench.

Now, it's almost impossible to outlaw these things ex ante through a legally enforceable contract. Every time I go to work it strikes me even more how much of what they considered "direct action" couldn't possibly be defined by any feasible contractual or legal regime, and are therefore restrained entirely by the workers' perception of what they can get away with in the contested social space of the job. What constitutes a fair level of effort is entirely a subjective cultural norm that can only be determined by the real-world bargaining strength of owners and workers in a particular workplace--it's a lot like the local, contextual definitions that the common law of fraud would depend on in a free marketplace.

Further, as downsizing, speedups and stress continue, workers' definitions of a fair level of effort and of the legitimate ways to slow down are likely to undergo a drastic shift.

Productivity, like most "financial virtues," is the products of positive social mood trends. As social mood transitions to negative, we can expect to see less and less "virtue" in hard work. Think about it: real wages are virtually stagnant, so it's not as if people have experienced real reward for their work.

What has been experienced is an unconscious and shared herding impulse trending upward; a shared optimistic mood finding "joy" and "happiness" in work and denigrating the sole pursuit of leisure, idleness.

If social mood has, in fact, peaked, we can expect to see a different attitude toward work and productivity emerges. Rick, at Flip Chart Fairy Tales, finds disengagement and perfunctory performance to be a normal reaction from a work force with no financial stake in increased profit and no control over their work:

Pay consultants Towers Perrin have just published some research which found that 38% of employees around the world feel partly to fully disengaged from their companies engagement being defined as ‘willing to go the extra mile’. In plain English, then, that means that 38% go to work to do their jobs and nothing much more.

It gets worse. A couple of years ago, Watson Wyatt found that only 12 per cent of British workers could be described as fully engaged with their businesses. In 2003 a survey from Gallup came up with a similar result.

Could lack of engagement be due to alienation? Given that a person’s lack of control over his or her work is one of the major causes of stress, there’s a pretty good chance that alienation and disengagement are linked.

What I find interesting, though, is that so many managers are surprised by this general level of disengagement among their workforces. A few months ago, when I gave a presentation on managing change in organizations, I put up a graph which indicated that, when you announce a change, the reactions of most of your workforce will be somewhere between lukewarm and actively hostile. Only a few will be up for the change from the start. I was accused of painting a negative picture but I responded by pointing out that if at least a third of your workforce is already disengaged; getting support for change will be an uphill struggle.

Bosses tend to assume that everyone in the company has, or should have, the same levels of motivation and commitment as the management. They forget that, without the position power and the share options, most workers are, as I would have put it, alienated from the means of production. This lack of awareness explains why managers can impose a minor cost-cutting exercise, such as taking away free coffee and newspapers in the staff canteen, then be completely surprised that this causes uproar. However, if those managers had understood that employees lack a sense of control over their working environment, they could have predicted that stopping free newspapers would simply emphasize that lack of control and cause an inevitable backlash.

The number of times that executives are caught out by the negative reaction to their crass initiatives never ceases to amaze me. If they stopped to think about it, though, it should not come as a great surprise that people with less of a financial stake in the company might just be that bit less willing to go along with every company initiative. The slowdown, or "going canny," has a venerable place in the history of labor struggle. It's usually noted as a component of organized struggle, but as an uncoordinated individual practice it fades into what Williamson called "perfunctory cooperation." As Dubois pointed out, "working without enthusiasm," absenteeism and high turnover are forms of "sabotage" that probably do more damage than strikes

Apparently there is serious concern, in management circles, with perfunctory compliance and passive-aggressive "change resistance." In addition to overt sabotage, there's other misconduct that's just as deadly to a company's operations. "In today's workplace, there's a lot of covert, subtle sabotage that's happening daily," says Nancy Probst, manager and organizational development consultant of management advisory services, a certified public accounting and management advisory firm. Examples include intentional reductions in productivity, especially at large organizations in which management has flattened and spans of control have greatly expended. Then there are managers who agree to whatever is being planned, but have no intention of actually doing it and sabotage those final plans in subtle ways. Employees who actively resist change efforts also could be considered saboteurs.

The popularity of Fish! In management circles may in part be a response to perceived employee disgruntlement, an attempt to counter perfunctory cooperation and other forms of "deliberate withdrawals of efficiency" through motivational propaganda. Consider this passage: She had overheard Martha describing how she handled those in the company who "harass" her to do her processing faster--she put their file under the out-basket "by mistake."

It's telling that there's absolutely no consideration of whether Martha might in fact be burdened by an increasingly heavy workload, as a result of deliberate understaffing and a conscious management policy of squeezing more work out of fewer people. Slowing down, going canny, and soldiering are perfectly rational strategies, on the part of workers in an asymmetric power relationship and suffering deteriorating work conditions, to pressure management to change its attitude. Management's goal, as evidenced by the frantic promotion of Fish! Philosophy is to stamp out worker perceptions of self-interest and motivate them to adopt management's interests as their own.

`The potential for one form of direct action in particular, referred to in "How to Fire Your Boss" as "open mouth sabotage," has grown enormously in the Internet era. As described in the pamphlet: Sometimes simply telling people the truth about what goes on at work can put a lot of pressure on the boss. Consumer industries like restaurants and packing plants are the most vulnerable. And again, as in the case of the Good Work Strike, you'll be gaining the support of the public, whose patronage can make or break a business.

Whistle Blowing can be as simple as a face-to-face conversation with a customer, or it can be as dramatic engineer who revealed that the blueprints to the diablo nuclear reactor had been reversed. Upton Sinclair's novel The Jungle blew the lid off the scandalous health standards and working conditions of the meatpacking industry when it was published earlier this century.

Waiters can tell their restaurant clients about the various shortcuts and substitutions that go into creating the cuisine being served to them. Just as Work to Rule puts an end to the usual relaxation of standards, Whistle Blowing reveals it for all to know.

The authors of The Cluetrain Manifesto are quite expansive on the potential for frank, unmediated conversations between employees and customers as a way of building customer relationships and circumventing the consumer's ingrained habit of blocking out canned corporate messages. They characterize the typical corporate voice as "sterile happy talk that insults the intelligence," "the soothing, humorless monotone of the mission statement, marketing brochure, and your-call-is-important-to-us busy signal."

When employees engage customers frankly about the problems they experience with the company's product, and offer useful information, they usually respond positively.

Christopher Locke recounts his experiences as director of communications for "an AI software outfit." He soon figured out that that translated, more or less, into their "PR guy," and that the press perceived public relations people as thinly disguised hucksters.

Locke didn't have much taste for that role, and so he started engaging in unscripted, off-message conversations with editors and reporters.

We talked about manufacturing and how it evolved, about shop rats and managers, command and control. We talked about language and literature, about literacy. We talked about software tool of course — what it could and couldn't do. We talked about the foibles of the industry itself, laughed about empty buzzwords and pompous posturing, swapped war stories about trade shows and writing on deadline. We talked about our own work. But these conversations weren't work. They were interesting and engaging. They were exciting. They were fun. I couldn't wait to get back to work on Monday morning.

Then something even more amazing happened. The company started "getting inkAnd not in the lowly trade rags it had been used to, but in places like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal and Business Week. One day the CEO called the VP of Marketing into my office.

"What has Chris been doing for you lately?" the CEO asked him.

"I'm glad you brought that up," said the marketing veep. "In the whole time he's been here, he hasn't done a single thing I've asked him to."

"Well..." said the CEO looking down at his shoes — here it comes, I thought, this is what it feels like to get sacked — "whatever it is he's doing, leave him alone. From now on, he reports to me."

That's how I discovered PR doesn't work and that markets are conversations.

A Saturn mechanic joined a conversation in a newsgroup sparked by a customer who posted a message titled "Am I Getting F-'ed By My Saturn Dealer???" (the dealership had done a lot of extra servicing, despite the fact that the owner's manual called only for an oil change at that mileage, and charged him for it). Other customers began recounting their experiences with dealers, comparing prices, and discussing what the company's policy was on such matters. The mechanic who showed up, rather than robotically spouting official happy talk with a perm smile, provided frank and useful information about the variation in dealership policies and quality of service, and what the customer's options were for handling the situation.

The Saturn mechanic was speaking for his company in a new way: honestly, openly, probably without his boss's explicit sanction--and he greatly served the interests of Saturn.

He and others like him are changing the way Saturn supports its customers. And Saturn corporate might not even know its happening.

Symantec officially encouraged a similar approach when it launched Cafe, "a suite of programming tools for Java developers."

They had one person virtually living in the public support newsgroups. He responded to questions, fielded tech support requests, and generally got himself known as a very straight shooter about Symantec's products. He was only one person, but he was almost singlehandedly responsible for the developer community's positive take on Symantec. He wasn't there to promote, but strictly to assist. He gave honest answers to hard questions, acknowledged product shortcomings, and painted an honest, open picture of the product's strengths and weaknesses. The developer community's collective opinion of Symantec soared.

Another anecdote from the public relations history of Sun's Java team paints an anti-example. In the first year and a half that Sun's Java group existed, members of the engineering team spoke directly with customers and the press. Java grew from a glimmer, a possibility, to a platform with thousands of curious, turned-on early adopters. There was a general perception that Sun's Java team listened, answered questions, and was actively engaged with the community of Java developers.

After about eighteen months, the workload grew to such a point that we started shutting down our channels to the outside world. PR and marketing took over much of our contact with the outside world, and we put our heads down to deal with the increasing demands on the engineering team. The reaction from our developers was stated in these precise words many times over: "you disappeared." As we went underground, the perception of the Java group in the marketplace changed from "a small team of great engineers producing neat stuff" to "a hype engine to push Sun's stock."

What the Cluetrain authors don't mention is the potential for disaster, from the company's perspective, when disgruntled workers see the customer as a potential ally against a common enemy. What would have happened if Chris Locke, or the Saturn mechanic, or the Symantec rep had decided, not that their company's management was somewhat clueless, not that management was its own worst enemy and needed to be gently pushed to do a better job for its own good, not that they wanted to help their company by rescuing it from the tyranny of PR and the official line and winning over customers with a little straight talk--but that they hated the company and that its management was evil? What if, rather than simply responding to a specific problem with what the customer had needed to know, they'd aired all the dirty laundry about management's asset stripping, gutting of human capital, hollowing out of long-term productive capability, gaming of its own bonuses and stock options, self-dealing on the job, and logrolling with directors?

What if hospital workers told customers as in my case that management had cancelled employee PTOs in December because of the supposedly dire financial situation, and then turned around in April and rented them a corporate skybox suite at the local baseball stadium? Or that the same management that paid consultants megabucks to write a mission statement about "extraordinary patient care" and "enriching the lives in the communities we serve" had hired an HR consultant to ruthlessly downsize nursing staff until the hospital was a squalid, understaffed shithole with Third World quality of care on some wards? For the most part, still views the Internet as "just an extension of preceding mass media, primarily television." Corporate websites are designed on the same model as the old broadcast media: a one-to-many, one-directional communications flow, in which the audience couldn't talk back. But now the audience can talk back.

Imagine for a moment: millions of people sitting in their shuttered homes at night, bathed in that ghostly blue television aura. They're passive, yeah, but more than that: they're isolated from each other.

Now imagine another magic wire strung from house to house, hooking all these poor bastards up. They're still watching the same old crap. Then, during the touching love scene, some joker lobs an off-color aside — and everybody hears it. Whoa! What was that? People are rolling on the floor laughing. And it begins to happen so often, it gets abbreviated: ROTFL. The audience is suddenly connected to itself.

What was once The Show, the hypnotic focus and tee-vee advertising carrier wave, becomes in the context of the Internet a sort of reverse new-media an excuse to get together rather than an excuse not to. Think of Joel and the 'bots on Mystery Science Theater 3000. The point is not to watch the film, but to outdo each other making fun of it. And for such radically realigned purposes, some bloated corporate Web site can serve as a target every bit as well as Godzilla, King of the Monsters....

So here's a little story problem for ya, class. If the Internet has 50 million people on it, and they're not all as dumb as they look, but the corporations trying to make a fast buck off their asses are as dumb as they look, how long before Joe is laughing as hard as everyone else?

The correct answer of course: not long at all. And as soon as he starts laughing, he's not Joe Six-Pack anymore. He's no longer part of some passive couch-potato target demographic. Because the Net connects people to each other, and impassions and empowers through those connections, the media dream of the Web as another acquiescent mass-consumer market is a figment and a fantasy.

The Internet is inherently seditious. It undermines unthinking respect for centralized authority, whether that "authority" is the neatly homogenized voice of broadcast advertising or the smarmy rhetoric of the corporate annual report.

There’s no denying that a saturation ad campaign that puts your company’s name in tens of millions of banner ads will buy you some name recognition. But that recognition counts for little against the tidal wave of word-of-Web. Look at how this already works in today’s Web conversation. You want to buy a new camera. You go to the sites of the three camera makers you’re considering. You hastily click through the brochure ware the vendors paid thousands to have designed, and you finally find a page that actually gives straightforward factual information. Now you go to a Usenet discussion group, or you find an e-mail list on the topic. You read what real customers have to say. You see what questions are being asked and you’re impressed with how well other buyers --strangers from around the world --have answered them. You learn that the model you’re interested in doesn’t really work as well in low light as the manufacturer’s page says. You make a decision. A year later, some stranger in a discussion group asks how reliable the model you bought is. You answer. You tell the truth.

Compare that to the feeble sputtering of an ad. "SuperDooper Glue --Holds Anything!" says your ad "Unless you flick it sideways --as I found out with the handle of my favorite cup," says a little voice in the market. "BigDisk Hard Drives --Lifetime Guarantee!" says the ad "As long as you can prove you oiled it three times a week," says another little voice in the market. What these little voices used to say to a single friend is now accessible to the world. No number of ads will undo the words of the market. How long does it take until the market conversation punctures the exaggerations made in an ad? An hour? A day? The speed of word of mouth is now limited only by how fast people can type. Word of Web will trump word of hype, every time.

Marketing has been training its practitioners for decades in the art of impersonating sincerity and warmth. But marketing can no longer keep up appearances. People talk. Even more important for our purposes, employees talk. It's just as feasible for the corporation's workers to talk directly to its customers, and for workers and customers together to engage in joint mockery of the company.

In an age when unions have virtually disappeared from the private sector workforce, and downsizings and speedups have become a normal expectation of working life, the vulnerability of employer's public image may be the one bit of real leverage the worker has over him--and it's a dozy. If they go after that image relentlessly and systematically, they've got the boss by the short hairs. Given the ease of setting up anonymous blogs and websites (just think of any company and then look up the URL employernamesucks.com), the potential for other features of the writeable web like comment threads and message boards, the possibility of anonymous saturation emailing of the company's major suppliers and customers and advocacy groups concerned with that industry.... well, let's just say the potential for "swarming" and "netwar" is limitless.

It's already become apparent that corporations are quite vulnerable to bad publicity from dissident shareholders and consumers. For example, shareholders' in initiating some major changes at Sears, not by means of the norms of the corporate code (his proxy fight failed miserably) but through the pressure of public opinion. He paid for a full-page announcement in the Wall Street Journal where he exposed the identities of Sears' directors, labeling them the "non-performing assets" of Sears.... The embarrassment for the directors was so great that they implemented all the changes proposed by Monks.

There's no reason to doubt that management would be equally vulnerable to embarrassment by such tactics from disgruntled production workers, in today's networked world. The corporate world is beginning to perceive the danger of open-mouth sabotage, as well. For example, one Pinkerton thug almost directly equates sabotage to the open mouth, to the near exclusion of all other forms of direct action. According to Darren Donovan, a vice president of Pinkerton's eastern consulting and investigations division, with sabotage, there's definitely an attempt to undermine or disrupt the operation in some way or slander the company. There's a special nature to sabotage because of the overtones of it--and it can be violent. Companies can replace windows and equipment, but it's harder to replace their reputation. I think that's what HR execs need to be aware of because it is a crime, but it can be different from stealing or fraud. As suggested by both the interest of a thug and his references to "crime," there is a major focus in the corporate world on identifying whistleblowers and leakers through surveillance technology, and on the criminalization of free speech to combat negative publicity. Even more ominous, at first glance, is the virtual reenactment of the old "criminal syndicalism" legislation of the early 20th century under cover of the "economic terrorism" provisions of the patriot.

But the problem with such authoritarianism, from the standpoint of the bosses and their state, is that before you can water board open-mouth saboteurs at Gizmo you've got to catch them first. If the litigation over Diebold's corporate files and emails teaches anything, it's that court injunctions and similar expedients are virtually useless against guerrilla network. The era of the lawsuit is over, except for those cases where the offender is considerate enough to volunteer his home address to the target. Even in the early days of the Internet, the case turned into "the most expensive and most disastrous public-relations exercise ever mounted by a multinational company." As we already noted, the easy availability of web anonymity, the "writeable web" in its various forms, the feasibility of mirroring shut-down websites, and the ability to replicate, transfer, and store huge volumes of digital information at zero marginal cost, means that it is simply impossible to shut people up. The would-be corporate information police will just wear themselves out playing whack-a-mole. They will be worn out and destroyed in exactly the same way that the most technically advanced army in the world was defeated by a guerrilla force starting out with captured Japanese and French weapons, using bicycles to organize logistical support, and pitting fungi sticks against M-16s.

The last section of Naomi Klein's No Logo discusses in depth the vulnerability of large corporations and brand name images to net war campaigns. She pays special attention to "culture jamming," which involves riffing off of corporate logos and thereby "tapping into the vast resources spent to make [a] logo meaningful." A good example is the anti-sweatshop campaign by the National Labor Committee, headed by Charles, his formula is simple enough. First, select America's most cartoonish icons, from literal ones like Mickey Mouse to virtual ones like Kathie Lee Gifford. Next, create head-on collisions between image and reality. "They live by their image," says of his corporate adversaries. "That gives you certain powers over them, these companies are sitting ducks."

The potential threat network culture and the free flow of information pose to traditional hierarchies. Smart, interested, engaged and articulate people exchange information with each other via the Web, using hyperlinks and web services. Often this information papers, articles, documents, videos, recordings is about something that someone in a position of power would prefer that other people citizens, constituents, clients, colleagues) not know.

The exchanged-via-hyperlinks-and-web-services information is retrievable, re-usable and when combined with other information let's play connect-the-dots here often shows the person in a position of power to be a liar or a spinner, or irresponsible in ways that are not appropriate. This is the basic notion of transparency which describes a key facet of the growing awareness of the power of the Web.

Hyperlinks, the digital infrastructure of the Web, the lasting irretrievability of the information posted to the Web, and the pervasive use of the Web to publish, distribute and transport information combine to suggest that there are large shifts in power ahead of us. We have already seen some of that we will see much more unless the powers that be manage to find ways to control the toings-and-froings on the Web.

The hoarding and protection of sensitive information by hierarchical institutions and powerful people in those institutions is under siege, and... The accumulating impact of transparency and the decentralized distribution of information will lead to new forms of (smaller, more flexible, more nimble and more accountable) institutional structure and new types of dynamics by and between customers, colleagues and citizens. I've called the organizing principle that supports this hierarchy, the "archy" that stems from being wired, interconnected and engaged in the distribution and consumption of information leading to new knowledge, which in turn can and may lead to shifts in powerless top-down, more interactive, aggregated and focused on truth, trust and accountability.

We're now at the stage where the leadership of large, hierarchical organizations has achieved "negative credibility."These might just be examples of counter-suggestion--and our rulers' ignorance of this shows how little they understand of human nature.

But might something else be happening? Could it be that the ruling class now has negative credibility? Maybe people are now taking seriously the old Yes, Minister Joke -which one should never believe anything until it's officially denied. If so, doesn't this have serious implications? It means not merely that the managerial class has lost one of the weapons it can use to control us, but that the weapon, when used, actually fires upon its user.

Ah, "negative credibility"--what a beautiful expression! Every shift I finish at the hospital where I work, if I've managed to reduce the credibility of management (whether in the eyes of patients or of my coworkers), I feel I've accomplished my mission. My ultimate goal is for the hospital's senior management to feel engulfed by an almost tangible wave of hatred every time they enter the building. I want them to look into a sea of sullen or expressionless faces, afraid to turn their backs on any of them.

We have probably already passed a "singularity," a point of no return, in the use of networked information warfare. It took some time for employers to reach a consensus that the old corporate liberal labor regime no longer served their interests, to take note of the union-busting potential, and to exploit that potential whole-heartedly. But once they began to do so, the implosion of Wagner-style unionism was preordained. Likewise, it will take time for the realization to dawn on workers that things are only getting worse, that there's no hope in traditional unionism, and that in a Cluetrain world they have the power to bring the employer to his knees by their own direct action. But when they do, the outcome is also probably preordained. The twentieth century was the era of the giant organization. By the end of the twenty-first, there probably won't be enough of them left to bury.

Even if there were some way of objectively specifying expected levels of effort by ex ante contract, the costs of monitoring would likely be very high in practice. I suspect most market anarchists would reject, in principle, exogenous systems to enforce intra workplace contract that are not paid for entirely by those who rely on the service: in a market anarchy, those contractual arrangements which cost more to enforce than the benefits would justify would simply "wither away," regardless of whether the contractual violations incurred the moral disapproval of some.

As long ago as the 1930s, it is concluded that internal authoritarianism was counter-productive: any "efficiency" gains from greater work discipline were outweighed by costs resulting from passive sabotage. The assumptions of Theory Y imply that unless integration [of goals] is achieved the organization will suffer. The objectives of the organization are not achieved best by the unilateral administration of promotions, because this form of management by direction and control will not create the commitment which would make available the full resources of those affected. The lesser motivation, the lesser resulting degree of self-direction and self-control are costs which, when added up for many instances over time, will more than offset the gains obtained by unilateral decisions for the good of the organization.

The worst part is, management is completely aware of this. As we saw in Chapter Eight, they resort to expedients like Fish! to elicit consummate cooperation and simulate intrinsic motivation without giving workers anything in return, because from their standpoint they cannot afford to provide genuine motivation. It would require devoting greater resources to rewarding worker productivity, which stands in a direct zero-sum relationship to management's goal of feathering its own nest. The real goal of the organization is not increased efficiency or output, but supporting management in the lifestyle to which it is entitled by divine right. If things ever progress to the point where most workers see themselves as engaged in a zero-sum contest with management, the war will be over before it is fairly begun-because the comparative costs of monitoring and evasion are heavily stacked against management. Assuming a workforce that is bent on evading monitoring, I would venture to guess that there is no internal monitoring or surveillance system in existence that cannot be circumvented at a fraction of the cost of putting it in place. In the offensive-defensive arms race between management and labor, labor will always have the edge. As McGregor put it, "The ingenuity of the average worker is sufficient to outwit any system of controls devised by management."

The cumulative effect of these kinds of worker resistance, even when practiced only on an uncoordinated individual basis, can be overwhelming. J.C. Scott refers to "the small arsenal of relatively powerless groups," including among other things "such acts as foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering," and the like.

These techniques, for the most part quite prosaic, are the ordinary means of class struggle.... When they are practiced widely by members of an entire class against elites or the state, they may have aggregate consequences out of all proportion to their banality when considered singly.

We already saw, in Chapter Eight, the ways in which corporate hierarchies have turned to increasing internal authoritarianism in response to the perceived rise in worker disgruntlement and the associated threat of sabotage. There is a wide array of evidence that this perception on management's part is entirely accurate. The stagnant wages, downsizings, and speedups of the past thirty years have been associated with a dramatic increase in sabotage.

An executive coaching firm based in Dana Point, California, says he's seen a dramatic increase in bitterness from people in many types of workplaces over the past decade. He adds: "Sabotage seems to be just one more way for [workers] to kick the big corporation in the shins.

In 1998 there was an estimated $400 billion loss or 6% of annual corporate revenue, from "employee fraud and abuse". But such sabotage is actually under-reported, because negative publicity compounds the cost of the original sabotage. The news media, in effect, do our open-mouth sabotage for us: "Companies fear public scrutiny about what they did to cause an employee to get so angry or feel so desperate." According to Naomi Klein, rates of employee theft have risen dramatically in retail, and management has become much more frankly adversarial in searching the bags and purses of their "associates" at the end of the shift.

Disconnect between management's rhetoric of "empowerment" and the reality of downsizing, speedups and stagnant pay, probably adds fuel to the fire. Workers are not stupid, after all. The Solidarity workers in Poland, and the assorted insurgencies in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) adopted as their first order of business the creation of organs of workers' control in the factories. In other words, they took the Leninists' rhetoric about "workers' power" at face value, and used the regime's own official ideology as a weapon against it. American workers, likewise, are more than willing to use the master's tools to tear down the master's house.

Companies that continue to assault their workers with degradation, poor wages and mistreatment run the risk of finding themselves the victims of the workplace equivalent of guerrilla warfare. At a time when management gurus like to talk about "empowering" employees by flattening out the organizational chart, introducing total quality management and team workgroups, employees embrace sabotage as a way to accomplish instant empowerment without the hefty consulting fees and nauseating jargon. Certainly there is nothing more empowering than pouring a cup of coffee into the back of a computer, intentionally misfiling an important document or putting a little Krazy Glue into the back of a critical file cabinet. Only the boss might be able to crack the whip, but anyone can pull a plug.

The perception of powerlessness and the resort to destructive behavior are intimately connected. As workers feel increasingly powerless (and Fish’s mantra that "we can't control what happens to us" doesn't exactly help, does it?), the cumulative cost from petty and sporadic acts of destruction will continue to climb. One study, for example, found a close correlation between "employee deviance" (theft or destruction of property, or deviance from expected quantity or quality of production) and dissatisfaction with the work environment. another correlated destruction directly to the perceived lack of control. For example one high school student who smashed a locker "recalled passing it for the next three years and each time thinking proudly, 'there's my little destruction to this brand new school.'" This, apparently, was one student who didn't fully internalize all the administration happy talk about "spirit" and "his" school. And I suspect very few workers are stupid or brainwashed enough to buy into management's official happy talk about "our workplace," either.

The HR Nazis' reactions to the threat are almost comical--especially their ham-handed attempts at personality profiling to identify potential saboteurs (any worker who can't figure out what answers HR is looking for probably shouldn't be around heavy machinery anyway). One example of the genre refers to "negative attitudes toward authority" and a sense of being "alienated from authority" as self-evidently pathological. This is reminiscent, in an earlier stage of human resource-processing, of the public schools' attempts to treat such attitudes toward authority as symptoms of an actual disease: "Oppositional Defiance Disorder." The possibility that negative attitudes toward authority might be a reasonable and justified response to objective changes in the environment, it seems, never occurs to these people. In an incredible display of mirror imaging, the authors identify these feelings with a "sense of entitlement."

For some reason, this sense of entitlement on the part of management reminds me of an old cartoon in the New Yorker. A couple of Egyptian overseers with whips casually lean against the shady side of a pyramid, as slaves drag a granite block past them. "Oh, I believe there are plenty of jobs available," one overseer intones. "It's just that nobody wants to work."

Getting back to the issue of moral legitimacy, it's difficult to see how a wing of libertarianism that agrees with Walter Block on the moral defensibility of blackmail can consistently get all squeamish when workers pursue the exact same interest-maximizing behavior. That's no exaggeration, by the way. Contrast libertarian commentary on the virtuous function of price gouging after Katrina with this message board reaction at Libertarian Underground to the idea of workers doing exactly the same thing:

Fisticuffs: Economically speaking, why should [workers] do more than the minimum possible for their pay?

Charles M.: Why not just rob people if you can get away with it? Economically speaking?

Fisticuffs: If a person does a certain amount of work and gets paid for that amount of work, is the person really pricing himself efficiently if he does more work without getting paid more??

Here's a little thought experiment: try imagining Charles reaction if Fisticuffs had complained that employers are "robbing people" when they try to get the most work they can for an hour's wages. You can also do an experiment in real life: go to any mainstream libertarian discussion forum and complain about the bad behavior of the typical worker. The responses will range from commiseration over "how hard it is to get good help nowadays," to visceral outrage at the ingratitude and perversity of such uppity workers. Then go to a comparable forum and complain in exactly the same tone about your boss' behavior. The predictable response will be a terse and pissy "if you don't like it, look for another job." Try it for yourself.

I also recall seeing a lot of tsk-tsking from Paul Birch and others of like mind in some discussion forum several months back, about what blackguards union workers were for demanding higher wages when their labor was most needed. Golly, aren't these the same people who defend "price gouging" by the oil companies? It's not very consistent to go from "caveat emptor" and "fooled me twice, shame on me!" in every realm except labor relations, to spelling "God" E-M-P-L-O-Y-E-R within the workplace. The hostility is quite odd; assuming the person feeling it is motivated by free market principle rather than a zeal for the aggrieved interests of big business. They seem, in fact, to implicitly assume a model of employer-employee relations based on a cultural holdover from the old master-servant relationship.

Brad Spangler, in the comment thread to a Mises Blog post linking Jeffrey Tucker's article on the Hollywood writers' strike, pointed out this double standard when it comes to collective bargaining:

Negotiation of terms is part of the transaction process and, hence, the market.

Are you implying that sellers ought only passively accept or decline deals and never assertively negotiate with a potential buyer, merely so long as more than one potential buyer exists?...

If so, do you apply that dictum universally, or just in the case of labor deals?

If so, AND if you limit that view solely to the labor market, then I must ask what (in economic terms) is so special about labor.

If so, AND if you apply it universally, then I must say you're really doing yourself a disservice when it comes to selling a home or car....

That statement [that there is no way to sell anything for a higher price than the highest bidder is willing to pay] sort of misses the point --namely, that rhetorical efforts to systematically discourage assertive negotiation by one subset of transaction participants (under color of economic thought) are a misguided effort to cripple the market's own discovery process for determining what "the highest bidder is willing to pay".

The culture-bound reactions of the bluenose authoritarians at Mises.Org and Libertarian Underground are, indeed, holdovers from the older cultural atmosphere of master-servant relations. And despite all the libertarian rhetoric of "free contract," (as Paul Graham put it) "our employer-employee relationship still retains a big chunk of master-servant DNA. This was recognized by no less of a free market libertarian. So long as the worker remains a wage-earner, the marks of status do not wholly disappear. For so many hours daily he makes over his faculties to a master..., and is for the time owned by him.... He is temporarily in the position of a slave, and his over looker stands in the position of a slave-driver. Further, a remnant of the régime of status is seen in the fact that he and other workers are placed in ranks, receiving different rates of pay.

The modern terms "employer" and "employee" were coined to avoid the awkwardness of the previous terms, which are still used in employment law: master and servant. To avoid the unpleasant fact that human beings are rented, it is necessary to resort to "the usual linguistic sugar-coating involved in saying employees are 'hired,' 'employed,' 'given a job,' or 'invited to join the firm.'"This preliminary analysis of the employment relation must include consideration of the language of employment because "words tell a story." We previously noted that a good many people are not even aware that they live in a society based on the renting of human beings. But before we suggest that "The Big Lie" or ideological false consciousness may also exist on this side of the erstwhile Iron Curtain, we should check if people at least know the traditional legal name of the employment relation.

Slaves knew they were slaves, but do employees know their legal name? "Employer employee" is not the traditional name; it is newspeak which has only come into English usage within the last century. Society seems to have "covered up" in the popular consciousness the fact that the traditional name is "master and servant." Without special legal or historical education, one would think "servant" refers only to domestics. But domestic servants are only domestic servants, while all employees are servants in the technical legal sense of the word.

The master-servant language was used by the 18th century Blackstone, but in the 19th century it had acquired such negative connotations that it had passed out of common usage. For instance, there has no standard name for employee/servants in his classic since the old speak of "servants" been unacceptable but the newspeak of "employees" had not yet been imported from the French. Mill referred to employees as hired "operatives," "workpeople," "laborers," or even "the employed." Even around the turn of this century, the English version "employee" of the French "employŽ" was not fully accepted. In 1890, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary notes:

The English form of this word, viz., employee, though perfectly conformable to analogy, and therefore perfectly legitimate, is not sanctioned by the usage of good writers.

The traditional language of master and servant is still used today in the area of agency law, the law governing the relationships between principal and agent, and any involved third parties. The relevant distinction is between a servant (i.e., an employee) and an independent contractor. A lawyer or plumber in independent practice is an independent contractor while a lawyer or plumber on the staff of a corporation would be a servant or employee. The Chicago economist, quoted from a lawbook to describe the "legal relationship normally called that of 'master and servant' or 'employer and employee”.

The master must have the right to control the servant's work, either personally or by another servant or agent. It is this right of control or interference, of being entitled to tell the servant when to work (within the hours of service) or when not to work, and what work to do and how to do it (within the terms of such service), which is the dominant characteristic in this relation and marks off the servant from an independent contractor, or from one employed merely to give to his employer the fruits or results of his labor.

In addition to not being independent (e.g., not paying for one's inputs), the servant is marked off from the independent contractor by the employer's control over the execution of the work.

An agent could be either a servant or an independent contractor. In agency law, the distinction is quite important for the imputation of legal liability when a third part is injured within the scope of the agent's work. Modern labor legislation uses the newspeak of "employer-employee." The continuing use of the traditional "master-servant" language in agency law is not without controversy. Some writers consider the "master-servant" language to be so archaic that it can be used as technical terminology without any undue negative connotations.

Most people, who work, work as employees. Yet they do not know employment is the rental relation applied to persons and they do not know the traditional name of the relationship. The system of social indoctrination has been so successful that the employer-employee relation is not even perceived as something that could be different. "To be employed" has become synonymous with "having a job," to be "unemployed" is to be without work so "employment" has become the same as work.

The employment relationship is accepted as part of the furniture of the social universe. We have even described the opposite system without the employment relationship as "universal self-employment" which is akin to describing the opposite of the slavery system as universal self-ownership.

Knowing the power which unions can exert, masters are led to treat the individual members of them with more respect than they would otherwise do: the status of the workman is almost necessarily raised. Moreover, having a strong motive for keeping on good terms with the union, a master is more likely than he would else be to study the general convenience of his men, and to carry on his works in ways conducive to their health. There is an ultimate gain in moral and physical treatment if there is no ultimate gain in wages.

The real constituency of the new labor movement Sweeney envisions is the American public as a whole, as well as workers throughout the world. As the old social contract unravels, the great majority of those in jeopardy are not American union members but unrepresented American workers, as well as workers in the third world. Beyond organizing new members, labor must transform itself into a voice speaking mainly for these expansive constituencies who are not already American union members. Ironically, this will be the most effective way to service its own dues-paying members. In France, for example, less than 10 percent of the workforce is in unions, but the French people as a whole support union work stoppages to protect wages or benefits. In 1997, a majority of the French population virtually closed down the country in support of transportation workers' efforts to protect retirement and vacation benefits.

In addition, a socially-based union movement might take a page from the Twenties' book, offering cheap mutual health insurance not only to job-based union members, but to society-based members in non-union workplaces. It might try organizing production for exchange by unemployed workers, as well as setting up worker cooperatives on the model attempted by the Knights of Labor. During the great CIO organizing strikes of the early 1930s, one of great innovations was to ally the industrial unions with local organizations of the unemployed, to involve the latter in support of the strikes and weaken the social base for scabbing. A broad-based union movement, involved in creating social solidarity both in and out of the workplace, a self-organized workers' welfare state including not only job-based union members but non-union workers and the unemployed, would create a social base of support much like what described in France, and undermine the bosses' divide-and-rule strategy.

The clear implication is that as human capital becomes decisive to the firm, residual claimancy of labor is necessary to secure a proper level of worker "investment" of their human capital in the firm. Discussion of incentive systems in Managerial Dilemmas reinforces this lesson. Proper compensation not only serves as an efficiency wage for reducing turnover in human capital, but elicits hidden knowledge that otherwise might be exploited for information rents. The problem, he points out:

Since wages for subordinates are costs for the owner of residual profits, profit maximization by the center is an obstacle to the efficient resolution of both the hidden information and hidden action problem. The desire of owners to maximize revenues less payoffs for team members constantly tempts them to choose incentive schemes that encourage strategic misrepresentation and inefficient production methods by subordinates.

The central dilemma in a hierarchy is thus how to constrain the self-interest of those with a stake in the inevitable residual generated by an efficient incentive system.... There will be a set of managerial alternatives available to the owner that will decrease the overall size of the pie, while increasing the owner's share of that pie. A firm will be better off if it can guarantee its subordinates a secure "property right" in a given incentive plan and a right to control certain aspects of their work environment and work pace. Security in these property rights can give employees reason to make investments of time, energy, and social relationships that produce economic growth.

Unfortunately, the temptation for the owner whether shareholders or management to expropriate the net productivity gains and destroy employee trust in the long run is ever-present. For this reason, once again, the only stable solution to this built-in conflict of interest is to vest residual rights in the workforce itself.

A primary advantage of hierarchy over contracting in the market is that it enables the firm owners to monitor the performance of individual employees and fire them severally, as opposed to the alternative possibility of being able to monitor and "fire" only the entire contracting firm. The unstated assumption here is that the individual workers actually engaged in production have no ownership stake in either the contracted firm or in the internal organization of the integrated firm, and therefore have no direct market incentive to maximize performance as a result of their own ownership stake in the firm or their share in its market returns. It follows that the only way to maximize their performance is through altering the degree of supervision and the administrative rewards and penalties.

The fading strength of unions will continue for as long as organised labour is entrenched in past victories and outdated forms of resistance. But the networked mode of production opens up a "window of opportunity" for a renewed cycle of struggle, this time, however, of a different kind. Since all points of production have been transformed into potentially redundant nodes of a network, capital as a factor of production in the network has itself become a node subject to redundancy.

The growing importance of human relative to physical capital, and the rise of peer production in the informational realm, as reason for hope that independent and self-managed networks of laborers can rout around capital. Hence the importance he attaches to software patents and other aspects of the increasingly draconian "intellectual property" regime as ways of suppressing the open-source movement and maintaining control over the conditions of production.

The imaginary perspective of 2015, made a similar observation about the vulnerability of corporations that follow the Nike model of hollowing themselves out and outsourcing everything: Let's step back now from the perspective of the knowledge worker and look at how the business environment for corporations has changed in 2015. In the early 2000s, large corporations that were once hierarchical end-to-end business enterprises began shedding everything that was not deemed ‘core competency’, in some cases to the point where the only things left were business acumen, market knowledge, experience, decision-making ability, brand name, and aggregation skills. This 'hollowing out' allowed multinationals to achieve enormous leverage and margin. It also made them enormously vulnerable and potentially dispensable.

As outsourcing accelerated, some small companies discovered how to exploit this very vulnerability. When, for example, they identified North American manufacturers outsourcing domestic production to third world plants in the interest of 'increasing productivity', they went directly to the third world manufacturers, offered them a bit more, and then went directly to the North American retailers, and offered to charge them less. The expensive outsourcers quickly found themselves unnecessary middlemen. Now in 2015, the result is what Doc Searls and Dave Weinberger, two Internet experts, have called a World of Ends -which in its business application means a disintermediated world where specialized businesses contract directly with each other to bring the benefits of globalization and the free market to consumers. The large corporations, having shed everything they thought was non 'core competency', learned to their chagrin that in the connected, information economy, the value of their core competency was much less than the inflated value of their stock, and they have lost much of their market share to new federations of small entrepreneurial businesses.

Returning to Peters and his exalted reaction to Moody's Microsoft quip, it's a bit odd to hear the "human imagination" described as a "factory asset" in a country that celebrates the abolition of slavery. It may raise Peters' neck hairs, but it makes my stomach turn. Unfortunately, most of the profitable sectors in the corporate economy (software, entertainment, biotech, pharma) are built on the assumption that the human imagination is subject to corporate ownership. And to answer Peters' question about managing the human imagination, Microsoft's Internet Explorer web browser is getting a run for its money from a browser, Firefox, produced entirely by self-managed human imagination, and distributed without a patent. Microsoft is able to manage the "human imagination" working on its products because they are unable to freely build on existing knowledge without the permission of the corporate gatekeepers--unlike the developers of new versions of Linux and Firefox, and countless other open-source products. The human networks writing code for Microsoft are quite similar to the human networks outside in the free software movement. The main difference between them is the corporate boundaries enforced by Microsoft's fake "property" rights.

The Cluetrain Manifesto makes a similar observation. Today the networked public knows more about the company's product than its own officers do, getting "far better information and support from one another" than from the company's official representatives. The internal workforce of the corporation, in the age of the "hyperlinked organization," is similarly networked through the intranet; although corporations initially install intranets "top-down to distribute HR policies... that workers are doing their best to ignore, before long people are "talking to each other inside the company--and not just about rules and regulations, boardroom directives, bottom lines." Both the work force and the public are networked and engaged in conversations that corporate management can't control. And "a metaphysical construct called 'The Company' is the only thing standing between the two."

However subliminally at the moment, millions of people now online perceive companies as little more than quaint legal fictions that are actively impeding these conversations from intersecting. To the outside, the company begins to look like a set of hyperlinked clusters who select themselves based on trust and respect and even their sense of fun. The trust is built through the quality of voice of the participants: that is all that counts in a hyperlinked team.

The business now consists of a shifting set of hyperlinked groups, self-organizing, inviting in participants based on the quality of their voice, regardless of where --and whether --they are on the org chart. Management is simply an impediment to these groups. In fact, rather than employees feeling that they must constantly justify themselves to management, management now needs to give workers a single reason why it should be involved in the life of the business it used to believe it ran.

Of Philip Morris' purchase price for Kraft, Peters mentions that ten percent was the value of the actual production assets, and ninety percent was "other." Most of that "other" was the capitalized value of privilege.

The abolition of the artificial property rights (copyrights, patents, and trademarks) which are currently the main bulwark of the corporation as locus of control, will cause most firms to wither away in industries centered on human capital.

In industries like manufacturing, which even with general-purpose technologies for decentralized production require comparatively large capital outlays?

The increasing agency problems of human capital within the corporation, and the resulting change in perceived self-interest of capital as it affects firm ownership, may serve to promote cooperative ownership of capital-intensive industry. For over a century, the principle of shareholder supremacy has reflected the perceived self-interests of large-scale absentee owners of investment capital. But with the increased agency problems entailed in wage labor and absentee ownership, they may well decide that the dangers of expropriation are less when the capitalist is a contractual claimant collecting a fixed payment on debt. The networked digital world has created an unprecedented state of affairs. In many industries, the initial outlay for entering the market was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars or more. The old electronic mass media, for instance, were "typified by high-cost hubs and cheap, ubiquitous, reception-only systems at the end. This led to a limited range of organizational models for production: those that could collect sufficient funds to set up a hub."

The networked economy, in contrast, is distinguished by "network architecture and the cost of becoming a speaker." The first element is the shift from a hub-and-spoke architecture with unidirectional links to the end points in the mass media, to distributed architecture with multidirectional connections among all nodes in the networked information environment. The second is the practical elimination of communications costs as a barrier to speaking across associational boundaries. Together, these characteristics have fundamentally altered the capacity of individuals, acting alone or with others, to be active participants in the public sphere as opposed to its passive readers, listeners, or viewers.

The central change that makes this possible is that "the basic physical capital necessary to express and communicate human meaning is the connected personal computer."

The core functionalities of processing, storage, and communications are widely owned throughout the population of users. The high capital costs that were a prerequisite to gathering, working, and communicating information, knowledge, and culture, have now been widely distributed in the society. The entry barrier they posed no longer offers a condensation point for the large organizations that once dominated the information environment. Instead, emerging models of information and cultural production, radically decentralized and based on emergent patterns of cooperation and sharing, but also of simple coordinate coexistence, are beginning to take on an ever-larger role in how we produce meaning--information, knowledge, and culture--in the networked information economy.

The desktop revolution and the Internet mean that the minimum capital outlay for entering most of the entertainment and information industry has fallen to a few thousand dollars, and the marginal cost of reproduction is zero. If anything that overstates the cost of entry in many cases, considering how rapidly computer value depreciates and the relatively miniscule cost of buying a five-year-old computer and adding RAM. The networked environment, combined with endless varieties of cheap software for creating and editing content, makes it possible for the amateur to produce output of a quality once associated with giant publishing houses and recording companies. That is true of the software industry, the music industry (thanks to cheap equipment and software for high quality recording and sound editing), desktop publishing, and to a certain extent even.

Podcasting makes it possible to distribute "radio" and "television" programming, at virtually no cost, to anyone with a broadband connection. A network of amateur contributors have peer-produced an encyclopedia, Wikipedia, which Britannica sees as a rival. As Tom Coates put it, "the gap between what can be accomplished at home and what can be accomplished in a work environment has narrowed dramatically over the last ten to fifteen years.”

It's also true of news, with ever-expanding networks of amateurs in venues like Indymedia, and natives and American troops reporting news firsthand from places like Iraq, at the very same time the traditional broadcasting networks are shutting down foreign news operations because of the high cost. With a digital camera ready-at-hand and an Internet connection close by, the anarchistic mode of news reporting turns any passer-by into a potential journalist for a moment.

The central characteristic of information and culture production, in the networked digital age, is "non-rivalry" and zero marginal reproduction cost. "Non-rival" means that possession of information good does not make it less available for consumption by others. In addition, information can be reproduced indefinitely at little cost. The work of creating a novel need only be done once, after which the thousandth or millionth reproduction can be made for the labor and material cost of printing, at no further cost to the author. And digitized information can be reproduced at virtually no cost whatever.

James Bennett describes this as "the end of capitalism" in the sense of absentee ownership and wage labor) "and the triumph of the market economy."

The first thing was that the falling price of computers crossed the line to the point where the average programmer could afford to own a computer capable of producing the code he typically produced. This meant that, for the first time since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the ownership of the most critical tool of production of the most critical industry of the world’s leading economy became readily affordable by the individual worker. Throughout the first three decades of the Information Age, the individual worker was still as dependent on his employer for his means of production as was any textile worker in Manchester or Lawrence in 1840. Suddenly, this changed. Now, it is as if a steelworker could afford his own blast-furnace or rolling-mill; an automobile worker his own assembly line. By strict Marxist definitions, capitalism ended sometime in the early 1990s. I have nowhere seen this fact brought to the attention of the world.

The second thing which has changed is the rise of the Internet. This is taking the control of the communication networks, and ultimately of the communications media, out of the hands of the large corporations which have always controlled them. It is creating the basis for a heterogeneous, worldwide, real-time market in which packages of communications capability, and content, will be bought and sold as commodities, and in which small players will likely hold the advantage over big ones. The Internet, the computer, and broadcasting capabilities will just be arbitrary divisions within a wider uniform medium. The cost of a facility for Webcasting is far less than the cost of a facility for television broadcasting; in a few years the quality of the Webcast will be as good, if not better, than that of broadcast television, and the cost of a Webcasting facility for high-quality production will readily be in the range of many individuals. Just as the individually-owned computer capable of producing first-rate software is revolutionizing the work relations of software, the individually-owned Webcasting facility will change the nature of the media.

It is also changing the dynamics of production. Even though the tools of production can now be owned by the workers, individually and severally, there still seemed to be a need to bring programmers together in one place and put them under the control of management, Although this is still the case in most instances, the rise of Linux and other open-source products has provided another paradigm, and one which will soon grow to become the principal model of production in the principal industry of the leading economies of the planet.In this environment, the only thing standing between the old information and media dinosaurs and their total collapse is their so-called "intellectual property" rights--at least to the extent they're still enforceable. In any such industry, where the basic production equipment is affordable to all, and bottom-up networking renders management obsolete, it is likely that self-managed, cooperative production will replace the old managerial hierarchies. The network revolution, if its full potential is realized, will lead to substantial redistribution of power and money from the twentieth century industrial producers of information, culture, and communications--like Hollywood, the recording industry, and perhaps the broadcasters and some of the telecommunications giants-to a combination of widely diffuse populations around the globe, and the market actors that will build the tools that make this population better able to produce its own information environment rather than buying it ready-made."

The potential for such "worker control of the means of production," in the digital world, has been celebrated by no less of an anarcho-capitalist. pick on a guy who has a) successfully challenged the industrial-capitalist system of software production, b) argued, effectively, that the assertion of intellectual-property rights leads to bad outcomes, and c) helped lead the charge to put programming back in the control of programmers. And the ripple effects of my work have gone way beyond programming; it’s been cited by insurgent movements in bioinformatics, library science, game design, pharmaceuticals, third-world development economics, and half a dozen other disciplines.

And, you know, it’s not like I’ve made any secret of the fact that I believe open-source thinking has radical political consequences in the longer term. I’ve said many times that the economic-efficiency arguments for open-source decentralization should sufficient to get people to do it without buying my politics. Then I’ve turned around and observed that learning how to do without centralization and big management in one area provides people with both working models and efficiency arguments for getting rid of authority hierarchies elsewhere. Yeah, sure, that’s a conservative prescription!

I’ve even argued that we’re entering an era in which the traditional capital-intensive, management-intensive corporate form is less and less appropriate for managing production in which the main bottleneck is skilled human attention. I don’t use the term “workers’ cooperative” for what’s replacing it, but hello…hello? Can’t any of the so-called “progressive” thinkers in the Marxist camp put two and two together?

And the same model of organization can be extended to fields of employment outside the information and entertainment industries--particularly labor-intensive service industries, where human capital likewise outweighs physical capital in importance. The basic model is applicable in any industry with low requirements for initial capitalization and low or non-existent overhead. Perhaps the most revolutionary possibilities are in the temp industry. In my own work experience, I've seen that hospitals using agency nursing staff typically pay the staffing agency about three times what the agency nurse receives in pay. Cutting out the middleman, perhaps with some sort of cross between a workers' comp and a longshoremen's union hiring hall, seems like a no-brainer.

The chief obstacle to such "break-away firms" is non-competition agreements signed by temp workers at their previous places of employment. Typically, a temp worker signs an agreement not to work independently for any of the firm's clients, or work for them through another agency, for some period usually three to six months after quitting. Of course, this can be evaded fairly easily, if the new cooperative firm has enough workers to direct particular assignments to those who aren't covered by the non-competition clause in relation to that particular client.

One important implication of these phenomena is that the traditional association of capitalization with productivity (especially the predilection of Austrians, as we saw in Chapter One, to view accumulation and "round-a-boutness" as the central prerequisites for a high standard of living) has become obsolete. Even the mainstream marginality tradition, in its Austrian and neoclassical variants, professes to believe that capital is just one factor of production among many; it is therefore a bit odd, as "Jed" notes at Anomalous Presumptions blog, to name the market system for one factor in particular ("capitalism"). And, Jed also argued, technological advances are simultaneously reducing by orders of magnitude the capital outlays needed to set up in many industries, even as human capital replaces physical capital as the critical factor. Given this shift in the relative importance of capital and labor, it makes less sense than ever to treat capital as the primary factor.

Finally, I want to address the common contention of right-wing libertarians that unions are useless. I've read Economics in One Lesson. I'm familiar with the argument that "in a free market" wages are determined by productivity. I'm familiar with theargument that unions can't do anything for workers, in a free market, that isn't already accomplished by the operation of the market on an individual basis. I've also seen, in the real world.

Labor is far more productive than it was thirty years ago; yet virtually the entire increase in GDP in that time has gone to corporate profits, CEO salaries, and exploding land rents. The entire growth of economic output over the past thirty years has gone into mushrooming incomes for the reinter classes, while the majority has kept up their purchasing power by cashing out home equity. These facts, seemingly so at odds:

If a contradiction appears between a theory and experience, we always have to assume that a condition presupposed by the theory was not present, or else that there is some error in our observation.... The disagreement between the theory and the facts of experience consequently forces us to think through the problems of the theory again. But so long as a re-examination of the theory uncovers no errors in our thinking, we are not entitled to doubt its truth.

When the theory predicts that in a free market wages will be determined by the productivity of labor, and we see that they aren't, what's the obvious conclusion? That this isn't a free market. That we're dealing with power relations, not market relations.

In a state capitalist market, where some component of employer profits are rents extracted from the employee because of state-enforced unequal exchange, organized labor action may provide the bargaining leverage to reduce those ill-gotten gains.

It's also odd that the Rothbardians see so little advantage in contracts, from a worker's perspective.

Contract is the basis of the free market; yet the non-union laborer's "contract" is an unenforceable, malleable verbal agreement which can be rescinded or modified at any time, called "at will employment." There's nothing philosophically repugnant about "at will employment," but I find it odd that Pacific’s does not likewise decry written, enforceable, binding contracts between other entities --suppliers and purchasers, for example. Far from putting employers and employees at odds with each other, dealing on the basis of explicit contract minimizes misunderstandings. Each party knows what he or she is required to do to execute the contract, and each party knows what he or she can expect as a benefit under it.

Contracts introduce long-term stability and predictability for everyone: something free-market libertarians consider to be a fairly non-controversial benefit, when anything but labor supply is involved. Had held down a blue collar job, he might have understood the incredible feeling of relief in knowing you're protected by a union contract against arbitrary dismissal and all the associated uncertainty and insecurity that comes with being an "at-will" employee. Any time you see a right-wing libertarian throwing a hissy fit over something they approve in principle under other circumstances, it's a pretty safe bet it must be benefiting workers.

Another point, on the same subject: hostility toward the "economic illiteracy" of workers who voluntarily refrained from crossing picket lines, and consumers who boycott scab goods, is quite uncharacteristic for a subjectivist. It's certainly odd, for adherents of an ideology that normally accepts no second-guessing of "revealed preference," to get their noses so out of joint when that preference is for respecting a picket line or buying "fair trade" coffee.

More importantly, in acknowledging that enough potential "replacement workers" so honored picket lines as to constitute a "problem," from his perspective, he also gave the lie to arguments ilk that the success of strikes depends on forcible exclusion of scabs. To see just how ridiculous that assertion is, imagine someone making the analogous claim that "the success of the boycott as a weapon depends entirely on the use of force to exclude customers from the market." A strike does not have to achieve 100% participation of the workforce, or exclude 100% of potential replacements. It only has to persuade enough of both groups to inconvenience the employer beyond his threshold of tolerance. And that a general moral culture which encourages labor solidarity and respect for picket lines, alone, may be enough to achieve this, is suggested by the very fact that right-wing followers regard that kind of moral culture as such a threat.

These remarks by Charles Johnson are probably better than anything I could come up with as a closing summary:

Disentangling free market economics from the particular market structure of alienated labor reveals some good reasons to think that there are serious economic problems with bureaucratic, centralized corporate commerce that rose to dominance in the 19th and 20th centuries under the auspices of “Nationalist” and “Progressive” interventionism. Central planners face the knowledge problems identified whether those planners are government or corporate bureaucrats. If workers are often deeply unhappy with the regimented, authoritarian structure of corporate workplaces, then there is also reason to believe that many would happily dump the bosses off their backs in favor of more autonomous forms of work, as those become widespread, successful, and economically reliable. Thus there is reason to think that in a free market less hierarchical, less centralized, more worker-focused forms of production would multiply and bureaucratic big business would wither under the pressure of competition. Since the cooperative, bottom-up model of labor unionism offers one of the best existing models for practically asserting workers' self-interest, and ultimately replacing boss-centric industry with decentralized, worker-centric production, there are good reasons for libertarians to integrate wildcat unionism into their understanding of social power.

# The Report

This is the number one thesis in *the cluetrain manifesto,* and the concept that has fueled almost every discussion in class since day one. Social media has made it possible for people to exchange information much more quickly, thus changing the way marketers interact with consumers. Status updates and tweets happen in real time, which makes communication and conversation much faster.

Social Media is often thought of as a conversation where marketers seek to engage consumers. This conversation analogy emphasizes a one to one discussion rather than a one too many. If marketers think of social media advertising not only as joining one of millions of conversations but instead, joining a ‘party,’ it may help set the appropriate tone for engaging many consumers at once. Each network and sub-network is its own little party. Different parties have different characteristics and purposes, and each person adds something to the discussions whether he/she is a listener or a contributor. Marketers don’t need social media to have a one to one conversation with consumers. Email, which has been a primary online activity for over a decade, has always allowed for one to one discussions with consumers. Nor did we need technology to enable one to one contact; before email, consumers used the telephone and snail mail to engage in discussions. A better analogy is that social media is like a network of parties already underway. Groups of people are gathered, they have existing networks of relationships, and they are already talking.

As companies enter a social media ‘party,’ they must not think that they are VIP or the guest of honor; in fact, the truth may be exactly the opposite. Nielsen’s report *Trust in*

*Advertising* reveals that consumers are 30% or more likely to believe recommendations from other consumers than they are information provided by brands on Web sites, on TV, on the radio, in magazines, and in every other medium. Often do you read reviews on a product before you buy it? And who are reviews written by? Consumers trust recommendations and reviews by other consumers because they are honest. Companies will say almost anything to get their products sold. Every

Verizon and AT&T commercial on TV now are just bashing each other and who has better coverage. If I were looking for a new provider, I would never make my decision based on their commercials. I would read reviews and talk with consumers who have Verizon or AT&T service.

The value of the party metaphor becomes even more apparent when you think of the size of social media. It’s a ton of parties—people are talking about a brand on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and YouTube, not to mention on hundreds or thousands of blogs. Once social media is perceived not as individual discussions but as never-ending and constantly shifting participatory discussions with new guests arriving at every moment, one can begin to appreciate what it takes to succeed. A few ways companies are successful with social media are by not engaging in a flame war with an unreasonable and biased individual, having a respectful and humble personality, and realizing the conversations are going on with or without them, and reviews are being written whether consumers have a bad experience or good experience. Marketers cannot expect to create a Facebook fan page and automatically have fans joining and creating the party, but rather marketers must participate, provide content, and gain their consumers’ trust; while at the same time engage and encourage their consumers to participate and add their own content as well.

There are Personal observations during an undercover stint as a worker at a large London nightclub, many examples of workers imposing costs or reducing efficiency in response to perceived unfairness by the employer. Worker disgruntlement was expressed actively through wastage of supplies, deliberate destruction, and over-generosity toward the customer (i.e., the "good work strike"); it was also expressed through more passive measures, like withdrawal of enthusiasm and working to rule. As mild as "withdrawal of enthusiasm" may sound, the simple refusal to show initiative or to take timely action based on direct observations in the work process may result in massive losses to the employer. Consider this for example: In the early hours of one Saturday morning, the staff discovered that a high voltage electrical transformer had started to smoulder. However, they did not disconnect the appliance from the mains, or inform the managers. It was only when a small, but potentially destructive, fire broke out that one of the group members went to find a manager.

The comments which the staff used to explain away their behavior on this occasion were typical of those which would follow a case of inaction. For example, Ali said, 'I couldn't give a damn, let the bloody place burn down. It's nothing to do with me.' Sandra's reaction was: 'Oh to hell with it. I'm not going to go running to tell them every time something goes wrong, every time I see a little fire. It's their problem. If the place is really going to burn down, they'll find out soon enough and they can sort it out.' Compare this to the account above, in the case of automated machine tools, of the costs imposed by workers through the deliberate lack of initiative.

A disgruntled worker, through deliberate wastage, can cost an employer large sums of money with virtually no chance of getting caught. For example one member of the bar staff, Joe, asked to leave work upon hearing that his wife had checked their son to the hospital. The Catering Manager's response: "If you want to go, go but don't bother coming back if you do. You lot get paid to do a job. I couldn't care less, it's the business I am interested in not your kids. Don't waste my time again." Joe subsequently ruined several hundred pounds worth of spirits by contaminating them. "Do you think he's anything like as upset as I was last week?"Another worker, Chris, described a "nightmare" shift of loud, abusive customers swearing at her. The management's response, predictably: "...you're not being chirpy enough. You've got to smile!" After that manager, the source of the helpful advice, left her station, she dropped a full bottle of Tia Maria in the trash bin.

Even when the overall bargaining power of labor is seemingly too weak to permit significant resistance, it's possible to make one's will felt by timing non-cooperation to coincide with the employer's greatest periods of vulnerability. This has been done time out of mind through sick-outs and other form of unannounced, one-day wildcats at random intervals. Analoui and Kabadse recount one example at an engineering firm in northeastern England, where union demands for a 9.6% raise were met with a counteroffer of only a 7.6% raise, along with the warning to consider the high rate of unemployment before rejecting it. Not long afterward, the firm received an order for five hundred water pumps, enormously profitable to the firm, but which would require acceptance of overtime to complete by deadline. The shop steward, not surprisingly, announced that the workers weren't in the mood to work the overtime. The employer is enormously vulnerable to the strategic refusal of cooperation when cooperation is most desperately needed.

As we saw earlier this was, predictably, one of the primary objects of outrage at Libertarian Underground--that's right, among the same people who also, predictably, rally to the defense of price gougers. In another example, the bar at which Analoui worked undercover was selected for a surprise visit by the parent company's directors, with little advance notice. The General Manager, who had recently fired several cleaners, announced to the overworked bar staff (in a lengthy late-night meeting after a long, hellish shift) that they would be expected to come in early the next day to get the place shipshape for the visiting dignitaries. As you might expect, the General Manager wound up being humiliated in front of his own bosses. Typical of worker reactions was that of Ali: "Who's he talking to like that?

We're not rubbish. Making me late home. He wants the place clean? He can do it himself. He sacked the cleaners, not me.

That last is an especially effective form of "open-mouth sabotage," by the way: exposing the boss's dirt to his bosses.

# FOUR DAYS

I remember running through the woods, forcing our way through the hawthorn bushes, while the bullets whizzed around us, snapping off branches. The shooting became heavier. Red flashes spurted here and there on the edge of the wood. Sidorov, a young soldier of Company One ("What is he doing in our skirmish line?" I found myself wondering), suddenly slumped down on the ground and looked back at me in silence with great frightened eyes. Blood trickled from his mouth. Yes, I remember that clearly. I also remember how, in the dense undergrowth, within almost a stone's throw from the edge of the wood, I first saw him. . . . He was a huge fat Turk, but I went straight for him, weak and thin though I was. There was a report, and something flew past me, something enormous, it seemed to me; there was a ringing in my ears. "He is shooting at me," came the thought. With a scream of terror he recoiled against a thick hawthorn bush. He could have gone round it, but in his fear he did not know what he was doing and flung himself upon the prickly branches. I struck out, and knocked the rifle out of his hands, then struck again and felt my bayonet sinking into something soft. There was a queer sound, something between a snarl and a groan. Then I ran on. Our men were shouting "hurrah!” dropping, shooting. I remember firing several shots after I had come out of the woods into a clearing. Suddenly the cheers sounded louder and we all moved forward again. I should have said "our men" instead of "us," because I was left behind. I thought it rather odd. Still odder was it when all of a sudden everything disappeared, and all the shouting and the shooting were silenced. I heard nothing, and saw only a patch of blue; it must have been the sky. Then that went too.

I have never been in such a queer position before. I am lying, I believe, on my stomach, and see nothing in front of me but a small patch of earth. A few blades of grass, an ant, its head lowered, crawling along with one of them, bits of rubbish from last year's grass—that is my whole world. And I see it with only one eye, as the other one is pressed hard up against something—no doubt the branch on which my head is resting. I am terribly uncomfortable, and want to shift my position, and simply can't understand why I am not able to do so. Time passes. I hear the chirr of grasshoppers, the hum of bees. Not a sound more. At last, with an effort, I disengage my right arm from under my body, and pushing away from the ground with both hands, I make an effort to get up on my knees.

A pain, intense and swift as lightning, shoots through my whole body from knees to chest and head, and I fall back. Again darkness, a void.

I wake up. Why do I see the stars shining so brightly in the blue-black Bulgarian sky? Am I not in my tent? What made me crawl out of it? I make a movement and feel an excruciating pain in the legs.

Yes, I have been wounded. Is it dangerous or not? Both my right and left legs are clotted with blood. When I touch them the pain gets worse. It's like a toothache-a continuous gnawing pain. There is a ringing in my ears, and my head is weighted with lead. Dimly I realize that I have been hit in both legs.

What's the matter? Why didn't they pick me up? Have the Turks beaten us? I begin to recollect what happened to me, at first vaguely, then ever more clearly, and come to the conclusion that we have not been beaten at all. Because I dropped (I do not actually remember that, but I do remember everyone running forward while I wasn't able to, and being left behind with something blue before my eyes)-I dropped in the clearing, just on top of the mound. Our little battalion commander had pointed out that clearing to us. "Make for that, boys!" he had cried in his ringing voice. And we had made it, so we could not have been defeated. Then why hadn't they picked me up? It was an open spot here; they could not have missed me. Besides, I probably wasn't the only one lying-there. They had been shooting so rapidly, I must turn my head and have a look. I can do that more comfortably now, because when I had come to myself that time and seen the ant with the blade of grass crawling along head downwards, I had tried to get up and had dropped again not in my former position but on my back. That's why I can see the stars.

I raise myself and sit up. It's a hard thing to do with both my legs crippled. I had almost given it up in despair, but managed it at last with tears of pain springing to my eyes.

Overhead is a bit of blue-black sky with a big star and several small ones shining in it surrounded by something dark and tall. It's the bushes. I'm in the undergrowth-they have overlooked me!

I can feel the roots of my hair crawling on my head.

But what could I be doing in the undergrowth when I was wounded in the clearing? I must have crawled over here dazed with pain. The odd part about it is I cannot stir a limb now, while before I had been able to drag myself over to these bushes. Perhaps I had been hit only once then, and the second bullet had got me here.

Faint pink circles began to swim before my eyes. The big star faded and some of the smaller ones vanished. It was the moon rising. How good it was at home now!

Strange sounds reach my ears. It's like someone moaning. Yes, it's a moan. Is it someone else lying next to me overlooked, someone with crippled legs or a bullet in his stomach? No, the moans sound so near, but there doesn't seem to be anyone near me. . . . My God, why it's me myself! Low piteous moans; is the pain really as bad as that? It must be. Only I do not realize it, my head is so leaden and clouded. I had better lie down again and go to sleep-to sleep, sleep. . . . Would I ever wake up, though? Who cares?

Just as I am preparing to lie down a broad pale strip of moonlight clearly illumines the place where I am lying, and I see something dark and big lying within five paces of me. The moon picks out bright spots on it here and there. These are buttons or accoutrement. It's a dead body or a wounded man.

I don't care what it is-I'm going to lie down. . . .

No, it cannot be! Our men could not have retreated. They are here; they have driven back the Turks and are holding these positions. Then why is there no murmur of talk, no crackle of camp-fires? It must be that I am too weak to hear anything. They must be here, I am sure.

"Help! Help!"

Wild, hoarse, frantic cries burst from my throat, but remain unanswered. They resound loudly in the night air. All else is silence. Only the grasshoppers keep up their ceaseless chirp. The round face of the moon looks down on me sorrowfully.

If he were wounded he would have come to from such a cry. It is a corpse. One of ours or a Turk? Ah, my God! What difference does it make? And sleep descends upon my burning eyes.

I lie with closed eyes, although I have long been awake. I do not want to open them, as I can feel the sunlight through my closed eyelids; if I open them the glare of the sun will hurt. And I had better not move either. Yesterday (was it yesterday?) I was wounded; a day has passed; more days will pass, and I shall die. Who cares? I had better not stir. Let my body lie still. If only I could stop my brain working, too! But nothing can check it. Thoughts and memories throng in my head. That is not for long, though; soon the end will come. All that will remain will be a few lines in the newspapers saying that we had sustained few casualties-so many wounded, volunteer Private Ivanov killed. They will not even write the name; just-one killed. One private, like that wretched little dog.

A vivid scene leaps to my mind. It was long ago; but then my whole life, *that* life I had lived before I lay here with shot up legs, was so long ago. . . . I was walking down the street, and the sight of a crowd of people made me stop. They were standing in silence, looking at a bleeding ball of white that was whimpering piteously. It was a pretty little dog that had been run over by a horse tram. It was dying, as I am now. A janitor pushed through the crowd, picked the dog up by the scruff of its neck and carried it away. The crowd dispersed.

Would someone carry me away? No, I am-to lie here and die. And how beautiful life is! That day (when the accident occurred to the dog) I was happy. I walked along drunk with joy, and had good reason to be. Ah, aching memories leave me alone, do not torment me! The joy that was, the anguish that is ... let the anguish alone remain; it is easier to bear than memories which compel comparisons. Ah, what agony! You are worse than wounds!

It is becoming hot, though. The sun is blazing. I open my eyes and see the same bushes, the same sky, only now in daylight. And there is my neighbour. It's a Turk, a corpse. What a huge man! I know him; it's that same man. . . .

Before me lies the man I have killed. What did I kill him for?

He lies there dead and gory. What fate had cast him here? Who is he? Perhaps he, too, like me, has an old mother. How long will she sit on the doorstep of her squalid little clay hut in the evenings, looking northward to see whether her beloved son, her breadwinner and worker, is coming home?

And I? And I too. . . . I would gladly change places with him. How happy he must be not to hear anything, not to feel the pain of his wounds, nor the deadly anguish, nor the thirst. . . . . The bayonet had pierced him to the heart.

There was a big black hole in his uniform with blood round it. *I had done that.*

Ihad not meant to. I had had no grudge against any one when I went to fight. The thought that I would have to kill anybody had not occurred to me somehow. I had merely seen *myself* putting *my own* chest out to meet the bullets. And I had gone and done so.

And now what? Ah, fool, fool! And this poor fellah (he was wearing Egyptian uniform)-he was still less to blame. Until they were packed into a steamer like herrings in a barrel and shipped to Constantinople, he had never heard of Russia or of Bulgaria. He had been told to go, so he had gone. If he had not he would have been bastinadoed, or some pasha perhaps would have shot him down with a revolver. He had made the long and gruelling march from Stambul to Rustchuk. We had attacked, he had defended himself. But seeing what formidable men we were-men who had kept pushing on and on in face of his patented English Peabody-Martini rifle-terror had struck his heart. And when he had wanted to retreat, some little fellow, whom he could have killed with one blow of his dark fist, had rushed at him and plunged his bayonet into his heart.

Was it his fault?

Was it my fault, for that matter, although I did kill him? This thirst is terrible. Thirst! Who knows what that word means! Even when we were going through Rumania, marching fifty versts a day under a terrific heat of over a hundred degrees, I had never felt what I am feeling now. Ah, I wish somebody would come!

My God! Why, he must have some water in that huge flask of his! How can I get to it, though? At what cost? But get to it I must.

I begin to crawl. My legs drag, my weakened arms barely push my inert body forward. The corpse lies within fifteen feet of me, but for me this is more-not more, but worse-than fifteen miles. But crawl up to it I must. My throat burns. Besides, you'll only die quicker without water. As it is, you stand some chance.

And I crawl forward. My legs drag over the ground, and every movement is agony. I scream, scream and weep with pain, but crawl on. At last I reach the body. There is the flask... it has water in it-a lot of water! It must be at least half full. Oh, that water will last me a long time-it will last me till I die!

You are saving my life, my poor victim! Leaning on one elbow, I begin to unstrap the flask, when suddenly I lose my balance and fall face downward on my saviour's chest. He is beginning to give off a strong smell of putrefaction.

I drink my fill. The water is tepid, but it is still drinkable and there is a lot of it. It will keep me alive a few more days. Iremember reading in *The Physiology of Everyday Life* that a man could live without food for over a week, so long as he had water. It gave the story of a suicide that had killed him by starvation. It had taken him a long time to kill himself because he had had water to drink.

What of it? What if I do live another five or six days? Our men have retreated, the Bulgarians have run away. There is no road near by. All the same I'll die. Only instead of three days' agony I have given myself a week. Would it not be better to put an end to it? Next to my neighbour lies his rifle, an excellent English fire-arm. I need only stretch my hand out; then-in a flash-it will all be over. The cartridges lie there, too, all in a heap. He had not had time to use them up.

Well, should I get done with it, or wait? Wait for what? Rescue? Death? Wait until the Turks come and start flaying me, stripping the skin off my wounded legs? Better to put an end to it myself.

But I must not lose heart; I must hold on, fight till my last ounce of strength. If they find me, I am saved. Perhaps my bones are uninjured; they will patch me up. I'll see my country, my mother, Masha. . . .

God, don't let them learn the whole truth! Let them think I was killed on the spot. What will happen to them when they find out that I had been suffering for two, three, four days!

I feel dizzy; that journey to my neighbour has taken it out of me. And that horrible smell, too. How black he has gone ... what will he be like tomorrow or the day after? I am lying here only because I haven't the strength to drag myself away. I'll have a rest and crawl back to my old place; the wind, by the way, is blowing from that direction and will carry the stink away from me.

I am lying utterly exhausted. The sun is burning my face and hands. I have nothing to cover myself up with. I wish it were night already; it will be the second, I believe.

My thoughts wander, and I drop off.

I slept a long time, because when I woke up it was already night. Everything is the same: my wounds hurt; my neighbour lies there as huge and still as ever.

I can't help thinking about him. Had I given up all that I loved, all that was dear to me, had I made this thousand-mile march out here, suffering from hunger, cold and the blazing heat, did I lie now here in such agony, merely for the sake of taking that poor man's life? What useful military objective had I achieved apart from this murder?

Murder, murder. . . . And who? I!

When I had decided to go and fight, my mother and Masha had not tried to dissuade me, although they had cried over me. Blinded by an idea, I had not seen those tears. I had not realized (now I do) what I had done to those I love.

What's the use of looking back now! The past is gone and done with.

And how queerly many of my acquaintances had regarded my behaviour! "The man is crazy! He doesn't know what he's letting himself in for!" How could they say that? Row do such words tally with *their* notions of heroism, love of country and other such things? To *them I* was the embodiment of all those virtues. And yet they called me "crazy."

And so I went to Rant; I was loaded up with a knapsack and all kinds of military equipment. And I went off with thousands of others, among whom you would hardly find more than a few odd men like me, who had volunteered. The rest would have stayed at home if it had depended upon them. Yet they go as we "intelligent ones" go, marching thousands of miles and fighting just as well, if not better than we do. They perform their duties despite the fact that they would immediately drop the whole thing and go away if they only had the chance.

A keen morning wind springs up. The bushes begin to stir, and a sleepy bird takes wing. The stars grow dim. The dark-blue sky pales and becomes flecked with soft fleecy clouds; grey shadows rise from, the earth. It is the third day of my. . . . What can I call it? Life? Agony?'

The third. . . . How many more remained? At any rate very few. I have grown very weak, and I don't think I'll be able to move away from the corpse. Soon we shall be on even terms and won't be objectionable to each other. I must have a drink. I will drink three times a day-morning, noon and evening.

The sun has risen. Its huge disk, criss-crossed with the black branches of the underbrush, is red, like blood. It is going to be hot today, I think. What is going to happen to you, neighbour? God knows you are hideous enough as it is!

Yes, he was hideous. His hair had begun to fall out. His skin, which was naturally dark, had become blanched and yellow; the bloated face had drawn it so tight that it had split behind the ear. Worms were swarming there. His booted feet were swollen, and huge blisters pushed out between the hooks. His whole body had distended enormously. What would the sun do to him today?

Lying so close to him was unbearable. I must crawl away at all cost. But could I do it? I can still lift my hand to open the flask and have a drink, but shifting my heavy, inert body? But I must move away, no matter how little-be it even at the rate of half a pace an hour.

I spend the whole of that morning moving away. The pain is bad, but what does it matter now! I no longer remember, I cannot even imagine what the sensation of a healthy man is. In fact I seem to have got used to the pain. That morning I manage, after all, to crawl away about fifteen feet, and find myself on the old spot. But I was not to enjoy the fresh air for long-if you can call it fresh air within six or seven paces of a decaying corpse. The wind has shifted round and the stench is nauseating. I have a gripping pain in the pit of my empty stomach. The fetid contaminated air keeps flowing over me in sickening waves.

In despair, I start crying. . . .

Utterly worn out and stupefied, I lay almost unconscious. Suddenly. . . . Could it be the fancy of an excited imagination? Hardly. Yes, it was a sound of voices. The tramp of horses' hoofs, human voices. I was about to cry out, but checked myself. What if they were Turks? What then? To these tortures would be added others more horrible, tortures the mere reading about which in the newspapers makes one's hair stand up on end. They would skin me alive, roast my wounded legs. I might even expect worse; they were so diabolically ingenious. Was it really better to end my life in their hands than to die here? But what if they are our own men? Damn those bushes! Why have you grown all round me in such a thick wall? I can see nothing through them; only in one place a small gap between the branches allows me a glimpse of a hollow in the distance. There is a brook there, I believe-the brook from which we drank before going into battle. Yes and there is the great slab of sandstone thrown across the brook? They will probably ride over it. The murmur of voices ceases. I cannot make out what language they are speaking-my hearing has grown weaker. God! If it's our men. . . . I'll shout to them; they will hear me at that distance, surely. Better than running the risk of falling into the clutches of the bashibazouks. But where are they so long? I am in an agony of suspense; I don't even smell the corpse, although the stench of it is as bad as ever.

All of a sudden I catch sight of Cossacks at the crossing of the stream! Blue uniforms, red-striped trousers, lances. Half a *sotnia* of them. At the head a black-bearded officer on a magnificent horse. No sooner had the unit crossed the stream than he turned back in his saddle and shouted: "Forward, at the trot!"

"Stop, for God's sake, stop! Help, brothers, help!" I shout, but the tramp of the heavy horses, the clatter of sabres and the noisy talk of the Cossacks are louder than my hoarse cries-they do not hear me!

Damnation! Exhausted, I fall face downwards on the ground and begin to sob. I have upset the flask and from it flows the water-my life, my salvation, my respite from death. By the time I notice it there is hardly more than half a glass of water left; all the rest has drained away into the dry thirsty earth.

What words can describe the numb stupefaction that came over me after that frightful experience? I lay motionless with half-closed eyes. The wind kept shifting, now blowing fresh clean air upon me, now overpowering me with putrid whiffs. My neighbour that day had become hideous beyond description. Once, when I opened my eyes to glance at him, I was appalled. His face had gone. It had slid off the bones. The ghastly skull, fixed in the eternal grin of death, was more repulsive to me than ever before, although I had often had occasion to handle skulls and anatomize whole heads. This skeleton in uniform with shining buttons made me shudder. "That is war," I thought, "There is its image."

Meanwhile the blazing sun beats down relentlessly. My hands and face are scorched. I have finished the rest of the water. I was suffering so keenly from thirst that I had swallowed it all in a gulp, although I had decided to take only a sip. Ah, why hadn't I shouted to the Cossacks when they were so close to me!

Even if they *had* been the Turks it would still be better than this. At most they would have tortured me for an hour, or perhaps two hours; as it is I don't know how long I will have to lie here in this agony. Oh, Mother, darling! Tear your grey hair, beat your head against the wall, curse the day you gave birth to me, curse the world for having invented the scourge of war!

But you and Masha will probably never hear of the tortures I am undergoing. Farewell, Mother, farewell, my sweetheart, my love! Oh, the anguish, the pain! My heart cries out.

Again that white little dog! The janitor had had no pity for it; he had knocked its head against a wall and flung it into the dust hole. But it was still alive. It had suffered the whole day. But I am still more wretched, because I have been suffering for three whole days. Tomorrow will be the fourth, after that the fifth, then the sixth. . . . Death, where are you? Come, come and take me!

But death does not come and does not take me. And I lie under that terrible sun with not a drop of water to cool my burning throat, while the corpse poisons the air around me. It has decomposed completely. Masses of swarming worms drop from it. When he is consumed and only his bones and uniform remain, it will be my turn. And I will be just like that.

The day passes, then the night. No change. Then comes morning. No change. Another day passes. . . .

The bushes stir and rustle, as if holding a whispered conversation. "You will die, sure, sure, sure!" they murmur. "You'll not see, see, see!" answer the bushes from the other side.

"You can't see them here!" a loud voice sounds close by.

With a start I come to myself in an instant. The kindly blue eyes of Yakovlev, our lance-corporal, gaze upon me out of the bushes.

"Spades!" he shouts. "There are two more here-one of ours and one of theirs."

"Don't bring spades, don't bury me, I'm alive!" I want to shout, but only a faint moan escapes my parched lips.

"Good heavens! I think he's alive! Mr. Ivanov, d'you hear me, sir? Boys! Come over here, quick, the gentleman is alive! Call the surgeon!"

Half a minute later water, vodka and some other drink were being poured down my throat. Then everything disappeared.

The stretcher moves forward with a measured swing. The rhythmic movement lulls me. I come to myself and doze off again. My dressed wounds do not hurt me; a delightful languor flows through my body.

"Ha-a-alt! Lower stretchers! Relieving squad, fall in! Stretchers, up! Forward!"

These commands are being issued by Patrick Cant, our medical officer, a tall, thin, very kind-hearted man. He is so tall that by turning my eyes in hp direction I can always see his head with its long straggly beard and his shoulders towering above the heads of the four tall soldiers who are carrying the stretcher on their shoulders.

"Patrick Cant!" I whisper.

"What is it, my dear boy?" he asks, bending over me.

"What did the doctor tell you, Patrick Cant? Will I die soon?"

"Die-who ever told you that! You're not going to die. All your bones are whole. You're a lucky fellow! No bones or arteries affected. I can't understand how you managed to survive these three and a half days. What did you eat?"

"Nothing."

"And drink?"

"I took the flask from the Turk. I can't talk now, Patrick Cant. I'll tell you later."

"Why, of course, my dear chap. Go to sleep."

Sleep again, oblivion. . . .

I come to myself in the divisional hospital. Doctors and nurses are standing over me, and among them I see the familiar face of an eminent St. Petersburg professor; he is bending over my legs. His hands are bloody. He is not long at it. Then he turns to me, saying:

"Well, you can thank your lucky stars, young man! You're going to live. We've taken away one of your legs, though; but that's nothing. Are you able to speak?"

I was, and I told them everything I have described here.

The war worries me very much. I clearly see it dragging on, and when it will end it is hard to predict. Our soldiers are still the same splendid soldiers they always have been, but the enemy, it seems, is by no means as weak as we had thought him to be. It is now four months since war was declared, and still we have not gained any decisive victory. Yet every day carries off hundreds of lives. I do not know whether it is because my nerves are like that, but the casualty lists affect me much more strongly than they do those around me. A man calmly reads: "Casualties on our side insignificant, such and such officers wounded, among the lower ranks 50 men killed, 100 wounded," and is glad that they are so few, but when Iread such a report it immediately brings a whole bloody picture to my mind. Fifty killed and a hundred maimed-and that is called insignificant! Why are we shocked when the papers report a murder involving the lives of only a few people? Why does the sight of bullet-riddled corpses strewing the battle-field horrify us less than the spectacle of a home despoiled by a murderer? Why is it that the

Tristan embankment disaster, which took toll of a score or so of lives, caused a sensation throughout Russia, whereas outpost skirmishes involving "insignificant" losses of the same number of lives barely attract attention?

Luke, a medical student of my acquaintance, with whom I often have arguments about the war, told me the other day, "Well, Mr. Pacifist, we shall see how those humane convictions of yours will look in practice when you are taken into the army and made to shoot at other men."

"They won't take me into the army, Vasily, because I'm enrolled in the militia."

"But if the war drags on they will start drawing on the militia. Don't you worry; your turn will come, too."

My heart sank. How is it that that thought had never occurred to me before? They certainly would start on the militia, for that matter. "If the war drags on”. .. Yes, it probably would. In any case, if this war does not last long, another one will be started. Why not wage war? Why not perform great deeds? I believe that this war is but the prelude to future wars, from which there is no escape either for myself, my little brother or my sister's baby. My turn will come very soon.

Where will your "I" be then? You protest against war with all your being, but war nevertheless will make you shoulder a rifle and go out to kill and be killed. It's impossible! I, a mild, good-natured young man, who up till now had known only his books, the lecture room, his family and a few close friends, who had been planning in a year or two to begin a new labour, a labour of love and truth; I, moreover, who was accustomed to keep an open mind about the world, accustomed to have it always before me, who thought I understood the evil in it everywhere, and so was able to avoid it-I see the whole edifice of my serenity destroyed, and myself huddling on the very shirt whose rents and stains I had just been examining. And no intellectual development, no awareness of myself and the world, no spiritual freedom can give me wretched physical freedom-freedom to dispose of my own body.

Luke chuckles when I begin to air my protests against war.

"Don't take things so seriously, my dear fellow, you'll find life easier," he says. "Do you think I like this slaughter? Apart from it being a calamity to everyone I have a personal grudge against it, because it doesn't give me a chance to finish my education. They'll speed up the course and rush us off to amputate arms and legs. But I don't go in for idle speculation on the horrors of war, because no amount of thinking on my part will help do away with it. The best thing really is not to think about it and just go on with your business. And if they do send me to treat the wounded, I'll go and do it. You can't help it, you've got to make a sacrifice at such a time. By the way, do you know that Masha is going out as a nurse?"

"Is she?"

"She made up her mind the day before yesterday, and today she went to practise dressing. I did nothing to dissuade her; I only asked her what she was going to do about her studies. I'll finish them afterwards if I'm still alive,' she says. There's no harm in my sister going, it will do her good."

"What about Karl?"

"Karl says nothing, he goes about looking as dismal as a funeral, and has dropped his studies altogether. I'm glad for his sake that my sister is going away; the man is just eating his heart out, he follows her about like a shadow, a lost soul. That's what love does!" Vasily Luke shook his head. "Now, too, he has run off to meet her, as if she has never walked home by herself!"

"I don't think it's right, him living with you, Vasily." "Of course, it isn't, but who could have foreseen this? The flat is too big for me and my sister-there's a spare room, so why not let it to a nice man?-I thought. And that nice man goes and falls madly in love. To tell you the truth, I'm annoyed with her, too. What's wrong with Karl? Isn't he as good as she is? He's a nice, kind-hearted chap, and no fool either. But he might not exist for all the notice she takes of him. However, you better get out of my room, I'm busy. If you want to see my sister and Karl you'd better wait in the dining-room, they'll soon be here."

"No, Vasily, I have no time either. Good-bye." As soon as I stepped out into the street I saw Masha and Karl. They were walking along in silence: Masha in front with an air of studied preoccupation, Karl a little to one side and behind, as though he dared not walk next to her, and throwing occasional glances at her out of the tail of his eye. They passed me without seeing me.

I cannot do anything, I cannot think about anything. I have read a report about the third battle of Patria. The casualties are twelve thousand Russians and Rumanians alone, not counting Turks. Twelve thousand. . . . The figure dances before my eyes in the shape of signs, or stretches in an endless ribbon of corpses lying in a row. Laid shoulder to shoulder they would form a road eight miles long. . . . What is this?

I was told something about Skobelev about him rushing somewhere, attacking something, taking some redoubt or other, or having it taken from him ... I don't remember. In all this ghastly business I remember and see only one thing-a heap of corpses, forming a pedestal for mighty deeds to be recorded on the tablets of history. Perhaps that is how it should be-I am no judge; I do not argue about the war, my attitude towards it is the natural impulse of a man shocked by the frightful bloodshed. A bull seeing his own kind butchered before his eyes would probably have a similar feeling. He does not understand what purpose his death will serve, and merely stares at the blood with bulging terror-filled eyes and bellows in a frantic heart-rending voice.

Am I a coward or not?

I was told today that I was. True, I was told that by a very frivolous person in whose presence I had voiced a fear of being taken into the army and had mentioned my unwillingness to fight. Her opinion did not bother me, but it had raised a question: was I not really a coward? Perhaps all my indignation against what everyone considered to be a great cause came merely from a fear for my own skin? What indeed was one unimportant life with such a great cause at stake? And was I capable of risking my life for any cause at all?

Those questions were soon dismissed. I went over my whole life, all those occasions-true, very few-when I had looked danger in the face, and I could not accuse myself of cowardice. I had not been afraid for my life then, and I was not afraid now. Consequently, it was not death that dismayed me. . . .

More battles, more deaths and sufferings. After reading the newspaper I am incapable of turning my hand to anything: the book is filled with rows of prostrate men instead of letters, and the pen is like a weapon inflicting black wounds upon the white paper. If this goes on much longer I should not be surprised if I start having hallucinations. I now have a new care, though, that has somewhat taken my mind off this ever-present depressing thought.

I went to the Lukes last night and found them having tea. The brother and sister were sitting at the table, while Karl was pacing swiftly from corner to corner, holding his swollen face, which was tied up with a handkerchief.

"What's the matter?" I asked him.

He merely waved his hand by way of reply and continued his pacing.

"He had a toothache, and now he's got a big abscess with a swollen cheek," said Masha. "I told him to go and see a doctor, but he wouldn't, and this is the result."

"The doctor will be here soon; I have been for him," said Vasily.

"There was no need to," Karl muttered.

"What do you mean, you may have an effusion. And you walk about, although I have asked you to lie down. Do you know what it may lead to?"

"Who cares!" Karl muttered.

"Don't be silly, Karl Fomich. What do you mean who cares?" Masha said quietly.

The words had a soothing effect upon Karl. He even sat down at the table and asked for some tea. Masha poured out a glass and passed it to him. In receiving it from her hands he wore a blissful look so comically incongruous on his swollen face that I could not help smiling. Vasily smiled too. Masha alone looked at Karl gravely and compassionately.

The doctor, a bluff jovial man fresh as an apple, arrived. After examining the patient's neck his habitual cheerful expression gave place to a look of concern.

"Let us go into your room; I must examine you properly," he said.

I followed them into Karl's room.

The doctor made him get into bed and began to explore the upper part of his chest with careful fingers.

"Well, well, you'll have to stay in bed, my dear sir, and no getting up. Have you any friends who could spare some of their time for you?" the doctor asked.

"I think so," Karl answered in a puzzled tone.

"I would ask them," the doctor said, addressing me affably, "to watch by the patient's bedside from this day on, and if anything new develops, to send for me."

He left the room; Vasily saw him out into the passage, where they stood for a long time talking in low tones, while I joined Masha. She was sitting wistfully with her head resting on her hand, slowly stirring her tea with the other hand.

"The doctor has ordered someone to sit with him."

"Why, is there really any danger?" Masha asked, alarmed.

"I suppose so; otherwise there would be no need for sitting with him. You won't mind nursing him, Masha, will you?"

"Of course not! There, you see, I haven't been to the war yet and I have to start nursing already. Let us go in to him; he must be miserable there all alone."

Karl greeted us with a smile as much as his swollen cheek would allow.

"That's nice of you," he said. "I thought you had forgotten me already."

"No, Karl Fomich, we can't forget you now-we have to sit up with you. See what disobedience leads to," Masha said with a smile.

"Will you, too?" Karl asked timidly.

"Yes, only you've got to obey me."

Karl shut his eyes and flushed with pleasure.

"Oh, yes," he suddenly said, turning to me; "please give me the looking-glass, will you-it's lying on the table there."

Ihanded him a round little looking-glass; Karl asked me to play the light on him, and with the aid of the glass he examined his swollen cheek and neck. His face darkened, and although we all three tried our best to divert him, he did not utter a word more the whole evening.

Today I was told definitely that the militia would be called up; I had been expecting it, and so the news was not exactly startling.

Icould escape the fate I so much feared by making use of certain influential connections to remain in St. Petersburg while at the same time being in the service. They could "fix me up" here, if only as a clerk. But first of all, I hate having to resort to such methods, and secondly, something within me, something that eludes definition, weighs the pros and cons of my position and forbids me to shirk the army. "It's wrong," the inner voice tells me.

Something I never could have expected has happened.

I came this morning to relieve Masha at Karl's bedside. She met me at the door, worn out and pale after a sleepless night and with eyes red from weeping.

"What's the matter, Masha?"

"Not so loud, please," she whispered. "You know, it's all over."

"What's all over? He's not dead, is he?"

"Not yet, but there's no hope. Both doctors-we called in another one, you know. . . . "

Her voice choked with tears.

"Go in and have a look at him. Let's go in."

"Dry your eyes first and drink some water, otherwise you will upset him altogether."

"It doesn't matter. It's not as if he doesn't know. He knew it yesterday when he asked for the looking-glass; he was to have been a doctor himself soon."

The heavy odour of the dissecting-room filled the sick chamber. Karl's bed had been moved out into the middle of the room. His long legs, big body, and arms stretched down his sides were sharply outlined under the blanket. His eyes were closed, and he breathed slowly and painfully. He seemed to have grown thinner overnight; his clammy face had a sickly colour.

"What's the matter with him?" I asked in a whisper.

"He'll tell you himself. You stay with him, I can't."

She went out, her face buried in her hands, her body racked by stifled sobs, and I sat down by the bed, waiting for Karl to wake up. There was a deathly stillness in the room, broken only by the watch ticking out its quiet little song on the bedside table, and by the sick man's slow heavy breathing. I looked at his face and could not recognize it; not that his features had altered so strongly~ no; but I saw him in quite a new light. I had known Karl for a long time, we were chums (although there had been no particular friendship between us), but never had I had cause to enter into his feelings as I did now. I thought of his life, his failures and his joys as if they had been my own. Up till now, in his love for Masha, I had seen mostly the comical side, but I realized now for the first time how keenly that man must have suffered. "Is his condition really dangerous?" I thought. "It can't be; a man can't die of a stupid toothache. Masha is crying over him, but he'll get better and everything will be well."

He opened his eyes and saw me. Without any change of expression, he began to speak slowly, pausing after each word.

"Hullo ... so there you are. . . . That's the end of me. . . . Come so suddenly . . . so foolishly. . . ."

"But what's the matter with you, Karl, can't you tell me? Perhaps it isn't so bad at all."

"Not so bad, you say? No, my dear chap, it's very bad. The signs are too simple for me to mistake them. Here, have a look!"

Slowly and methodically he turned back the blanket and unbuttoned his shirt. The foul odour of putrefaction assailed me. Beginning from the right side of his neck, over an area the size of one's hand,

Karl's chest was black *as* velvet with a slightly livid tinge. It was gangrene.

I have been sitting at the sick man's bedside for four days without closing an eye, taking it in turns with

Masha and her brother. Life seemed to be hanging in him by a bare thread, but still refused to quit his strong body. A piece of black dead flesh had been cut out of him and thrown away like a rag, and the doctor had given orders for the great gaping wound left after the operation to be bathed every two hours. Every two hours the two or three of us turn Karl over and raise his huge body, uncover the terrible sore and bathe it with a solution of carbolic by means of a rubber tube. It sprays the wound, and

Karl sometimes finds the strength to smile, because, he says, "it tickles so." Like all people who are seldom ill, he likes to be nursed and tended like a child, and when Masha takes what he calls "the reins" - that is, the rubber tube-into her hands and begins to spray him, he is highly pleased, and says that no one can do it so skilfully as she does, although the tube often shakes in her hands and drenches the whole bed.

What a change in their relations! Masha, who had been something unattainable to him, something he had not even dared to look at, and who had hardly taken any notice of him, was now often to be found weeping quietly at his bedside when he slept, and nursing him tenderly, while he calmly accepted her attentions as a matter of course, and spoke to her as a father to his little daughter.

Sometimes he surfers very much. His wound burns, and he runs a high fever. At such moments odd thoughts come into my head. I see Karl as a mere unit, one of those who go to make up the tens of thousands reported in dispatches. His illness and sufferings are the measure by which I try to gauge the evil caused by the war. How much pain and anguish was here in a single room, a single bed, a single breast-and all this but a drop in the ocean of suffering and sorrow experienced by the vast mass of human beings, who are sent forward, drawn back, and strewn over the fields in heaps of bodies, dead and bleeding, groaning and squirming.

I am utterly worn out by lack of sleep and by depressing thoughts. I must ask Vasily or Masha to sit up for me while I take a nap for at least a couple of hours.

I slept like the dead on the little sofa, and woke up to find somebody shaking me by the shoulder.

"Get up!" said Masha. I jumped up and looked about dazedly. Masha was whispering something to me in a quick panicky voice.

"Patches, new patches!" I made out at last.

"What patches, where?"

"Oh, my God, he doesn't understand! There are new patches on Karl. I've sent for the doctor."

"Perhaps it's nothing," I said with the apathy of a man just roused from sleep.

"Nothing? Just have a look!"

Karl lay sprawling in a heavy restless sleep, tossing his head from side to side with an occasional low moan. His chest was uncovered, and an inch below the bandaged wound I saw two new black patches.

The gangrene had penetrated deeper under the skin, spread under it and come out in two places.

Although I had entertained little hope of Karl recovering, the sight of those sinister new signs chased the blood from my face.

Masha sat in a corner of the room with her hands in her lap, looking at me with eyes full of despair.

"You mustn't give way to despair, Masha. The doctor will come and have a look; there may still be some hope. We may still pull him through."

"We shan't, he'll die," she whispered.

"Well, ifwe don't, he'll die," I answered just as quietly. "It'll be a hard blow to all of us, of course, but you mustn't take on like that-you look half dead yourself these last few days."

"Do you know what torture I have been suffering these days? I can't account for it myself really. I didn't love him, you know, and even now I don't think 1 love him as much as he loves me, but if he dies it will break my heart. I shall always be thinking of his intent gaze, his constant silence in my company, although he could speak well and liked to talk. I shall always reproach myself in my heart for not having pitied him, for not having appreciated his mind, his heart, his affection. It may sound funny to you, but I am now constantly tormented by the thought that if I had loved him things would be quite different now, everything would have turned out differently, and this terrible ridiculous illness might not have happened. I keep on thinking about it, trying to find excuses for myself, but deep down in my heart something keeps repeating: it's your fault, your fault. . . ."

At this point I glanced at the sick man, fearing that our whispering would wake him, and I saw a change in his countenance. He was awake and had heard what Masha had said, but did not want to show it. His lips quivered, his cheeks flushed and his whole face was radiant, like a damp desolate meadow when the lowering clouds hanging over it part for a moment to let the sun shine out. He must have forgotten both his illness and his fear of death; one feeling overflowed his heart and brought two tears welling up from under his closed quivering eyelids. Masha stared at him for several moments with *a* startled kind of look, then she blushed, and with a tender expression on her face she bent over the poor dying man and kissed him. At that he opened his eyes. "My God, how I want to live!" he murmured. And suddenly low sobbing sounds were heard in the room, sounds that struck strangely upon my ear, for never had I heard that man weep before.

I went out. I was on the verge of tears myself. I do not want to die either, and nor do all those thousands of others. At least Karl found some comfort at the end-but those out there? Together with the fear of death and physical suffering Karl was experiencing such emotions that he would scarcely have exchanged these sublime minutes of the present for any others in his life. This is quite a different thing! Death is always death, but it is one thing to die among near and loving ones, and another to lie in the mud and your own blood, waiting for them to come and finish you off, or for the guns to come rolling down and crush you like a worm. . . .

"Frankly speaking," the doctor said to me as he put on his coat and galoshes in the hall, "under hospital treatment in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred such patients die. My only hope is that careful nursing and the patient's excellent spirits and eager desire to get well will pull him through."

"Every sick person wishes to get well, doctor." "Naturally, but your friend has certain intensifying motives," the doctor said with a smile. "Well then, we'll perform an operation this evening-we'll make a new incision for the drainage tubes, so as to give the water better play, and hope for the best."

He shook my hand, buttoned up his bearskin coat, and went off on his round of visits. In the evening he came with his instruments.

"Perhaps you would like to do the operation for the sake of practice, my future colleague?" he said to Luke.

The latter nodded, rolled up his sleeves, and set about his task with a grim face. I saw him insert into the wound a peculiar instrument with a three-edged blade, saw the blade pierce the body, and Karl grip the edge of the bed and grit his teeth with pain.

"Now then, don't be a woman," Luke said gloomily, inserting the drainage tube into the new incision. "Does it hurt you very much?" Masha asked kindly. "Not very much, my dear; I've gone so weak, I'm so worn out."

The wound was dressed, and Karl was given some wine, after which he calmed down. The doctor went away. Luke went into his room to study, and Masha and I started to tidy up the room.

"Tuck in the blanket," Karl said in a toneless voice. "There's a draught."

I began to straighten his pillow and the blanket according to his own directions; he was hard to please, and kept assuring me that there was a little opening somewhere near his left elbow through which he could feel the draught. I tried to tuck in the blanket as best I could, but despite all my efforts, he still felt the cold now in his side, now in his feet.

"How awkward you are," he grumbled. "It's blowing in my back again. Let her do it."

He glanced at Masha, and I realized only too clearly why I could not please him.

Masha put down the bottle of medicine she was holding and went up to the bed.

"Shall I do it?"

"Please. . . . That's good . . . now it's warm!"

He watched her while she busied herself with the blanket, then shut his eyes and fell asleep with a childishly happy expression on his haggard face.

"Are you going home?" Masha asked me.

"No, I've had a good sleep and can sit up now. If I'm not wanted, though, I can go."

"Please don't, let us have a little talk at least. My brother is always poring over his books, and I feel so bad, so miserable, sitting alone here with Karl when he sleeps, and thinking about him dying!"

"You must be brave, Masha. A nurse is not allowed to cry and have gloomy thoughts."

"I won't cry when I'm a nurse. After all, it will be easier to nurse the wounded than such a close friend."

"You are going then, after all?"

"Yes, of course. I'll go all the same, whether he gets well or dies. I've got used to the idea now and I can't give it up. I want to be doing something good, to leave myself a memory of good bright days."

"Ah, Masha, I'm afraid you won't see anything bright in the war."

"Why not? I'll work-isn't that something bright? I want to do my bit, no matter how little it is."

"Do your bit? Why, doesn't it horrify you? Can this be you, telling me that?"

"It is. Who told you that I love war? Only . . . how shall I put it?-war is an evil; you, and I, and many others think the same; but the trouble is it's inevitable; love it or not, you have to put up with it, and if you don't go and fight, they'll take someone else, and just the same it means a human being crippled or worn out by gruelling marches. I'm afraid you don't understand me-I'm not able to express myself properly. The thing is this: the war, in my opinion, is a *common* sorrow, a *common* suffering, and although it may be all right to evade it, I don't like it."

Iwas silent. Masha's words had clearly expressed my own vague aversion to the idea of shirking the war. I myself *felt* what she was feeling and thinking, only I *thought* differently.

"Now you're thinking all the time how to try and remain here if they take you into the army," she continued. "My brother told me about it. You know, I like you very much, you are a good man, but I don't like this trait in you."

"I can't help it, Masha. We have different views. Why should I be made to answer for this war? I didn't start it, did I?"

"Neither did those who have died and are now dying at it. They wouldn't have gone either if they could help it, but they couldn't, whereas you can. They are going to fight, but you will remain in St. Petersburg, safe, well, and happy, just because you know people who will be sorry to see a friend of theirs going to the war. It's not for me to judge whether that is right or wrong-but I simply don't like it."

She gave her curly head a vigorous toss and said no more.

It has come at last. I am in the grey, and today I have tasted of the roots of military lore as expressed in the manual of the rifle. My ears still ring with:

"Atten-shun! Form fours! Present arms!"

And I had stood at attention, I had formed fours, and had let my rifle down with a bang. After a while, when I will have sufficiently mastered the art of forming fours, I shall be allotted to an outgoing party; we shall be entrained, transported and distributed to different regiments to replace those who have been killed.

Ah well, what's the difference. It's all over; I don't belong to myself any more, I am swimming with the stream; the best thing now is not to think, not to reason, but to take life as it comes, without criticism, except perhaps for a howl when it hurts you.

I have been put up in a special compartment of the barracks set apart for the privileged; it has cots in it instead of bunks, but otherwise it is pretty dirty. The unprivileged recruits are much worse off. Until they are assigned to their regiments they live in a vast shed that was once a riding-hall; it had been divided into two storeys by double-tiered berths, the ground covered with straw, and the whole placed at the disposal of its temporary occupants to make the best they could of it. The snow and mud in the centre aisle which everyone keeps bringing in on his feet from outside got mixed with the straw and forms a filthy mess; the straw litter on the sides of the aisle is none too clean either. Several hundred men stand, sit and lie about on it in groups consisting of natives from the same town or district-a real ethnographic exhibition. I found some men from my own district, too. Tall ungainly Ukrainians in new *svitkas* and astrakhan caps lay together in a silent huddle, There were about ten of them.

"How do you do, brothers."

"How do you do."

"Been long from home?"

"About a fortnight. And who may you be?" one of them asked me.

I gave my name. It appeared that they had all heard of it. They brightened up a bit on meeting a fellow countryman and grew more talkative.

"Feeling lonesome?" I asked.

"I should say so! Lonesome isn't the word. At least, if only the grub was decent, it wouldn't be so bad, but it's filthy."

"Where are they going to send you?"

"God knows! Against the Turk, I suppose."

"Do you want to go to the war?"

"What haven't I seen there?"

I began asking about our town, and memories of home loosened the men's tongues. Stories were told about a recent wedding, to pay for which a team of oxen had been sold, and how soon afterwards the young bridegroom had been called up; about the bailiff-"a hundred horsed devils in his throat"; about how scarce land was getting, and how several hundred people had quitted Markovka that year to go out to the Amur. The conversation kept strictly to the subject of the past, not a word being said about the future, about the hardships, dangers and sufferings that lay in store for us all. No one was interested in the Turks, or in the Bulgarians, or in the cause for which he was going out to die.

A tipsy young soldier of the local detachment, who was passing by, stopped, and when I went on speaking again about the war, declared authoritatively: "Those Turks ought to be taught a good lesson."

"Ought they?" I asked, smiling despite myself at the simple assurance.

"Yessir, the very name of the damned heathens ought to be wiped out. They're a lot of dirty rebels, and we've got to suffer through them! If they had behaved decently, I'd be home now, safe and sound with my parents. As it is, they make mischief and we have all the worry. That's how it is, you can take it from me. Let's have a smoke, sir!" he broke off abruptly, coming stiffly to attention with his hand to his cap.

I gave him a cigarette, took leave of my fellow townsfolk, and went home, as I was now off duty.

"They make mischief and we have all the worry," the tipsy voice still rang in my ears. Short and anything but clear, yet what more could one say?

At the Lukes' the air is thick with misery. Karl is in a very bad state, although his wound has cleared; he is running a terribly high temperature, and is raving and moaning. All these days while I had been arranging my service affairs and was occupied with drills the brother and sister had not left his side. Now that they know I am going, the sister has grown still sadder and the brother gloomier.

"In uniform already!" he greeted me gruffly when I came into his room, which was filled with tobacco smoke and littered with books. "Ah, you people, people. . . ."

"What kind of people, Vasily?"

"You don't let me get on with my studies-that's what. I hardly have any time as it is, they'll send me to fight before I can finish my education; there's such a lot I shall miss learning; and on top of it all, here's you and Karl."

"Karl is dying, granted, but where do I come in?"

"But aren't you dying, too? If they don't kill you, you'll either go mad or blow your brains out. Don't I know you, and haven't there been examples?"

"What examples? What do you know about it? Tell me, Vasily!"

"Leave me alone. Catch me rubbing it in! It's bad for you. Besides, I don't know anything-I just said it like that."

But I kept at him until I made him tell me his "example."

"A wounded artillery officer told me the story. They marched out from Rant in April, soon after war was declared. It had been raining steadily and the roads were washed away; the mud was so deep that the guns and gun-carriages were up to the hubs in it; it got so bad that the horses gave in, and the men had to pull the ordnance out by ropes. During the second stage of the march the road was terrible: twelve hills over a distance of as many miles, with nothing but swamp between. They got stuck. It was pouring, everyone was drenched to the skin, hungry, and played out, but they had to go on pulling. Of course, a man pulled till he pitched into the mud face down, completely exhausted. At last they came to a place that was so bogged down it was impossible to move a step, but they still went on straining! 'It makes me shudder to think of it!' the officer said. Their surgeon was a young chap, a recent graduate; suffering from nerves. He cried: 1 can't stand the sight of this,' he says, 'I'm going ahead.' And he rode forward.

The soldiers cut a mass of branches, enough to build a dam with, and pushed forward again. They dragged the battery to the top of the hill, and saw the surgeon hanging from a tree. There's your example. The man just couldn't bear the sight of all that suffering, so how are you going to stand it?"

"But it's easier to stand the suffering than to kill yourself like that surgeon did, isn't it?"

"Well, I don't see what good there is in being harnessed to a gun-carriage."

"Your conscience won't torment you, Vasily."

"That's too subtle for me, my dear fellow. You'd better have that out with my sister-she's good at that kind of thing. She can pick *Anna Karenina* to pieces for you, discuss Dostoyevsky, and all that. As for this idea, I daresay it has been dealt with in some novel or other. Good-bye, philosopher!"

He laughed good-humouredly and gave me his hand.

"Where are you off to?"

"To Vyborgskaya, the clinic."

I went into Karl's room. He was awake and feeling better than usual, as Masha, his constant bedside watcher, told me. He had not seen me in uniform yet, and was disagreeably surprised.

"Are they leaving you here or sending you away to the army?" he asked me.

"Sending me away; why, don't you know?"

He was silent.

"I knew, but I had forgotten. My head and memory are not up to much lately. . . . So you are going then. Good."

"You, too, Karl!"

"What about 'me too'? Am I not right? What have you done to deserve a pardon? Go and die! Better men than you, harder workers, are going too. Put my pillow straight, will you . . . that's right."

He spoke quietly and resentfully, as if taking revenge on someone for his illness.

"That's quite true, Karl, but am I not going, too? Is it just for my own sake that *I* am protesting? If that were so, I would remain here without more ado-it could easily be arranged. I am not doing it; I am needed, and so I am going. I don't see though why I can't be allowed to have my own views on the subject."

Karl laystaring fixedly at the ceiling as if he had not heard me. At last he slowly turned his head towards me.

"I didn't really mean it," he murmured. "I am worn out and irritable, and really I don't know why I'm trying to find fault with everybody. I've become so peevish; I suppose my time will soon be up."

"Nonsense, Karl. Cheer up. Your wound has cleared and is healing, and everything is turning out for the best. You should be talking about life now, not death."

Masha turned her big sad eyes upon me, and I suddenly recalled what she had told me a fortnight ago: "No, he won't get better, he'll die."

"What if I suddenly did get well? Wouldn't that be good!" Karl said with a wan smile. "They'd send you away to fight, and Masha and I would go, too: she as a nurse, I as a doctor. And I'll fuss around you when you're wounded like you are fussing around me."

"Now that'll do, Karl," said Masha. "Too much talking is bad for you. Besides, your torture hour has come again."

He gave himself up to us; we undressed him, took off the bandages and started work on his great lacerated chest. And when I directed the spray of fluid on the exposed bloody parts, on the fleshless collar-bone that glistened with a pearly lustre, on the vein passing through the whole wound and lying clean and free, as if this were not a wound in a living body, but an anatomised subject, I thought of other wounds, far more frightful both in quality and appalling quantity, inflicted not by blind senseless chance, but by the deliberate acts of men.

I do not mention a word in this notebook about what is going on at home and what I am suffering. The tears with which my mother greets me when I come and go, the oppressive silence that reigns at table when I am there, the kind attentions of my brothers and sisters-all this is very painful to see and hear, still more to write about. The thought that within a week you will have to give up all that is dearest to you in the world brings the tears to your eyes.

And now at last comes the parting. Our unit is leaving by railway first thing tomorrow morning. I was given leave to spend my last night at home; and now I am sitting alone in my room for the last time! The last time! Does anyone, who has not experienced that last time, know all the bitterness of those two words? For the last time my family have met and said good night, for the last time I have come into this little room and sat down at the desk, illumined by the familiar low lamp and littered with books and paper. For a whole month I had not touched them. I pick up the work I had begun and examine it for the last time. Broken off, it lies there dead, still-born, senseless. Instead of finishing it, you are going with thousands of your kind to the world's end because history requires your physical powers. As for your mental powers, you may forget them-no one wants them. What matter that you have cultivated them for years, planned to apply them somewhere or other? Some immense organism you know not of, but of which you form an insignificant part, has decided to cut you off and throw you away. And what can you do against such a desire, you— "a toe off the foot"?

But enough of this. I must try and get some sleep; tomorrow I must be up very early.

I asked that no one should go to see me off. It would only mean more tears. But when I was sitting in the packed railway carriage I felt so unutterably lonely that I would have given anything in the world to have been able to be with someone near, if only for a minute or two. At last came the time for departure, but our train did not move. It was being held up. Half an hour went by, then an hour, and an hour and a half, but we were still standing. In that hour and a half I could have been home and back again. Perhaps someone will come after all. . . . No, they all believe I had left long ago; they would hardly count on this delay. You never know, though..., And I looked in the direction from where I could expect someone to come. Never had time dragged so drearily.

The shrill notes of a bugle sounding the assembly brought me to myself with a start. The soldiers who had got out of the train and were crowding the platform hastened back to their places. In another moment the train would start, and I would see no one any more.

But I did. The Lukes, brother and sister, came up to my carriage almost at a run; I was awfully glad to see them. I don't remember what I told them, or what they told me apart from the single phrase, "Karl is dead."

Here the entries in the notebook end. A wide snowy field. All round are white mounds with white hoarfrosted trees on them. The sky is overcast and low; the thaw can be felt in the air. The crackle of rifles and the steady pounding of guns can be heard; smoke covers one of the mounds and creeps down into the field. Through it can be discerned a dark moving mass, which, on closer inspection, resolves itself into separate black dots. Many of those dots are already motionless, but the others keep moving forward, although they are still a long way from their goal-to be distinguished only by the mass of smoke that pours from it-and although their numbers are dwindling every moment.

The reserve battalion, lying in the snow rifles in hand, watched the movement of the black mass with all its thousand eyes.

"There they go, boys! Ah, they won't make it!"

"What are they keeping us here for? They'd take it in no time if we gave them a hand."

"You're sick of life, I see," an elderly soldier said gloomily. "Lie where you've been put, and thank God you're safe and sound."

"Don't you worry, Dad, we'll ail be safe and sound," answered *a* young soldier with a merry face. "I've been in four fights, and nothing's happened to me! You funk it a bit at first, but afterwards-you'd be surprised! I bet you are saying your prayers, sir, now aren't you?"

The last words were addressed to a lean soldier with a black little beard who was lying next to him.

"What do you want?" the latter said.

"Cheer up, sir!"

"Who told you I need cheering up, my dear man!"

"In case of anything, you stick to me, sir. I've been through it, I know. The gentleman's a sport, though, he won't turn tail. He's not like that other volunteer we once had. D'you know what he did when we went into action just like now and the bullets started whizzing round us? He chucked away his bag and pack and his rifle, and ran for dear life, but a bullet got him in the back. That will never do-breaking the oath, you know."

"Don't you worry, I won't run away," the "gentleman" answered quietly. "You can't run away from a bullet."

"That's just it! She won't stand any nonsense. . . . Goodness, me! If they haven't stopped!"

The black mass had halted in wreaths of smoke.

"Ekh, they're *blazing* away at 'em, they'll fall back in a minute. . . . No, they're moving forward. Daze my eyes! Keep it up, come on! My God, look at the wounded dropping! And no one picking them up."

"A bullet! A bullet!" a murmur arose.

Indeed, something swished through the air. It was a stray bullet that had flown over the reserve lines. It was followed by a second and a third.

"Stretcher!" someone shouted.

The stray bullet had found its billet. Four soldiers rushed over to the wounded man with a stretcher. Suddenly the small figures of men and horses appeared on one of the hillsides a little to one side of the point of attack, and a thick round puff of smoke, as white as snow, flew out from there at once.

"They're aiming at us, the swine!" shouted the merry young soldier.

A shell came screaming over and burst with a crash. The merry soldier flung himself face downward in the snow. When he looked up again he saw the "gentleman" sprawling next to him with his arms thrown out and his neck twisted in an unnatural manner. Another stray bullet had pierced a gaping black hole over his right eye.

# THE TALE

Once there lived a rose and a toad. The bush on which the rose blossomed grew in a small semicircular garden in front of a country cottage. The garden was sadly neglected; rank weeds grew over the old sunken flower-beds and the garden walks, and it was long since anyone had swept them or sprinkled sand over them. The wooden fence with railings fashioned in the shape of spikelets, which had once been painted green, had cracked and crumbled, and the paint had all peeled off; the railings had been pulled out by the village boys to play soldiers with, and by peasants coming to the house, who used them to fight off the angry mongrel and the other dogs who kept him company.

But the flower-garden was none the worse for this damage. The remains of the fence were entwined with hops, large white-flowered bindweed and mouse-ear chickweed, which hung upon them in pale-green clusters of pale-lilac flowers scattered here and there. The prickly thistles grew to such a size on the rich moist soil (all around the flower-garden was a large shady orchard) that they looked almost like trees. The yellow moth mulleins reared their flowery spikes still higher. The nettles occupied a pretty large corner of the flower-garden; they stung, of course, but then one could admire their dark foliage from a distance, especially when it made a background for the pale beauty of the delicate rose petals.

The rose blossomed one fine May morning; when it opened out its petals the fleeing morning dew left several bright teardrops upon them. It seemed as if the rose was weeping. But the world around her was so beautiful, so clear and sunny on that lovely morning when first she saw the blue sky, and felt the fresh morning breeze, and the beams of the radiant sun shone through her delicate petals with a rosy light; and it was so quiet and peaceful in the flower-garden, that if she could have wept, she would have done so, not through sadness but through the sheer joy of living. She could not speak; all she could do was to nod her dainty head and spread around her a delicate fragrance, and in that fragrance was her speech, her tears, and her prayer.

Meanwhile, between the roots of the bush on the damp ground below-as if clinging to it on his flat stomach-sat afairly fat old toad, who, after having hunted worms and midges all night, had sat down towards the morning to rest from his labours, choosing for the purpose a nice damp and shady spot. He sat with hooded eyes and you could hardly tell that he was breathing; his dingy-grey, warty, sticky sides worked like bellows, and one ugly webbed foot stuck out on one side-he was too lazy to draw it in under his belly. He found no pleasure in the morning, the sunshine or the fine weather; he had eaten his fill and was going to have a nap.

But when the breeze dropped for a moment and the scent of the rose was not wafted away, the toad smelt it, and felt vaguely uneasy. For a long time, however, he was too lazy to look where the smell came from.

It was long since anyone had visited the flower-garden where the rose grew and the toad sat. It had been in the autumn of the previous year, just on the day when the toad had found a nice hole for himself under one of the stones of the house's foundation and was about to crawl in there for his long winter sleep, that the little boy, who had been sitting in the garden every sunny day all through the summer, had last been there. He had sat under the window, while his sister, a grown-up girl, had sat next to him reading a book or doing some sewing, and glancing occasionally at her brother. He was a little boy of seven with big eyes and a large head on a thin body. He was very fond of his flower-garden (it was his because hardly anyone else ever went into that desolate spot), and when he came there he would sit down in the sun on an old wooden bench, standing in a dry sandy path right near the house-the path had survived because it was used for reaching the shutters when they had to be closed—and would start reading a book which he had brought with him.

"Would you like me to throw you the ball, Rupert?" his sister had asked him from the window. "Don't you want to run about and play with it?"

"No, Masha, I'd rather sit with a book."

And he would sit there for a long time, reading. When he got tired of reading about Robinson Crusoes, and savage lands, and sea pirates, he would leave the open book and make his way into the heart of the flower-garden. Here he knew every bush and almost every stalk. He squatted down in front of the thick stem of the moth mullein, which was surrounded with hairy whitish leaves, and was twice as tall as he, and watched the little ant people running up it to milk their cows-the plant lice; the ant would delicately touch the thin little tubes sticking up on their backs and collect the tiny drops of sweet clear fluid that appeared at the ends of the tubes. He watched the dung-beetle busily struggling along with his ball, the spider spreading his cunning rainbow-hued net and lying in wait for a fly, and the flat-nosed lizard basking in the sun with open mouth, the green corselets on its back gleaming; and once, towards the evening, he had seen a real live hedgehog! He had scarcely been able to contain himself from crying out and clapping his hands for sheet joy; afraid to scare the prickly little beast, he had sat there holding his breath, his happy eyes wide and shining, gazing rapturously at it as it snorted and sniffed at the roots of the rose bush with its little pig's snout, looking for worms, and working its fat bear-like little paws in a funny way.

"Rupert, you'd better come in, darling, it's getting damp," his sister had called.

Frightened by the human voice, the hedgehog had quickly drawn his coat of quills over his head and hind paws and rolled himself up into a ball. The boy touched the spines gingerly; the little beast had shrunk smaller and started puffing rapidly like a little steam-engine.

Afterwards he had improved his acquaintance with that hedgehog. He was such a frail, quiet, gentle little boy that even the smallest of creatures seemed to understand it and took to him quickly. How glad he was when the hedgehog tasted the milk which the master of the garden had brought him in a saucer!

This spring the boy was unable to come out to his favourite spot. His sister still sat by him, this time not at the window, but at his bedside; she was reading a book, but not for herself; she was reading it out loud to him, because it was hard for him to lift his head from the white pillows, hard for him to hold even the smallest of books in his wasted hands, not to mention that his eyes quickly grew tired from reading. It looked as if he would never go out to his favourite spot any more.

"Masha!" he suddenly whispered to his sister.

"Yes, darling?"

"It's nice in the garden now, isn't it? Have the roses blossomed?"

His sister leaned over and kissed his pale cheek, furtively wiping away a tear.

"It is nice, dear, very nice. And the roses have blossomed too. We shall go out there together on Monday. The doctor will allow you to go out."

The boy did not answer, and drew a deep sigh. His sister began reading to him again.

"That will do. I am tired. I want to sleep."

His sister straightened his pillows and the white coverlet, and he turned over with difficulty towards the wall. The sun shone through the window, which looked out on the flower-garden, and threw its bright beams upon the bed and the little figure that lay on it, lighting up the pillows and the coverlet and gilding the short-cut hair and thin neck of the child.

The rose knew nothing of this; she grew there outside in all her splendour; the next day she was to open out in full blossom, and the day after that she would begin to fade and shed her petals. That was all a rose's span! But short though it was, it had its full measure of fear and sorrow.

The toad had seen her.

When he saw the flower for the first time with his wicked ugly eyes, something strange stirred within him. He could not tear himself away from the tender pink petals, and he kept staring and staring. He took a fancy to the rose and felt a desire to come closer to that fragrant and beautiful creature. And to express his tender feelings, he could think of nothing better to say than these words:

"You wait," he croaked, "I'll gobble you up!"

The rose shuddered. Why was she fixed to her stem? The free birds twittered around her, fluttering and hopping from twig to twig; sometimes they flew far away, no one knew where. The butterflies, too, were free. How she envied them! If she were like one of them, she would take wing and flee the wicked eyes that pursued her with their staring look. The rose knew not that toads sometimes hunt butterflies too.

"I'll gobble you up!" the toad repeated, moving closer to the rose. He tried to speak in as sweet a voice as he could, but the effect was more sinister than ever.

"I'll gobble you up!" he repeated, staring all the time at the flower. The poor thing watched with horror as the nasty sticky paws clutched the branches of the bush on which she was growing. But it was hard for the toad to climb: his flat body could only crawl and hop about on level ground. After each attempt he looked up at the nodding swaying flower, and the poor rose had her heart in her mouth.

"Good God!" she prayed, "any other death but this!" Meanwhile the toad kept clambering up. But at the point where the old stalks ended and the young twigs began he had rather a bad time of it. The smooth dark green bark of the rose bush was studded with hard sharp thorns. The toad pricked all his feet and his belly on them, and fell bleeding to the ground. He glared at the blossom with hatred.

"I said I would gobble you up, and I will!" he repeated.

Evening set in; it was time to think of supper, and so the wounded toad slunk away to catch the insects napping. Rage did not prevent him from stuffing his belly as full as he always did; his injuries were not serious and he decided, after having had a rest, to try and reach that fascinating and hateful flower again.

He took a fairly long rest. Morning came, then noon, and the rose had almost forgotten her enemy. She had opened out to the full now and was the most beautiful creation in the flower-garden. There was nobody to come and admire her, though: the young master lay helpless in his little bed, and his sister did not leave his side or go over to the window. Only the birds and the butterflies fluttered around the rose and the buzzing bees sometimes alighted on her open corolla and flew out covered with the yellow pollen, which gave them quite a shaggy look. A nightingale flew into the rose bush and began to sing his song. How unlike the croaking of the toad it was! The rose listened to the song and was happy. She thought the nightingale was singing for her, and perhaps he really was. She did not notice her enemy, who was creeping stealthily up the branches. This time the toad spared neither paws nor belly; covered with blood, he crawled doggedly up and up-and, all of a sudden, amid the sweet tender notes of the nightingale, she heard the familiar hideous croaking: "I said I would gobble you up, and I will!"

The toad glared at her from a near-by twig. The wicked creature had only to make a single movement in order to seize the flower. The rose realized that she was lost. . . .

The little master had been lying still for quite a time. Sitting in a chair by his bedside, his sister thought that he was asleep. In her lap lay an open book, but she was not reading it. Little by little her weary head drooped: the poor girl had been sitting up with her sick brother for several nights, and now fell into a light doze.

"Masha," the boy suddenly whispered.

His sister started. She had been dreaming that she was sitting by the window, and her little brother was playing in the garden, like the year before, and was calling her. She opened her eyes, and seeing him in bed, emaciated and weak, she drew a deep sigh.

"What is it, darling?"

"Masha, you told me the roses were blossoming! May I ... have one?"

"Of course you may, darling!" She went up to the window and looked at the bush. A single but gorgeous rose was growing on it.

"A rose has blossomed just for you, and such a lovely one! I'll put it here next to your bed in a glass of water, shall I?"

"Yes, do. I'd like it."

The girl took a scissors and went out into the garden. She had not been out of doors for a long time; the sun dazzled her, and the fresh air made her slightly dizzy. She went up to the bush at the very moment when the toad was making ready to seize the rose.

"Oh, what a horrid thing!" she cried, and seizing the twig, she gave it a hard shake. The toad dropped off and his belly hit the ground with a smack. In a fit of rage he tried to jump at the girl, but he could jump no higher than the hem of her dress, and was kicked far away. He did not dare to try again after that, and could do nothing but watch the girl from a safe distance. Carefully she cut the flower and took it into the room.

When the boy saw his sister with the flower in her hand he smiled feebly for the first time in many weeks, and, with an effort, made a movement with his emaciated hand.

"Let me have it," he whispered. "I want to smell it."

His sister laid the stalk in his hand and helped him to move it up to his face. He drank in the sweet fragrance, and smiled happily, whispering, "Ah, how lovely! . . ."

Then his little face grew set and grave, and he fell silent forever.

Although she had been cut before she began to shed her petals, the rose felt that she had not been cut in vain, she was placed in a glass all by herself at the head of the little coffin. There were whole bouquets there of other flowers, but, to tell the truth, no one even looked at them. Not so with the rose. When the young girl placed it on the table she raised it to her lips and kissed it. A teardrop rolled down her cheek on to the flower, and that was the best thing that had ever happened to the rose in all her life. When she began to fade she was laid between the leaves of a thick old book and dried, and then, many years afterwards, she was given to me. That is how I know the story.

About the Author

Royce I. Florentino was born in Tagiug City.

She attended De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde, and has a degree in Information System.

During her spare time, she’s best seen singing songs without the right tonality. She has a dream to sing Broadway someday.

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