

no matter. The Lincoln Portrait, like all the arts, should be enjoyed from many viewpoints.

OM MANI PADME HUM

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"Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind." Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces. (1949, 3)

We were beginning an adventure, at least as defined by a high school senior from a small Ohio farm town. Bruce had his dad's old Porche 911. Red and undercoat gray, seats of leather and bare floor panels, the body and interior still needed to be restored. But, the engineer was hot and smooth, and the radio loud and bawdy.

A popular song from years back regularly finds its way today into my subconscious. It began "Oh what a night, late September 1963, what a very special time for me, I remember what a night. Oh what a night, and I didn't even know her name, but it was never going to be the same, sweet surrender what a night."

Today, Bruce would be called a nerd, skinny, unathletic, buck toothed, craggy faced. He later became a flower child, touring India on a motorcycle after two years in the Peace Corps, carrying drugs to pay his way. In 1998, he is a computer hot shot and division manager in North Carolina with a fine family.

Bruce was the smartest person in our class of 101. He never studied or brought home a book, so my grades were better, but we all were in awe of his ability. He

went his own way, seemed to know the world, was full of confidence, and was one of my heroes.

In late 1963, I was an honor's student, a basketball player, a good guy, a year ahead, oversexed, inexperienced, congenitally naive, and ready to be enlightened. We were headed for a new experience, assaulting a university.

I imagined the stimulating conversations of collegians, pouring out over cafeteria tables. Libidinous young women, freed from the oversight of parents, awaited our arrival, and I practiced my one pick-up line. "Hi, where are you from?" Perhaps a beer or two awaited, even though I was underage, as was the 3.2% beer. I was expectant, excited, determined to be unflappable, and very insecure.

We had been among the 100 students selected statewide to bring their Science Fair projects to the Ohio State Fair the previous summer. Judging at local, regional, and state levels had surprised and delighted us. **Two** Tippecanoe High School students from Tipp City had made the big time, had competed successfully with the sophisticates from Cincinnati, Cleveland, Troy. . .

[As an aside, there were once two Tippecanoe City's in Ohio. Mixed up mail and a coin toss in the 1930s cost my town its William Henry Harrison name, but the high school remained unreconciled.]

My project was the restoration of a sheep's skeleton, fondly referred to as Serendipity. Unnamed, the sheep simply failed to come back to the barn one night for its food and shelter.

Young Billy Brown had taken over from his dad, share-cropping one of my Aunt Ahhh's three farms. Everyone called her Ahhh, because, as a toddler, I loved being with her and yelled AHHHHHHHHHHH when she went away.

This was share cropping a la Southwest Ohio. The owner provides the land. The farmer provides the equipment and the labor. They equally share the cost of the seed, the fertilizer, and the feed. Finally,

they share the gain or loss with the sale of the products.

So, Young Billy had a commercial interest in a lost sheep. But, with touches of an old farmer's stoicism and a rich man's nonchalance, he just shrugged. Billy rarely painted board, rarely mucked out the sheep barn [the floor was a solid two feet of dung], usually cleaned the farm house for Christmas, and seldom counted sheep.

He farmed there until sloth and theft finally destroyed family loyalty. Yet, when I was young, Young Billy was one of my heroes. He had a knowing, self-righteous demeanor, he harnessed massive farm machines, and he disdained breeds lesser than farmers.

Serendipity had been found in the fall of 1962, 98% decomposed, the victim of some unknown tragedy. Resting behind a log at Aunt Ahhh's picnic grounds, strangely undisturbed by animals, the skeleton was essentially complete.

Weeks were spent hunched over cement tubs in the basement, bleaching bones and scrubbing off the last mortal remains. Mom's temper got shorter with each day's soaking of **the bones**. Her German-Lutheran sense of order and cleanliness was offended by the smell and the defiling of her laundry trays.

Working on the project internalized an insight about my thought process. Later, I was often struck by the range of interest and the intellectual flexibility of many chemists. By comparison, biologists often seemed narrow and inflexible. How could disciplines generate such difference? Perhaps chemistry is more analytic, biology more descriptive. In any event, I learned over a laundry tray that description was not my calling.

As I scrubbed bones, a big hit on the radio was "The Wanderer." Some lyrics are, "Well I'm the type of guy who likes to roam around. I'm never in one place. I roam from town to town. When I find myself falling for some girl, I hop right in that car of mind and drive around the world." "There's Mary on my left and

Suzy on my right and Jodie is the girl who I'll be with tonight."

Sometimes I think that song was the impetus behind my love for travel and for international "affairs".

Gradually reassembled over several months, Serendipity became the backdrop for a long detailed speech on anatomy and evolution. She won. An insight about description, a love for international affairs, and an invitation to cruise the highways were her legacy. In some sense, she was also a heroine.

Now, it was fall of 1963. The sheep was in the closet, and the sheep shtick and skeleton had propelled me into a Porche 911 eastbound on old route 40.

Ohio University in Athens beckoned. Known as a party school, OU was trying to upgrade its image. Science project winners were invited to a long weekend of intellectual engagement and fun in hopes of luring them to apply.

We arrived in the early evening and checked into our housing. I was in a frat house, a field of elegance, intellectual refinement, and vice, rising above hometown acres of corn as a dimly perceived myth of decadence. I was terrified and determined to be cool.

We were scheduled to go to a mixer and then out on the town. Maybe I would meet a girl, hold her hand, get a kiss, who knew the possibilities. A new world awaited and I was ready.

In the bathroom, I preened in front of the mirrors and was joined by a frat man. We chatted and he asked what I thought about the President. I gave him a suitably sophisticated answer full of qualifiers and offering perhaps a C+, proud of my sophistry. Then I was off to the ball.

The songs, mentioned above, hold the possibility of a titillating description of first-sex or perhaps of an exotic, erotic tour around the world. As a first

time paper giver, I thought this might be a good way to focus the Club's attention.

At OU that night at the ball, I learned what the undertone of rock and roll and the drone of wind in our ears had obscured all day. The evening turned somber, the joy gone, the promise of warm flesh and collegiate mischief flown, but not forgotten.

The month was November, not September, the day was the 22nd, and President Kennedy had just been assassinated in Dallas.

The Kennedys were larger than life. Jack and Jackie were physically and symbolically attractive. He too was my hero, but as different from the others above as they were from each other.

Unlike the others, he was archetypal: out of the corrupt ethnic politics of Boston, injured in his nation's service, from nowhere capturing the nomination and then the Presidency, illuminating with the new light of Camelot reborn, and dying brutally in America's service.

Kennedy called us to be more than we are, to "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Regardless of clay feet subsequently revealed, he will always be the hero of my adolescence.

My first experience in a college class the next day at OU was Asian Religions. The professor personally welcomed several of us to his class, a never repeated experience. The topic that day was Buddhism.

The class was subdued but instruction did not stop for the outside world. Or, perhaps, commerce ruled compassion and this professor was asked to continue because of the recruits on campus.

In Buddhism, the prayer wheel is a commonly used device and enhances the devotees ablutions. While praying, the supplicant also spins a small prayer wheel on which a prayer is written. Each time it goes around another prayer is spun out. The usual phrase is "Om

Mani Padme Hum, " normally translated **"Hail Thou Jewel of the Lotus."**

Ever since, The Jewel of the Lotus has been associated in my mind with heroes and heroines.

Joseph Campbell (1949, 35) explains the hero myth. ". . . whether presented in the vast, almost oceanic images of the Orient, in the vigorous narratives of the Greeks, or in the Majestic legends of the Bible, the adventure of the hero normally follows (this) pattern. . . : a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life enhancing return. . ."

In preparing this paper I interviewed a few members of the Club. Since most are past their mid-life crises, no false heroes were offered and few members admitted to youthful indiscretions entertaining tin gods. Over beers, I also talked with good friends who are younger both in age and spirit, but they also seemed too mature for false heroes. Five groups of heroes emerged from these discussions: the successful, the archetype, the childhood, the symbol as hero, and the private hero.

Importantly, neither members nor friends identified those who failed in life, as heroes or heroines. Even heroes who had lost everything or been killed, subsequently, in some way, transcended their loss or death. Simple failures do not count in this tally. After all, who would choose to aim at death or poverty or prison unless some redemption was attached.

Charlie noted, "myths are more durable than reality." True; however, the centuries when mythical, mystical heroines and heroes inspired society are lost to us. Today myths are made of individuals. Campbell states, "The long-inherited, timeless universe of symbols has collapsed." (1949, 387)

The modern world has shattered the basic mysticism tied to the hunt or to the fertility of the land. Modernity brings with it antibiotics dueling with death, trips to the moon capturing space, relativity puncturing time, genetic engineering replicating life.

There is little room for the mystical, for belief in the transcendent individual, the universal hero.

Delta Airlines Sky Magazine has a section entitled "Heroes in Our Time." One is Sara Lee CEO John Bryan and the featured quote is, "The recipe for a healthy corporation is significant numbers of women and minorities working their way smoothly to the top." (1998, 131) His statement is farsighted and courageous, especially since, for a decade, Bryan has been matching deeds with words at Sara Lee.

Bryan may be a hero, but the story assumes that corporate success combined with a just idea equates to heroism. His actions may have simply been the easiest and smartest things to do. Bryan has driven home an important idea, probably with self doubt and moments of despair. He is a remarkably successful man. But, without more information, he is a representative of the false hero, the 20th century's most common and most destructive hero myth.

We have all had heroes in this group, usually defined as the successful. They include the corporate CEO, the sports heroine, the rock star, the TV personality, or the film writer. "We have cheapened the definition of heroism," according to Bill, "and made it synonymous with celebrity. We have forgotten the ideas of service."

A job title, money, superbowl ring, possessions, screen credits, or fifteen minutes of fame have become the yardsticks of heroism in the 20th century. Unfortunately, they are often false heroes whose notoriety provides a negative role model at too young an age, for too long, for too many. Young Billy Brown was one of my own false idols.

My ex-brother-in-law, for instance, is in his 40s and seems to believe that "whoever has the most 'toys' when he dies, wins." He currently has nine cars, flashes suit labels, and casually remarks on both the million dollar deal he makes in the commodities market and how to handle imminent bankruptcy. He is a sad man.

The hero as conqueror is often a dangerous dawn star for the young. Too often today, heroes of youth are defined by external, material standards, and these visions become lodestones for our society's children. Success can remain the lifelong definition of heroism.

A relentless search for success becomes a curse for our ever more material society and for the searcher. Focusing on success, highlights only the final stage of the hero's saga. The hero's adventure involves a call, tests, the return, and the gift. Heroism is defined by the process not by the final achievement.

Chuck, made a simple, crucial point regarding heroes. "You know, heroes change over time." It gives us some hope as we despair over the popular images of today. Movable type and available books must have sent the same waves of despair through 17th Century Europe.

While bemoaning the modern ascendance of the successful as hero and the loss of the mystical, we should not forget that many of us have followed similar false idols.

We should also remember that the famous, the successful, or the well known may be genuine heroes, individuals who have completed the adventure of "separation-initiation-return."

For Ernie the heroic meant not only success but also that "there was always a physical component, always someone taking action. It wasn't cerebral." For instance, Michael Jordan is the classic American sports icon. He was mentioned by Hamner as a hero, but not because of his success.

Ironically, Jordan is a hero because he has lost more than won, i.e. in college, at baseball, or in his family. But, Jordan persisted and triumphed through adversity, and, perhaps, has become a genuine hero. After all, even Madison Avenue must find it easiest when there is real substance.

Mark agreed with Jordan's special character, but touched on another dimension of the successful as

heroism. Instead of the lead figure, he preferred to focus in sports and in life on the "guy who does the right thing but doesn't get the press." Applying your values, persistence, and overcoming major faults were crucial qualities. The stage need not be grand and the success may be the nurturing of a family or simple survival.

Similar characteristics were found in some of Tom's historical heroes. Lincoln and Churchill both lost more than they won. They were out of the office more than not. They were both real people, far from saintly, and often wrong. But, they never gave up. They had the courage to make decisions and to live with them. They were willing to take the heat.

The hero as successful individual role model has become the most commonly accepted modern definition. Those people mentioned by my friends, including the little guys who struggle to survive, all fall within this category. They are real, genuine, not false heroes.

For the future, this category promises fascinating tales and difficult questions. For instance, how do we distinguish the false from the genuine without waiting for the judgment of history?

The successful as hero also seems to blend, into a second large category, the archetypal hero. This mythical, historic dimension to heroism was crucial for Tom. My three comrades agreed that history and time often become the measure for heroism when perceived by larger groups in the society. For a more general social consensus, the heroic can only be known in retrospect.

However, for some, time and history remove the patina of heroism. Kennedy, the archetypal hero of my teens, had faded in my lexicon and would be a rare choice of today's generation X.

In addition to time changing judgments, the times can also make the hero. An old Chinese curse applies to the making of heroes, "May you live in interesting times." The archetypal hero needs to be larger than

life, as Kennedy was for me. Hence, the archetype most likely appears when called for by events. Churchill and Lincoln are also illustrations of this second group.

The archetypal, however, will have to await future papers. Similarly the childhood hero and the symbol as hero-myth, Bruce and Serendipity in my story, will survive until a later round.

Many colleagues focused on a fifth category, personal/private/intimate heroism. Family was a common theme. Not unsurprisingly, we sometimes find heroism in those around us.

Hamner saw heroes and heroines in parents who taught that we are responsible for our actions, that choices are not always pleasant but that you must live with them. My other amigos [frank discussion, wisdom, and quantity of beverage being directly related] echoed Hamner's sentiments.

Bob's mother and father were heroes to him. "Mother was by temperament and intellectually a 19th century anticlerical. She was a skeptic. She believed in tough love. I remember an instance where my brother played some verbal practical joke on me. I complained to Mother and she said, 'well, you fed him the straight line'."

"To my Mother, Father was a hero. He worked for the phone company, and she used to tell us that all the poles would fall down if he weren't busy at work."

An older sister can find her way into our personal mythology. Betty was three years older, kind, hard working, a scholarship student, strong and tough. A new freshman, Art came home from Howard University in December, full of piss and vinegar, and ready to change the world. He turned eighteen in DC, and picked up pool.

He got home, and went right down to the pool hall to show his stuff to Cincinnati and to enjoy his new maturity. Dinner time passed and into this den of masculinity marched Betty, full of spunk, ready to tag

the bull. Finally a grown up, Art was ordered home, by a girl no less. Who could resist the combination of her fire, her gentleness, and mom and dad's directive.

Shortly thereafter, in the middle of a brilliant college career, Betty died on the operating table from something easily treated today. The family was crushed and Art was in Japan with the occupation army. The tragedy brought him home to his parents. He not only gave up an appointment to West Point, but her death also evoked the heroine myth as Betty became a symbol of how a life should be lived and a warning that it can too soon be gone.

For years Cliff worked summers as a wrangler at a ranch in Wyoming and has tales of real western heroes. But, Cliff's grandfather was one of his first idols. He went to Colorado to homestead a horse ranch in 1878, had a huge mustache, loved to sit in his chair, and his wife always fussed at him for not being a gentleman.

"Grandpa and I always got along, and nobody else seemed to get along with him very well. He was out walking with me one day, and he said, 'Can you run fast Bud.' I said I could, and he said, 'I bet I can beat you.'"

"I knew he had some heart trouble, but not what it was. I knew running was not something he could do safely. He shammed me into it, and took about three steps, and fell into the bushes. I ran in and got some people to come out and get him. I didn't know what to do. I was scared to death. I had just killed my Grandfather."

"I wandered into the kitchen and hid under the stove. It was one of those stoves that had legs so high you could get under the oven. I think I wept there for a while. Finally, a big bosomed cook, Mary, came in, heard something, and looked under the stove. She immediately got through to Father and Mother."

Cliff's father was critical of the other adults around because Cliff had been left alone in a crucial situation. For Cliff, both Father and Grandfather, although they never got along, were heroes.

Another Bob fondly mentioned two heroines, his father's two maiden sisters. "Since my father died when I was young, my need for a hero is much greater than most other people." Perhaps, but maybe the need is no greater. The lack or absence of a father may simply require a more difficult and sustained search.

One of Bob's aunts "was on the board of the Mercantile Library for 25 years and founded the Visiting Nurse Association. The other belonged to the Public Library board and these two prim maiden ladies brought home books to read every week to see if they were suitable for public consumption."

"They took my brother, me and my sister to the zoo every spring and summer. We saw band concerts, went to the symphony, saw Thurston the Magician, and enjoyed circuses. These aunts sat through all kinds of things they had little interest in except for us. We appreciated their silent message of love and their sometimes inept efforts to be a substitute father."

Grampa Schulz, my mother's father, died when I was sixteen. My teenage years and his heart condition had distanced us. He grew up Augustus Wilhelm Schultz, speaking German in Wapakoneta, Ohio. His younger brother was nicknamed Dutch. He was called German before W.W.I, Gus when the war broke out. He also dropped a T from his last name to make it less Teutonic. The action, I like to think, of a young man.

Gus was a big time, small town baseball player. He had a welcoming laugh, nicknames for everyone in town, a quiet, stern demeanor, a huge heart, and gigantic bushy eyebrows. I have encouraged mine to grow in remembrance.

When I knew him he was a local plumber and electrician, with his shop right next to our house. He stopped by often and came over at lunch when he could, exciting me and my two sisters and then leaving Mom to calm the waters.

In the 1920s Gus, Dutch, and a third partner formed a large heating, plumbing, and electrical business in Tipp that worked the whole region with over

fifty trucks and two hundred men. The depression hit and they very slowly cut back as work dried up.

Grampa and Dutch thought they had an obligation to the men. There were no jobs and little money for anyone. The partner wanted to close up and cut losses. They bought him out and kept going. Later, Gus and Dutch "had words," a great family aphorism, over the same issue and Grampa bought out Uncle Dutch. They never spoke again.

Gus kept employment as high as he could, until he was finally down to his small house, an old car, a truck, and one assistant. He never again reached for the big time, but he was content.

In the depression new houses were rare and each an important part of tomorrow's bread. A friend was building a house and Gus got the contracting job.

In the basement as Gus installed plumbing, the friend talked about a new group being formed in Tipp. He should join, all the right people were. "No thanks," Grampa said, "I don't believe in that stuff." The friend said jobs were scarce. Few outside the group would be building. Gus' work could dry up. This house, for instance, could even go away.

Grampa picked up his tools, looked him in the face, said, "You can shove your house," and walked out. That night Gramma, my Mom, and Grampa were on the front porch, when a group of men formed up about a block down the street. While they adjusted their white robes and hoods, Gus sent his family inside.

The Klu Klux Klan marched up the street and burned down a cross in the lot across from Grampa, while he pretended to read his paper. Later he would say, "those fellows didn't think I knew who they were and I never told them, but everyone in town had only one good pair of shoes. They never got my trade." He taught me how to "kill with kindness." Grampa is my primary hero.

In the twentieth century our search for the heroic myths turns away from the mystical, societal figure,

inward to our closest intimates. We often look to those around us and they take on features larger than life.

The importance and influence of intimates are no longer buffered by overarching social myths and mysticism. They are no longer protected by simply being demigods, lesser idols whose lives are lived at our side. These intimate heroes and heroines are now placed higher and their fall can be more disastrous.

My colleagues and I have been blessed by personal heroes from our lives and families. But, America faces a twin dilemma. First, is the corruption of potential societal heroes by the cult of celebrity. This moves us to look to people we know personally for direction, for heroism.

Second, however, when society atomizes there is often no one there to touch. The heroic can no longer be found at home; so, where do we seek. This absence of intimates who can be viewed as genuinely heroic is tragic. It is one of the curses of the ghetto and the coach potato.

In a fundamental sense, many in our society lack real heroes who went through the fire and returned to society with a boon.

We need the passion of a Martin Luther King, the moral authority of a Vaclav Havel, or the courage of convictions of a Teddy Roosevelt. Instead we find venality, consumerism, mass marketing and focused groups.

Well, time races, the wheel turns, and the search for heroism needs to be fleshed out with the telling of more tales. They will have to wait.

Joseph Campbell concludes his manuscript (1949, 391), "the modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom it is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not, wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalized avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. 'Live,' Nietzsche says,

'as though the day were here.' It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal -- carries the cross of the redeemer -- not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair."

If so, there are real, current, upsetting conclusions. For example, President Clinton's failure is not only legal, sexual, trivial, and impeachable, but it is also profound. Driven by polls and pols he has failed to be the guide. He has failed to understand his obligation as the hero figure writ large in the age of modern communications.

Perhaps the times are different from Kennedy's and the media more ferocious, but the obligation remains the same for both the great and the small. In 1963 Kennedy met that obligation, today we need, and lack, leaders and followers who do the same.

The search for heroes and heroines remains unending. Without stars to reach for, without dreams to chase, we simply survive. We are captive on the wheel of time and heroes give pattern, direction, and mission to our turnings. Today we are each forced to search for heroes and meaning in our own small universes.

Campbell notes, "The problem of mankind today, therefore, is precisely the opposite to that of men in the comparatively stable periods of those great coordinating mythologies which are now known as lies. Then all meaning was in the group, in the great anonymous forms, none in the self-expressive individual; today no meaning is in the group -- none in the world: all is in the individual. But there the meaning is absolutely unconscious. One does not know toward what one moves. One does not know by what one is propelled." (1949, 388)

We have obligations to ourselves as we search for the heroic. How do we find our own "Jewel of the Lotus?" We have more nebulous, more difficult to define, yet more powerful obligations to those for whom we inadvertently or unknowingly become heroes.

As Bill said, "Heroes are rarely self-aware." Consciously aiming at the heroic seems to end in the banal or, worse, in the debased. Becoming the "Jewel of the Lotus" is beyond conscious reach. Understanding our obligations, delighting in their task, fulfilling a small portion is possible. It is a long quest.

This paper begins an adventure whose purpose is to find out where I am moving and what propels me. In the process, perhaps some friends and colleagues will also enjoy the turning of the wheel. At best, this may leave a legacy to my daughters and our friends. At worst, we will all be more confused than at the beginning. This is the more likely outcome, but I never really expect more.

For Campbell, ". . . the problem is nothing if not that of rendering the modern world spiritually significant." (1949, 388). Stay turned for more to come. "Om Mani Padme Hum."

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