

Troll Models

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 13 February 2016 18:08

It may be the early Egyptians built the pyramids not with blocks, tackles, or roller logs, or even long-sSpeculated minerals with anti-gravity properties. They could have been hupped together by really, really strong coffee.

Although I admit the anti-gravity thing would be a nice touch, and would also help keep this season's ant parade from finding my triple-espresso mocha-supremo extra-grande within six seconds of touchdown of my free, attached, limited-edition, celebrity-signature model hand-truck-beverage-holder, up to the computer station, where it gets strapped in like tanks of liquid oxygen near the thruster ports.

Sometimes, you ride the caffeine rocket, and other times, it rides you. And, if you are interested in almost everything in Life, then it's sheer suicide to light the fuse without an onboard gyroscope and working directional fins. (I speak from experience here.)

Anyhow, this is also how I started my morning's idle musing, pondering the concept of the role models being provided in our times, and then I wound up reading about a study of resilience in humans, then another about a test to indicate fragility and frailness...

... then, thinking back to that other article again, as I have been off and on, about the previous decades being about the celebrity of Production versus the celebrity of Consumption which we have now...

Somewhere along the line, I got snagged into ClickBaitLand, and read about a sea lion showing off his home, using a selfie stick, and, meanwhile, how a macaque monkey's selfie can't be ruled as the monkey's own intellectual property for copyright purposes. *Whoa -- going far afield here, now... □ Pull up, PULL UP!*

Somewhere in there, I also remember a blurb about a more powerful form of Lyme disease, Darwin's time spent in the Blue Mountains of Australia, and about a new ship's engine which weighs 2,300 tons and which puts out more than 100,000 horsepower -- plus, I have memories of how to build a snowball launcher (an offshoot of a discussion regarding the absence of true two-by-twos anymore), an article about Amelia Earhart's exploits and loss at sea, and another

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article about the "winter counts" recorded by the Kiowas from 1752 to 1887.

Did you know early stone tools show a right-handed preference? *Hmmm.*

Or the name of the largest structure built by living beings? *No, it's not the Great Wall of China, which is starting to fall down in spots, I've read....*

- Olivia Judson writes in *Smithsonian*, that the volume of coral built up at just one atoll is around 250 square miles -- like building the Great Pyramid of Giza more than 416,000 times.

(Coral must have mind-blowing, breakthrough technology in their caffeine delivery systems -- we may be experiencing a dreaded Caffeine Gap! Research into neck implants must continue!)

- Judson continues: The Earth has scores of atolls. And, the Great Barrier Reef runs for more than 1800 miles, comprising 3,000 reefs and 900 islands, *making it the largest structure yet built by living beings.*

There was also something about a tourist in Iceland who became famous for being lost, and driving to the wrong spot -- along with a critique of GPS devices and the spelling ability of Icelandic folk, all in one story, mind you.

Yes, and:

About halfway into my 50-gallon drum of Weekend Morning Liftoff Mix, I also became fascinated with an article which concerned itself with questioning the relevance of String Theory, given the many recent insights, theories, and developments in the scientific community as a whole.

There was also one story about the rocky start -- *(should I say this, right out loud, that its*

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beginning was ironically plagued with idea-stealing for shameless greed and profit?)
-- of the joy-of-capitalism game called
Monopoly.

The early inventor of the game, you see, called it *The Landlord Game*, and had originally hoped to use the game to teach people about the pitfalls of capitalism and blind greed, even writing two sets of rules, one for *monopolists* and one for *anti-monopolists*

However, she had her idea hijacked and sold by another person as a game of amusement to Parker Brothers. (She received \$500 in payment, versus the vast wealth generated by the capitalistic man -- the one with the rich imagination who claimed to have invented the game.)

... and now, flashing back in history, and realizing we have all grown up around this game, it takes on new and sinister shadings...

- There we are, all laughing at the pleasures of trying to bankrupt one another in joyous amusement, trying to corner ownership of all the railroads, or grab all the utilities, and putting up the maximum possible rents, laying a hopeful trap for our fellow players, striving, busting a gut, lying in wait for the dice to steer our family and friends into our financial tiger traps, then, our amused thrill of watching players go bust before our very eyes, and our grinding them underfoot, forcing them to retire in shame, to the poor house, no longer eligible for the *Community Chest...*

*

Around about there, I started flashing on Trump's obvious joy at having so successfully navigated his well-marketed and small-minded life, thanks to his father's riches and his own dumb luck, and how he had so often bragged about how well, and how successfully, he *always* did, and with absolutely everything, *even his*

FOUR

bankruptcies...

Something went *SPLINK* about then, somewhere inside.

Like I say, you need to know how to aim and steer, when you get on a caffeine rocket, or you have to expect bouncing off the walls. This is especially true if you slip off your StarWars brand chemical-land-speeder cup / drum / thermos / mocha-tanker-truck with the wind fully in your sails, and a topped-off electrical charge thrumming in your brain, trying hard to not ground yourself out.

*

Television was going to be a terrific new way to share information and educate people, once upon a daydream, when it was first invented. *Monopoly* was going to be a way to share warnings about capitalism, once upon an inventor's dream. We can see how well those two ambitious, and foolishly selfless, notions worked out.

I suppose none of this is surprising, seeing as how we are a capitalistic country, and a cutthroat one at that. So, in a system of money, it is no surprise whatsoever that absolutely everything gets converted and reduced into the structures and conceits of making money, of creating profit at all costs -- *or, better yet, creating profits at NO cost!*

It's anyone's guess why we might ever hope or think our political system will somehow be above the fray, and be some semblance of a noble enterprise, soaked and saturated as it is in money -- and in mysterious, dark, secret money, too, complete with legal rulings which say People have no right to know the names of donors-slash-purchasers of the American political system, or that piles of money somehow equates to free speech.

- If you are rich enough, and secretive enough, you might be able to get some say-so -- some pull -- in the American political system. That was the original dream, then, by the founders -- to have land-owners vote, and the rest of us go holler up a tree?
- Well, is this is so, it was also their intention that we definitely NOT have a permanent class

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of politicians, but citizens who would take turns guiding the country... but those arguments start to reopen doors to contentious subjects, like a citizen draft -- to share the pain of war -- and the idea that weapon ownership be allowed -- within the confines of a well-organized militia...

Meanwhile, back in 2016, here you go: Have some gerrymandered voting districts, and these new-and-improved rules which state who can and cannot vote, and during which restricted time windows of operation, and using which forms of updated and approved ID -- using which outdated voting mechanisms and what privately-owned software to run them.

... oh, and, here's the current plans on voter intimidation at the polls, and which precincts will have long lines for most of the day, and how we'll put out the usual fake word early, that our candidate has already won, and that there's no point anyone making the trip to the polls now, now that it's a lost cause, and all...

*

I periodically ask a question every three, four years or so. Here it is again:

- *Why doesn't every state in the country have vote by mail?*

I never get a very satisfying answer to that one. that method of voting has huge advantages, conveniences, and offers a paper record. It's used successfully in lots of places, and helps voting participation increase, because it is so easy.

However, I imagine I'm simply supposed to shut up and stop asking.

I imagine I should also forget that repressing votes and keeping turnout low *always* provides a clear advantage to Republicans, while encouraging voter turnout is to their disadvantage.

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It also goes without saying that Republicans are always first in line to gerrymander, require laborious identification processes, and are always very active in voter suppression activities, and discouraging turnout.

Weird coincidences, how that happens -- *always, all the time.*

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But, yeah: *Role Models*. It was a short list, this morning, before I became over-served, caffeine-wise:

- Role Models: Those you hope kids will emulate
- Roll Models: Those who flash their horse-choking rolls of banknotes
- Rolled Models: Has-beens who have already been worked-over by media and spat out

Then, after the first booster rocket of caffeine hit, I found myself clinging to the structural security of the alphabet while whirling through mental space at Warp 99:

- Bowl Models: Sports figures, for good or ill, concussions or not, scholarships or not...
- Coal Models: Climate changers and mountain-top removers...
- Cold Models: The departed? For flu products? Those who have magnetic-but-cold shoulders?
- Dole Models: Reagan's original fake-out of the "welfare queen" myth...

On and on. Foal Models, for horse lovers, Goal and Gold Models, for uber-greed achievers. Hole and Hold Models -- depending on whether your celeb was chucked into a freedom-or-finance-sucking hole, or whether he or she was on a vacationing hiatus, or awaiting a morality decision or morals charge...

And, yeah, on through to Mold, and Polled (and Poled) Models, and Soul (and Sold) Models, and then to Troll Models, and to a stop, before I could ponder what on earth a Vole Model might be, in these here YOO-nited States...

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With a couple exceptions, seems to me we're pumping out Troll Models to beat the band.

The full and complete list of them is already in my head, loaded and ready to go and download, unbeckoned, except by accidental twitch of caffeine.

Clearly, I'm going to have to ease off the throttle on the Jumpin' Joe's Java Juice and keep the flight path subsonic, way under Mach One, with more nap-of-the-earth flying, and not flirting with any more Jumps to Light Speed.

It's not the nosebleeds -- it's the jumpy stomach, all that caffeine and adrenalin, hitting an empty gut.

Time to peel off this flight-suit and have some breakfast.

Uh -- Saturday's almost gone already?

Some resources:

Monopolizing capitalism:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/books/review/the-monopolists-by-mary-pilon.html?_r=0

Resilience: <http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-secret-formula-for-resilience?intcid=mod-most-popular>

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Sea Lion selfie: http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/02/12/Sea-lion-shows-off-habitat-using-selfie-stick/9311455310858/?spt=hsv=on

Monkey selfie:

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/01/07/Judge-Monkey-that-snapped-selfie-cant-hold-copyright/8001452194509/?spt=trc

Lost fame: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-35482537>