

Chapter 7 - Philosophy interests

1. Reading thirst

As referenced earlier, reading became a hobby due to living, essentially, isolated in the mid-1950s as all our neighbors had left their farms. My nearest friend would be 3 1/2 miles to Pelly, the nearest organized Community. With no car, TV, phone, etc., books became my sources for meditation and solace.

2. Poetry

Writing Poetry, likely originated from the memory work directed by my grades 4 to 6 teacher, Hatty Pritchard, who may have influenced my interest in poetry.

I started a book (scribbler) of poems that captured in time, how I felt from ages 16 through 20. It still is great to read them now and it immediately takes my mind back to those days and what was influencing my thoughts.

I still have that "ragged" scribbler where I transcribed my writings for reference for later years. When I do read them, I can immediately transpose myself into that era in my life. I get an "eerie" feeling even today.

3. General

Obviously, my reading material influenced the manner in which I eventually lived my life. I imagined myself a knight in King Arthur's Court assisting the poor and being a gentleman to all the fair ladies.

Reading all about the Second World War and seeing pictures of the atrocities committed by the Nazis to the Jews, imprinted a mental picture of the ability of "man's indignity to mankind". I understood early in life what people can do to each other when they feel they have an advantage and power to do so.

I was afforded a great deal of time to think about all these things as I would hike through the woods with my dogs. I was able to experience nature in all its grandeur of vegetation, wild animals, and birds.

I watched beavers building dams in Swan River right from the process of falling a tree to gnawing it to pieces and placing those sections of the tree into the river bottom and building on from there. I observed Muskrats building their houses. Owls, ducks, geese, loons, crows, magpies, and all other birds building their nests and co-existing with each other as one "family".

I was especially interested in all the farm animals as they vied for supremacy in the yard, and I realized then that all living beings are continually undergoing this turmoil of desire for "the best place in the sun".

I spent an afternoon watching my dog Duke entertaining himself with all the farm animals in this special manner. Duke liked his spot laying on the door entrance landing. He would lie there with his nose just past the corner of the wood fence enclosing Mom's special garden where she grew tomatoes, cucumbers, and an abundance of flowers. He exercised his dominance over all the animals as he was the only one allowed into the house yard which was separated by a wooden fence from the barnyard where every other animal lived their lives.

He enjoyed the sport of chasing them all but was severely reprimanded if he indiscriminately did so. He also knew that none of these animals were allowed in the house yard.

So, this day he lay there with his eyes opening every once in a while, feigning sleep. First a chicken would come to the open gate and scratch the ground as if feeding but craning her neck to see what Duke was doing. She would move closer into the house yard. This was a progressive advance. It will never be known whether Duke and her were playing a game but when Duke had calculated that the chicken had progressed far enough in so that he could catch her and pull a few tail feathers, he suddenly darted and was successful to get some feathers before the chicken passed the gate back (their border) to the barnyard and Duke returned to his post (yes, I could see that smile on his lips).

This followed with the pig and then the duck.

What I learned from all this is that there is a definite communication between all these animals that us humans do not appreciate nor understand.

I was very interested in all other exchanges that I had with the wild animals and birds so that I was always 'at home' in the wilderness and not afraid. Perhaps therein is the understanding that all living things have is that everyone needs to respect their individual territory and not be a threat to other as that will stimulate a reaction which is protection rather than aggression.

Some animals "marked" these territories with urine or defecation. The continual "sniffing" that all animals naturally do, is "checking out the territory".

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