

**HARDY HILL**  
*SELF INTEREST RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD*

THE SOCIAL ORDER

The sun is rising and everyone is taking his or her respective positions in the social order. Some grin out through the gray tombstones of their tombstone-like faces and ask passerby for cigarettes, others sell their wares, a handful advocate for the advancement of the cause, a spattering appreciate the beauty of the everyday, a smattering advocate for an immediate halt to the cause, a scattering collaborate on the formation of crowds, queues, traffic, and rabbles.

Not mentioned but also present are coachmen, celibates, hell-raisers, phonies, au pairs, pagans, Jesuits, loud lunatics, epicures, business men and boys, sensualists, tight-asses, unlikely success stories, sports fans, perfectionists, bell-hops, graduates, loners, surfers, and creeps.

No-more-than six aristocrats alight on one of the high arches of the social order. One adjusts a silken hoe, another declares fealty to the anointed monarch -- all shower the bike path bellow with perfumed handkerchiefs.

Someone is assigned to collect the handkerchiefs for recycling.

DE TOCQUEVILLE

De Tocqueville and I walking down Sunset drinking Dr.Pepper®

“Paris” he observes, “is like a pop song that never ever gets old”

I concede that one can hardly argue the point when the facts are there, round sums, square figures, ruled paper, disappearing ink.

A pack of stray dogs cross our path; their colors are yellow, brown, umber, ocher, ultramarine, burnt umber, yellow-umber, burnt sienna, and tera verde.

“These,” offers De Tocqueville “are your assiduous citizens, constantly circling for petty pleasures in the fragrant compost heap of human endeavor and under the ruddy red umbrella of despotism.”

I admit that the masses have constructed a formidable fence around thought, but indicate that the digging of post-holes has not -to date- been effectively mechanized and employs a not-insignificant portion of the western working class.

The strays have found a copy of *Memoir On Pauperism* and are tearing it into confetti.

We turn a corner and nearly collide with the social order. De Tocqueville is quick to comment on the delicacy of its craftsmanship and ‘harmony of form’.

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The living dead are all standing around in the chaparral.

“Aries-rising” say the living dead.

“My mom’s an Aries” reply the living dead.

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De Tocqueville pulls up to my house in a hot-rod shaped like a coffin.

“Get in” he opines, “We’re going to the beach”

Tear-assing down the 110, *contre nous de la tyrannie, l’étendard sanglant est levé* is just audible, the measures drifting through the bituminous fronds of Mexican fan palms hundreds of feet above the heads of the Angelino’s own bodies below.

“These” says De Tocqueville, indicating a syntagma of traffic pylons “are your armies; roused from their peaceful occupations, such as the assembling of quartz-crystal radios and ruined in their minor undertakings, such as the defacing of historic places -- What can they do but take to arms?”

*Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras égorger vos fils, vos compagnes!* rings through one of the Figueroa street tunnels like a coin sings in the pewter cup of a hurdy-gurdy man’s monkey.

I yield, that the employees of the California Freeway System (C.F.S) have certainly arranged the pylons winningly. However, I advance the position that more of our boys are brought to battle by the prospect of their bunkmates unbuttoned flies than a glory obtained without toil, by nothing but the leveraging of life.

*Aux armes, citoyens,  
Formez vos bataillons,  
Marchons, marchons!  
Qu'un sang impur  
Abreuve nos sillons!*

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De Tocqueville is weeping in the independent bookstore. The proprietor informs him that this just is not the place for that sort of thing in public and all and if he could find an establishment that catered to his particular needs and all that sure would be the best thing for all involved god bless and good day. De Tocqueville looks up, tears are rolling down his face, he tears the page he is holding in half. The pieces fall to the floor, they read:

WHY AMERI  
USE AN IN

CAN ORATORS  
FLATED STYLE

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I arrive late at the house and am greeted at the door by a little girl dressed as though for bed.

“What are *you* doing here?” she asks with an expression that looks like the ruddy red umbrella of despotism hove over the burning tire heap of European colonialism.

“Why I’m here to see my friend, De Tocqueville”

“De Tocqueville!” she exclaims “Another round for the health of De Tocqueville!” she cries in the direction of the conversation pit, visible from my position just past the teak casing of the door.

I am lead into the house where there are more little girls wearing pajamas. Their number? Remaining to be seen. Sleeping bags have been laid out and there are refreshments in the butler’s pantry.

De Tocqueville and I braid each other’s hair. The little girls perform a short service, liturgical in nature. I lie on the floor and they indicate that my head is a hat, and my arms are prosthetic arms, and my legs are the wheels of a motorcar, and that as far as they are concerned I live in my body like most people sit in a chair. Many tiny fingers -still uncounted- lift me into the air. I levitate above the conversation pit. I estimate myself to be about 120 cm above the fine wool carpet, about level with the seat bottoms of the Gunther Benzig chairs nearby.

“I guess they weren’t kidding when they said he was light in the loafers,” declares one of the little girls, gesturing with her cigar. The room bursts into applause.

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The Little girls are occupying themselves with games of chance and social cunning, jacks, craps, five-finger fillet, etc.

De Tocqueville leans over and whispers into my ear, as though it were his own “These” gesturing towards the little girls “are your wretched poor, nourished by what their betters deem unfit to eat, sheltered by the ruins of past ages, clothed in naught but newspaper petticoat, cloth cap, and chemise fashioned from carry-out bags. Foul Moloch has driven them to gin. The Individual, that dirty devil, muffles their piteous cries with wads and wads of cold-comfort cash – and indeed excess concern for worldly welfare has done naught to exhume them out of the squalid squat in which we find them – occupied only in decorating the walls with oaths against republican order.”

I feel an error has occurred, but defer to the little girls.

They say, “Yes! We are afraid, terribly afraid! How can we be sure we won’t be turned out of our homes and induced to fabricate amusements for the ennoblement of the children who have filled our now vacant positions?”

I say, “You can’t be sure of anything. Nothing is sure. Sure is a myth invented by the state”

They say, “Then we renounce our individuality and surrender our wills and embrace the principles of transcendental Buddhism”

I say, “You can not renounce your individuality because each of you has been assigned a unique tax ID number, and it is stored in a central computer, access to which is above your security clearance”

There is a knock at the door.

“Who can that be?” asks De Tocqueville.

“Why it’s the aristocrats,” say the little girls.

A crowd of aristocrats enters, the room burst into applause.

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De Tocqueville drives the hot-rod without saying a word, smoking like a house-aflame. Our bowie knives, grenades, night-vision goggles, c4, field rations, pocket bibles, telescopes, grenade launchers, compasses, letters from our wives, decks of playing cards, cigarette papers, astronaut pens, and can openers clatter around in the trunk. I am holding my red revolver and starting to believe De Tocqueville has misunderstood some foundational principles. De Tocqueville has his hand on his thigh like it was a holster.

Finally we arrive at the youth hostel, but the living dead are already there. I burst into tears, De Tocqueville bursts into flames.