

## Consuming the Host

This was written to address the financial debacle of 2008-?, fruition of the so-called Reagan Revolution, characterized by dismantling the public sector, “deregulating” the corporate sector, shipping manufacturing jobs overseas, and sweeping all profits into the pockets of the rich and powerful. In it, government and its role in regulating conscienceless profiteering became the enemy. Its success allowed its proponents to use their ill-gotten gains to pack the government and the media with their lackeys, accelerating the revolution.

Many years ago Michael Parenti summed up the game in one perfect sentence: government exists to keep the parasites from consuming the host.

Regulation means the government gauges how much blood the body politic produces and limits the parasitism accordingly. While I can envision more equitable systems, intelligently regulated capitalism can be one part of a healthy economic system. (Actually, most forms of life are parasitic to some degree, and parasites can be helpful as well as harmful. But in nature they are careful to not kill their host, lest they die along with it.) Regulations are essentially laws to prevent criminal behavior that drains the host faster than it is replenished, so while deregulation may sound catchy it is simply an invitation to lawlessness resulting in the exhaustion of the system.

Problems rapidly mount when the parasites eliminate their restraints and begin a feeding frenzy, which is what has been building up over the last thirty years within the capitalist system. Competition became nothing more than jockeying for the best places on the primary arteries. Now we are left with a group of bloated leeches hovering around an emaciated corpse, and blaming the corpse itself for cutting off their fair share of the juice.

It’s incredibly unseemly to blame the victims in such a pass, but that’s part of the typical denial pattern. The rightwing gas bags whine “Poor people caused this mess!” “Immigrants caused it!”

“No, liberals who sympathize with poor people and immigrants caused it!” Au contraire, liberals are those who seek sustainability of the system, and believe in leaving a little of the blood in the host so the poor can have a sip occasionally and the host doesn’t actually die. They know that hard working poor and lower middle class folks are who makes the blood in the first place. The military corporate (or industrial) complex, a gang of shameless welfare queens, is by far the main parasitical factor. The Reagan Revolution proposes to keep the host alive by a little blood trickling back into the body politic from the very parasites who are draining it dry. Nice! Too bad it didn’t work out that way.

Quick fact: all American mortgages in arrears could be retired for around 300 billion dollars, less than half the initial bail-out package. (Give people jobs and fair rates and they could pay it off themselves with ease.) The value of the credit scandal Ponzi scheme of the parasites at the moment is approximately 62 trillion dollars, around 200 times more money than the mortgage crisis. The difference is all smoke and mirrors, by the way. It’s a hot potato that keeps getting tossed to the next bigger sucker, until you run out of suckers willing to catch it. Which just happened.

Current government philosophy about fixing the situation? Drill the corpse for more blood in places where there might be a little left. While waiting for that to pay off, manufacture some more blood out of thin air and give it to the parasites as a bail-out so they don’t have to lose weight or give up their place at the table. And let the potatoes cool down a little and then see who will be willing to catch them. Hmmm.

It’s no wonder that fundamentalists play along with these most un-Christian greedheads: they believe that hey, God could refill that corpse with blood in a nanosecond if he wanted to, but he doesn’t because there are nonbelievers ruining His happy planet. All we have to do is get rid of the liberals and other ungodly types so God can love us and shower us with bounty once again. Unregulated capitalism is as much a pie-in-the-sky religious creed as any other: just substitute the word Market for God. But their

way of consuming the host destroys life rather than affirming it, because the root belief is the deification of selfishness. Religions at least pay lip service to selflessness or brotherhood or the common good, and some actually put it into practice.

Well, I'm sorry for carrying on, but I can't stand by while the architects of our problems point fingers at the innocent bystanders and pose as holier than everyone. It's frankly disgusting, and even though I've anticipated it for a long time it doesn't make it any prettier. Those guys are still rich. They could offer a little respect and compassion, and it wouldn't cost them a cent.

The parasites are particularly good at the tried and true technique of divide and conquer. Controlling the media and thus the public conversation, they adroitly divert the focus from themselves, placing the blame on polarized aspects of the body politic. Any "us versus them" attitude builds aggressiveness, which leads to blindness. Remember "you're either with us or with the terrorists" from George Bush's first speech after 9-11? So now even mainstream Presidential candidates are being treated as monsters. What a pathetic sight as metaphorical torch-bearing mobs chase chimeras in the form of ordinary citizens of various persuasions, while the real culprits smirk unobserved in their safe havens.

The solution is never to start battling some purported Enemy. It begins by disengaging from the context of suffering, by intelligently and peacefully extricating ourselves from the morass of polarization. Even "parasites versus host" has to be treated with care, because we overlap in many respects, and we all share culpability.

Life is resilient and will persist in some form, through thick or thin. As long as there is life, blood will be manufactured continuously. Times like this are a test of whether we're ready to use our "God-given" intelligence or just get swept along by the broom of history, as Hank the Cowdog would put it. A Big Crash could give us the chance to shake off many of the parasites and get a fresh start in a much more sane direction, so long as we don't

cherish and cling to all our outmoded sacred cows. That would be the military first and foremost, followed by corporate waste and fraud. There is actually very little difference between corporate greed and the military it has co-opted into its service.

Living in amity with the world community is inexpensive and could be wholly free, while living in fear and paranoia as a well-defended fortress is almost infinitely expensive. As Nataraja Guru suggested, though, we will have to give up our opulent lifestyle for mere abundance.

We all draw our sustenance from somewhere, despite the mythos that we create it ourselves from scratch. Some Christians consume a host wafer to symbolize their connection to the Source of sustenance. If it is done as a one way delivery of energy to them it is parasitical; if it is done reciprocally it is life-affirming. Unselfish host-consumers draw energy so they can give back energy, sharing the blessing with their comrades. And “comrades” has to include everyone, lest the result be parasitical, which is why Jesus counseled his followers to love their enemies along with the rest.

Life is anti-entropic, filled with the energy of hope and renewal. The Earth itself is our common host, and we can sip her bounty judiciously while making sure she stays healthy. Humans have many great ideas along these lines, most of which have been actively suppressed by the greed mongers. It’s time to toss the parasites off and let a million flowers bloom! It will be exciting and fun, even though there will undoubtedly be some big bumps in the road. Go well.