

Macaroni and Jesus and Barbecued Barbie

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Child abuse has so many faces doesn't it?

The horror of pederast priests and the Church covering for them is one thing but the molesting of a child's soul with received teaching gets under the skin and persists.

Century after century the doctrine of Hell and Original Sin has been institutionalized child abuse – a way to “control” the wild souls of children (and other primitives) by preaching a loving God alongside His Infinite Brutality

This came vivid to me when, to call on my fifth decade, I went to the forests of Big Sur to be alone for a few months to meditate and pray. I'd occasionally been a freelance hermit over the years but these months were initially quite rigorous.

I'd meditated for several weeks before the obvious was at all obvious. From Catholic catechism onward – since I was seven – I had lived every gesture under the gaze of an omniscient and punitive God.

Not “believing” in hell as an adult was apparently irrelevant. Until I “saw” - and saw through the pervasive and tacit “fact” of this merciless Catholic impostor of a “God” - I was stained with His relentless Presense.

I was among the damned.

In some ways I'd intuited as much years before.

Phrase by phrase the *terza rima* of Dante Inferno showed how familiar I'd been with the geography of hell since I was a kid and my years as a homeless teenager confirmed.

Like the church, the commercial world (of which some brands of Christianity are a variant) forever seeks to snatch the soul of a child and render it unrecognizable. Every parent knows this and the feeling of helplessness itself erodes you. Conspiring with the powers that be is common enough – adults are far from immune to the seductions of consumer imprint. And our “Amish” impulse to shelter the young'ns are far from convincing.

Long, long time ago when I was a recovering hippie single dad with a six year old girl, I knew it was my duty to preserve my daughter's soul from the banal violence of American culture. I didn't quite know the measure of the stink of hell that lingered around me – didn't know how much I saw America as a place of damnation – so I was perhaps too much a flamboyant. “fundamentalist.”

Specifically regarding this fellow claiming to be Jesus and that plastic babe of all babes, Barbie.

Jesus himself was a precocious young *rebbe* [rabbi] but daughter Nicole had come home once from playing with a fundamentalist friend asking me about sin and I begin speculating how to save her from the savior. And so in my early days of creating shamanic ritual, I cooked up some Kraft macaroni and Jesus.

The recipe did not even tax the culinary imagination of single dadhood. Take a crucifix and boil it a few minutes till His plastic body was soft enough to know His eucharistic essence had been imparted. Remove Jesus, boil until squishy macaroni and mix in the cheese powder. Voila' – macaroni and Jesus. I'd read some choice scripture over the sacrament, like God being love and all that, and then we chowed down.

The transmogrification of Barbie was another matter. No way at all to make her edible.

And no scriptural redemption.

What to do?

Well we went to the Salvation Army and got a cheap used Barbie and decapitated her so we could invite her cousins from New Guinea into the house to live with us.

"Barbarella," we decided, was a mudwoman from the Garoka Highlands. After we affixed a clay head to Barbie's body and painted her naked body, Barbarella told us - or so I translated - how it was that when neighboring brutes chased her into the Asaro river she covered herself with mud and they ran off.

"They thought I was a ghost!" she laughed

Barbarella was not in the least interested in Ken, thank God, and I set her on the altar as a protective spirit to shield Nicole from the demons that haunt American pop culture.

All of this was a bit much for Nicole who really didn't think much of Ken either and was much more into the Care Bears anyway.

Was I to decapitate a clan of Care Bears? And replace their heads with what? When I found myself fulminating about the Bears - "What do those sentimental twits know about feelings?" -

I could see my efforts to protect Nicole had an edge.

Girls, after all, just want to have fun, don't they?

I conceded to trusting my daughter's good sense and it was mine to play with my own damn Barbarella.

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This essay was just visited by a necessary post script.

I was recently telling the story of Barbarella to Ki'na Darkcloud, an Arikara woman who grew up on the Navajo reservation in Arizona.

As a child her Navajo brothers used to get her all sorts of used Barbies which she'd melt on a barbecue and bury. "I imagine the archaeologists of the future will be excited about the find: melted Barbies with their eyes sliding off and such."

And there it is – a full meal of Barbecued Barbies and macaroni and Jesus served to you by a mudhead.

What indeed might the archaeologist make of post apocalypse America?