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CHAPTER THREE/Ends and Means

Surprises, for those who watched, were few.

It was relatively easy to see the patterns, to compare the present moment with the infinite.

The flaws were evident. More evident was the lack of design.

As a band where each musician plays a different song in different keys.

As a joke with no punch line.

As a picture out of focus with no clear subject.

As a garment that suits neither figure nor personality.

Each thread was woven randomly, with little care to relationship or function. The interactions of the parts began to generate interference, and the whole disintegrated.

There was shift between possibility and reality.

The first warnings were subtle. As with all prophetic utterances, lunacy and misguided idiocy were a preferred explanation than facts.

People preferred to place responsibility on nameless, faceless, formless abstractions.

The nameless, faceless, formless Void that humans considered the "Other" that was non-human.

Masters of Reason, the Unreasonable rhythms of Nature were mystifying and demonized.

And so, humans set out to make Nature reasonable.

They named her.

They categorized her parts.

They partitioned her and corralled her.

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They constrained and regulated her.

They took her resources and polluted what was left.

And then they ignored the consequences.

The humans ignored the consequences. The rest of Nature noticed.

And the rest of Nature was not pleased.

Origins

There is a uniquely human quality, that of ascribing purpose and intent to consequences.

word count: 239

But Nature does not *intend*, she merely exists. She does. Or she does not. If something, or someone, is affected they are affected with no intention or purpose as far as could be determined by any outsider.

Intention requires a fore-knowledge, a determination, an overarching plan. It requires meaning.

Nature, herself, is meaningless. Meaning belongs to those who need, those who strive, those who fight or struggle. Nature does and is none of these things.

Existence is enough. Purpose is an accessory that is unnecessary, an adornment that would mar the perfection of presentation. And so purpose is ignored, rebuffed.

Time has meaning only after the fact, no single-minded direction, no plan.

If time is aware of events it is as an observer, from an impartial, distant vantage point.

The animals move in Nature and in Time, not separated out and judgmental, but manifestly part of the inscrutable whole. Neither ambitious nor content, they do and are and become and depart.

The rhythms of Nature are part of them. Building a shelter of some sort, finding and storing food, grooming and mating. The rhythms are predictable, regular but not regulated, part of their being.

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Some animals, long-lived and social, seem to step out periodically, noticing the changes of pattern, sensing rhythmic imbalances. But lacking either will or ability, they change little, and never deliberately.

And then, the rhythms were disrupted, the patterns of Nature were corrupted.

The animals noticed, the animals suffered.

Nature noticed. And shifted.

Actions

Any change requires something to happen.

Scientists liked to say that their study was of how, not why. They could look at patterns and say *this caused that*, but they couldn't explain why. And they wouldn't explain why.

So those who were not scientists took on the burden of explaining why.

Being human, they failed to recognize that sometimes, indeed most of the time, why is unnecessary.

And in focusing on why they missed what. They overlooked the mechanisms that continued to function long after they were set moving. The shifting patterns were broader, more frequent and more jarring. Rhythm was irregular, or lost completely.

Nature was rampaging in response to activities begun in the distant past, and with no purpose or intention was about to set things back to rights.

Ends

Time is outside of Nature, separate but intertwined.

It is a great swirling mass of events, moments, potentialities, becomings and vanishings.

Time does not move, it does not stop, it does not notice.

Nature steps in and out of Time, holding this moment or that, releasing parts back to be reused, acquiring what is useful as needed.

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Only the Void is greater than Nature and Time, un-named, un-namable, un-known, un-knowing, un-approachable, un-imaginable. Nature ignores the Void, Time passes through and by and around the Void. The Void waits.

The. Void. Waits.

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