

Title : TWO BANKNOTES

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Abstract :

My daughter asked me to write a short essay on a topic of my choice. So I chose to write about two dollar bills I won in Las Vegas that were forgotten in my wallet when I returned from California (where my daughter lives). I try to explain in a futile text my feelings about gambling as an adult and what it means in relation to childhood games. Is gambling a time to regress to childhood?

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« TWO BANKNOTES »

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Date 2022/06/22

Signed by JACQUES DEPIERREUX

TWO BANKNOTES



In my wallet there are two banknotes on which it is written:

"The United States of America", "In God we trust" and many other Latin formulas which do not evoke anything to me like this formula which proclaims loudly "Annuet Cœptis" or this one "Novus Ordo Seclorum" arranged in phylactery under the image of a pyramid surmounted by an eye which is itself inscribed in a luminescent triangle if one believes the rays drawn all around symbolizing a light source.

It is specified under this image that it represents "The Great Seal" which sounds strangely to my ears like a Masonic formula. It gives these pieces of paper a solemnity that one would not expect in a wallet as modest as mine.

Think, a tiny piece of black leather sewn in such a way as to easily hold the sesame of a daily life. Multiple identities of ourselves like this National Identity Card or the Carte Vitale which sums up well the use that is attributed to this name so performative without counting the permissions that are granted to me to circulate on board of motorized land vehicles on the territory of Europe and the United States for variable durations as says my Driving License.

In short, I'm getting lost in a bit of down-to-earth considerations, but all this is intended on the one

hand to warm up my mind, which must be prepared for the idea of a writing project to be carried out, and on the other hand to remind me that these bills on which appears the mention ONE DOLLAR are not the fruit of my work, nor even from an annuity like the one paid to me every month by the State and called "Pension", but rather the fruit of chance and of what can be classified in the category of unexpected gains - although provoked - in a completely different and voluntary way. I named the Game!

These tickets are at the same time the possibility to buy in the United States of America - for example at Ralph's (!) or in any other store of my choice - what I want within the limit of their value, but more than that, they are for me the memory of the time spent in the Pleasure Island - sorry, I meant Las Vegas - and of the childish joy of winning. I say childish because the joy of winning a little money brings me back to the simple joys of childhood when your hand would grab the dancing pom-pom above the merry-go-round and you would become the chosen one to get an extra ride hanging from Dumbo's ears or clutching the steering wheel of the plane of your dreams that was flashing with all its lights.

The arcades of Las Vegas are an adult version of those childhood rides except that we trade in the pom-poms of the old-time rides for the otherwise sophisticated alignments of the clanking, clattering machines.

Here, I let my joy explode by winning twice on these machines. Small wins, but they took me back to the joys of my childhood.

To relive them in all simplicity is a pleasure to share and as the writing of these lines is due to the initiative of a person very dear to my heart, I allow myself to digress as it is common to do in a casual conversation where all subjects must be treated without distinction or privilege.

It so happens that after having thought of closing the text on "the joys of childhood", the chance of the Parisian cultural current events leads me to deal with the use of a term too often present nowadays for bad reasons in the popular television programs, I named the term "regressive".

Having mentioned above the memory of childhood and the analogy between childhood rides and Las Vegas arcades, a reader might be tempted to use this term to install the idea that gambling should be seen as a "regressive" episode in an adult's life, but in my opinion, not only is this not the case, but the term seems to me to be meaningless, at least when it is used incorrectly by the media. To clarify the subject, in this case it was an announcement of an exhibition of various inflatable objects that were supposed to remind us of childhood by their playfulness. However, if I believe the

different definitions of the National Center of Textual and Linguistic Resources, I think I can affirm that the evocation of childhood by any activity is in no way a "regressive" form and that the use of this term is an abuse of meaning as well as of language. Our apprentice cooks of the show "Top Chef" who use this term to qualify such or such recipe recalling childhood would be inspired to go and inquire about this usage with the CNRTL and consequently, the cultural columnist of the French Radio would be advised to do the same.

This provisional conclusion of the subject is not useless as much as it seems, it allows to mark the subject and to fix it provisionally in this time where everything seems strangely appropriate in all circumstances! A sort of extension of the concept of "alternative truth" applied to vocabulary and ideas!

On the subject of what marks a situation and defines it in historical time - in the restricted sense - an anecdote comes to mind: during an interview with the filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard recorded with a tape recorder, one suddenly hears the sound of an airplane passing over the place of the recording. The technician suggests to JLG to redo this part disturbed by the noise of the engines to which this one replies:

- No, don't do that, it will mark the time of this recording !

It was wise and as an anecdote never travels alone, I remember this other memory.

I once bought a record of classical music concerts recorded by the "Rundfunk der D.D.R." (Berlin Radio) in 1954 under the baton of the famous conductor Celibidache, and I read on the cover of the record a warning about possible interference. It was stated that the building where this concert was recorded was close to Tempelhof airport, and that the noise was not due to errors in signal processing by the radio technicians, but to airplanes flying towards West Berlin, which was then landlocked in the middle of East German territory.

I think it is a very good thing that the tapes were kept as they were without being reworked.

Add to that the fact that I was able to listen to these tapes on a 1954 Telefunken device made in Germany, and I think it was a great time-traveling experience, and I hope no one will tell me that I had regressive fun! And this is how the evocation of two simple banknotes leads me, through all sorts of vain typographical wanderings, to tell the story of these two banknotes!

June 21st of this year 2022 in Paris (France)