



Marionettes

FRANK ARUNDELL

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Hi-diddle-dee-dee
An actress life for me
An ermine wrap with a golden brooch
Diamond rings and a tiny pooch Hi-diddle-dee-day
An actress life is gay
It's great to be a celebrity
An actress life for me
Hi-diddle-dee-dum
An actress life is fun
Hi-diddle-dee-dee
An actress' life for me
A fancy pouf and a big mink coat
A pony cart and a billy goat
Hi-diddle-dee-dum
An actress life is fun
With silken gowns from neck to floor
You ride around in a coach and four
You stop and buy out a candy store
An actress life for me!
Hi diddle dee dee
An actress life for me
A seal skin purse with an emerald catch
A great big house with a pool to match
Hi diddle dee dee
You sleep till after three
You promenade in fancy bars
And tour the world in a private car
Sip champagne with caviar An actress life for me!

Who can forget that wonderful tune from Walt Disney's Pinocchio; I took the liberty of changing the lyrics a bit to suit young females who clammer for fame and fortune as did the little male "wooden headed" Pinocchio; all he wanted was to be a real boy. I suppose we could call the cutie on the cover Pinocchia, surely, she would have wanted to be a real girl. I think this was Walt's second or third movie after the epic Snow White. For some reason I never get tired of watching Walt's animated features whenever they pop up. I have had the pleasure of personally knowing several of his best animators, Bill Tytla and Bill Melendez. Melendez finally won his fame with Charles Schultz's Charlie Brown holiday features. Just wonderful people, truly actor-artists. Neither one of them ever stopped telling me how Walt couldn't draw and what a taskmaster he was. My response was always "That's why he hired you!" All of Walt's classic films were morality-tales generally based on earlier classics in one way or another.

How many of us remember the anonymous poem:

"Star light, star bright, First star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, get the wish I wish tonight?"

Maybe we learned this little poem even before we learned our prayers. Geppetto's wish on that star was that his little creation Pinocchio would become a real boy. Do you remember what your wish was upon the evening star? Interestingly, the evening star most of us wished upon was likely the planet Venus. As little children we were already being launched into metaphysics or mythology. Our parturient understanding of a wishing-star conceivably could have been the precursor of what would later become some vague comprehension of an unseen God. Human beings grow up with the great gift of imagination, some more than others. It's the supernatural ability to see beyond materiality that

our senses present us as “reality.” I have often thought that those who are specifically curious about reality become physicists, chemists and engineers— and those more interested in imagination become artists, poets and mathematicians. Many of the former will argue that imagination is unreal while they simply put their own imagination to use in a more narrow purview. Their imagination anticipates reality as being only material. I believe the human imagination to be “super-natural” because so far, as opposed to the rest animal kingdom; only humans display the enormous use of it as against a very rudimentary use in the other living species. In fact, it is the gift of transcendence, our connection to spirituality, that makes us human. When archeologists and paleontologists explain the emergence of the human imagination over time they, in a way, are proving Darwin’s theory of evolution; so called natural-selection through the miracle of RNA, DNA and the double-helix. Human spirituality is indeed real. An infinite-horizon is discernible to every human being in my opinion. We have slowly become super-natural creatures since life began on this planet. Nature was added to by imagination and became “Human Nature” somewhere along the line. Nature, God’s creation, is all good, Human Nature? Well, that’s another story.

I picked up a synopsis of Pinocchio from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) but changed it a bit for your amusement, it goes like this:

The film opens with Jiminy Cricket sitting in a library singing “When You Wish Upon A Star”. Addressing the camera, he starts to tell the audience why he believes in such a thing. Opening up a storybook of “Pinocchio,” he explains how he came to the house of woodcarver Geppetto and his pets Figaro the cat and Cleo the fish. Geppetto had just made a little wooden puppet called Pinocchio, whom he loves dearly (“Little Wooden Head”). Before he goes to

bed, Geppetto wishes upon the evening star, probably the planet Venus, that his little wooden marionette would come to life and would afford him great joy. As he slept— a wraith, (spirit) able to infuse life into inanimate objects arrives and enlivens Pinocchio; but, lo and behold, because Geppetto wished on Venus, definitely a female “star,” what was to become a little boy, became, gulp, a little girl, Pinocchia!

For Geppetto it didn't matter much because as a loving father either a living little boy or girl was precious and worthy of all his love. Pinocchia will remain a puppet, says the wraith: “until she can prove herself and become worthy to be a real live girl.” However, being naive, she required some guidance, so the wraith appoints Jiminy Cricket to be her “conscience”. The cricket tells Pinocchia that anytime she runs into anxiety or other difficulties— all she needs to do is whistle for Jiminy. (“Give a Little Whistle”).

After a few weeks, Geppetto really could not understand the peculiar antics of his lovable little girl. She displays an inordinate desire for ultra fancy things, a great talent for dancing and a fierce need for constant attention which he could not always supply as a busy woodcarver. He was sure though that everything would be okay once she went off to school.

So one bright morning off she went anticipating a fun filled day out of that dingy, old wood-smelly studio. Jiminy, who overslept, found that she had gone off without him. On the way she is sidetracked by the wily fox John Worthington Foulfellow and his simpleton accomplice Gideon the cat. Recognizing her uniqueness and female beauty, the smooth-talking crooks decide to sell Pinocchia to marionette master Stromboli, whose traveling show was in town.

Convincing the naive Pinocchia that this is her chance to become an actress, Honest John and Gideon take the puppet to Stromboli (“Hi-Diddle-Dee-Dee an actress life for me”). Jiminy finds her but too late to save her from her fate.

Pinocchia becomes a big success as part of Stromboli’s fabulous shows dancing alongside normal puppets in European-themed musical extravaganzas. When she sings (“I’ve Got No Strings”) it isn’t quite true. Although she’s perfectly proficient at dancing without strings unlike the others, Stromboli, who resembles Harvey Weinstein but with a black beard and large mustache, keeps her on invisible nylon strings to suit his miserable fancies and control her every move. Jiminy Cricket, feeling that he failed at his job, walks off into the night.

Pinocchia is finally repulsed by Stromboli and tries to escape to return home to Geppetto. Stromboli, not wanting to lose such a beautiful cash cow, locks the puppet in a bird cage. Alone in Stromboli’s dark and damp caravan, Pinocchia whistles for Jiminy Cricket. He finds Pinocchia, but is not strong enough to unlock the bird cage. Suddenly, the benevolent wraith appears once again. Not wanting to admit she was naughty, Pinocchia tells a series of lies, but with every lie her nose grows longer. The wraith forgives her and lets her out of the cage, but warns her that she’ll never become human if she keeps misbehaving and then restores her nose to its petite size.

Pinocchia and Jiminy escape from Stromboli and head for home. Yet it isn’t long before the duo become separated again; and once more Pinocchia bumps into Honest John and Gideon, who have been hired by a dubious coachman to round up real boys and girls to take to the anarchic HOLLYWOOD Amusement Park. Jiminy, realizing that once again he has been too late, follows Pinocchia to

HOLLYWOOD, where boys and girls can be as naughty as they please and treat themselves to free-love, champagne, caviar and anything else they might desire, like a snort of cocaine. But there's a catch to all this; since they are acting like jackasses, the magic of "Tinseltown" gradually turns them into donkeys, which the coachman sells into a lifetime of humiliation and slavery in circuses and the mines. After a while Pinocchia starts to change into a jennet, (female donkey) growing long ears and a tail. Before the transformation is complete she manages to flee the horrible place having her fill, and finally returns home. To her dismay, her father isn't there.

A dove arrives with a note from the wraith explaining that Geppetto has gone to sea to search for his lost daughter and has been swallowed by the whale Monstro. Determined to save her father, Pinocchia and her reluctant conscience, journey to the bottom of the sea. They find Geppetto in the belly of the whale, and escape by setting a fire in the belly of the sea monster who sneezes them right out. In revenge, Monstro destroys Geppetto's raft. Without regard for her own safety, Pinocchia saves Geppetto from drowning but at the cost of her own life. Geppetto's wish is finally granted. Pinocchia's sacrifice has proven to the wraith that she is worthy, and she is brought back to life not as a puppet but as a real live girl.

While Geppetto, Pinocchia, Figaro and Cleo celebrate, Jiminy Cricket steps outside to thank the wishing star Venus for the happy transformation and reconciliation. The cricket has proven himself to be a good conscience and receives a gold badge as his reward. The perseverant, patient wraith takes her place as Pinocchia's fairy godmother, known to millions of others she has helped as the Blue Fairy.

It would be difficult for any adult to miss the stark symbolism in my edited version of this marvelous movie. When the story about Harvey Weinstein broke in the American media it was the perfect storm for hungry journalists everywhere to latch on to its salacious content, which always sells big, then turn the facts as they slowly emerged in every way possible to cast this “beast” to the dogs. Hundreds of attractive women finally got up enough courage to accuse Weinstein of prurient acts ranging from sexual harassment, abuse and even rape— all red meat for the ubiquitous news media. What is curious about this story is that it seems everyone in the world knew that Harvey was a sex pervert and a ferocious control-freak for years, but the story had been cautiously covered up by the very people who now are landing on him like a ton of bricks. The fact that he was a big contributor to the Democrat Party is of little significance. What is important to recognize is that almost fifty percent of our people are enslaved by the dictatorship of relativism: “What ever you can get away with is okay”. “Laws are made to be broken”. “We need a fairness doctrine”. You know the drill.

Any good psychiatrist would have a field day with Harvey’s case. His unstable personality, his propensity for bullying underlings, his insatiable sexual appetite to manipulate young women and his unattractive physiognomy has made him the monster of the entertainment world, the Frankenstein of filmdom. What’s so new about that? Most of us have known that multi-millionaire movie moguls were for all practical purposes the hybrids of low morals. One wonders, had it been Errol Flynn as the gross producer would we have ever known of his exploits? Come to think of it we did get to know about Flynn. He was exonerated from statutory rape in 1934 by a predominantly female jury. They ogled him all during the trial. The opportunities some people (man or woman) derive from having powerful positions is well known in all walks of life;

as Lord Acton told us “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely!” It has always been thus. If your even a moderate history buff you know this; from Genghis Kahn, to Henry VIII; from Joe Stalin to Bill Clinton, you could name hundreds in every generation including many women; not to mention great saints like Paul and Augustine before they saw the light.

There is no secret about “Man and woman’s inhumanity to man and woman,” nor should there be any surprise about the fact that we’re all sinners in one way or another and to one degree or another. In the “happy” land of relativism, the province of human weakness, law is enacted by elected officials to protect us against those whose sins would hurt us, but as we have seen, quite often, the very people who are given the power to enact the laws are often those who break them. Who will protect us against the gross-sinfulness made constitutional by legal means like the killing of infants in the womb or “merciful” euthanasia, all relatively and perfectly legal? We must hate the sin, but how can we possibly hate the sinner if we have been or are sinners ourselves. That would be hypocrisy, wouldn’t it?

For Weinstein, his consensual-sex plea is within the confines of the law, but if his defense doesn’t hold up, he most certainly will be and should be punished to the extent the law provides. Based on the news stories we read, the punishment will surely fit the crimes. Most sex scandals become media circuses because the average person is curiously drawn to prurient interests, great for viewership and circulation. It’s all a matter of money and power from start to finish, from year to year, from century to century. You cannot expect much humility and charity in a population where “secular-humanism” is slowly replacing spirituality. As of 2014 about a quarter of the American population are non-religious, and growing;

of the other three quarters, there is no way of telling how many sincerely practice their faith, and in America its none of our business. There were days in early protestant America when you could be flogged, dunked or put in the stocks. Earlier, in middle ages Europe you could be burned at the stake or beheaded by the Church or the Reformers over a religious controversy never mind sexual matters. Today we have learned that liberalism has released us from many hard strictures only to enslave us with others. According to a well known Catholic theologian, the ultimate victim of failure to maintain some sort of discipline in our lives is *truth*. “If you are not willing to defend the truth, then truth itself simply becomes a matter of opinion. That is, sadly, where we stand today.”

I think we would all agree that Weinstein is not what one would call normal; yet there are folks who claim that Bill Clinton’s antics like Errol Flynn’s or Richard Burton’s or Bill Cosby’s were not all that bad; really? Most of us are now convinced that a man marrying a man, a woman marrying a woman, changing your birth sex to the opposite sex, killing babies in the womb, taking the life of the hopeless elderly, with their permission of course, is all quite normal, and not only normal but protected by the laws we have made for ourselves. Is this the truth, or is it truth as we see it? Is there objective truth? Most people, in my opinion would answer NO. In time, when truth itself is finally eliminated and we are ruled by the “dictatorship of relativism,” the sequential destruction of civility must follow. Only violence controlled by the perverted-powerful will prevail. Then we will be on the brink of destroying the whole. You may not remember, but we have been there before. Do names like Hitler, Stalin or Hirohito ring a bell.

...*“Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five*

will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” (Luke 12: 49-53)

Do you think this is not happening among us? Can science, the new religion, save us from this? What generation will be ready to pack it off to another planet, maybe Venus, the one we’ve been wishing upon, or Mars, which is seriously being considered? As we write, powerful people with a half-a-brain are signing up for the trip.

Entertainment is a diversionary activity that holds our attention so we get a break from thinking about more important things. It beguiles us, we can become immersed in situations where necessary decisions and personal problems can be put on hold for a while. Some of us are able to entertain ourselves quite well; we write poetry, paint pictures, read fact or fiction, tend to a garden, etc. With these diversions the tools are simple: A pencil and pad or an iMac; Paint, brushes and a blank surface; A book, a comfortable chair or a nearby library; Snippers, a hoe or a rake— easy enough.

Other venues are a little more complicated, they require not only the entertained but entertainers, those who work at entertaining us for a living. Their functions and purposes might be different, but essentially, without getting into minutia, we are their audience, those who have chosen to pay to be entertained. Over two trillion dollars has been spent by us worldwide to be entertained in 2016. (*Billboard*) In America alone you would have to add another 175 billion for sporting events in that same year. (*Fortune*) We are just counting what we pay to be entertained, not what it cost for the entertainers to entertain us. The industry spends trillions of dollars

on the tools of the trade. Technical equipment, sound stages, ball-parks, stadiums, theaters, concert halls, TV stations, etc., not to mention what is paid out in contracts to personnel and suppliers of all kinds, dividends to share-holders, corporate taxes; all involved with our leisure time at a price. No wonder it costs between \$8 to \$12 for a hot dog and a beer at the ball park; around \$9 for a movie ticket; and between \$200 and \$500 for a good seat at a B'way Show. Oh yes, The New York Philharmonic charges between \$98 and \$169 for a seat plus \$15 for a glass of Chardonnay in the lobby bar at Alice Tully Hall. We pony up for it all.

The demise of Harvey Weinstein of late, has put the focus on Hollywood California as the entertainment capitol of both cinema-art and sleaze. It is my understanding that only about one out of every four or five films produced are successful. The print and advertising expenses associated with a film can sometimes rival and even exceed the cost of the production.

“From afar, the movie business looks very glamorous. Celebrities and producers glide down red carpets, clutch their Oscars and vacation in St. Bart’s... just because they can. While there's a lot of money to be made in the film industry, the economics of movie making is far from simple. Something you'll likely hear if you walk through the halls of any movie studio is, “nobody knows anything.” And it's true. The public can be fickle, the industry is in flux, and any movie is an extremely risky investment, even a film starring big names. It's nowhere as straightforward as the early days of cinema when a movie would come out in theaters, make the vast majority of its revenues via ticket sales, and then essentially disappear. Major studios and independent filmmakers alike now spend much of their days looking for new sources of revenue, because ticket sales are no longer the be-all and end-all for films. As the saying goes, nobody knows anything in

Hollywood. The film industry is in flux, and ticket sales alone don't drive revenue. There's merchandising, VOD (Video on Demand) sales, foreign sales and a plethora of other distribution channels that can help filmmakers, producers, and studios turn a profit. In Hollywood, there are no guarantees." (Investopedia Online) Some very dubious accounting methods are usually applied to purposely show losses, similar to other industries so as to manipulate the bottom line; another relative judgement possibly unlawful. In Hollywood, creativity exists on both sides of the camera to turn out a product that entertains us, as well as turn a profit for the studio.

The captains of that industry make a pile of money and amass a huge amount of power depending how successful they become. Let's have a look at the now infamous Mr. Weinstein:

"Bob and Harvey Weinstein were raised in Queens, N.Y., and founded Miramax Pictures in 1979 with profits from their concert promotion business when the brothers were both still in their 20s. The studio is credited with revolutionizing the film business, ushering in the birth of the independent movie scene by distributing critically acclaimed independent hits in the late '80s and early 90's' like 'Sex, Lies, and Videotape,' 'My Left Foot,' 'The Crying Game,' 'Clerks,' and 'Pulp Fiction.'

"Weinstein and his films have earned an amazing 341 Academy Award nominations. That's not possible without a certain amount of genuine talent and discernment. In 1993 the Weinsteins sold Miramax to the Walt Disney Company for an estimated \$60 million to \$70 million and continued to work for the studio. Harvey worked on movies under the Miramax brand, serving as a producer of award-winning films like 'Good Will Hunting,' 'Emma,' 'Shakespeare in Love,' 'The English Patient,' and 'Chicago,' while Bob focused on movies like the 'Scream' and

parody 'Scary Movie' series under the company's sister label, Dimension Films.”

“Bob and Harvey eventually broke away from Miramax and Disney and in 2005 founded the Weinstein Company, winning back-to-back Best Picture Oscars for ‘The King’s Speech’ (2011) and ‘The Artist’ (2012), and expanding into TV with series like ‘Project Runway.’ Despite the company’s successes, a 2015 Forbes report explained that the Weinstein brothers were not among ‘Hollywood’s Richest Power Brokers’ because of several poor business moves made in the preceding years, including doomed investments in fashion labels and a home video distribution firm.”

“On September 26, 2000, Harvey Weinstein was awarded the Honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters (DHL) by the University of Buffalo”

“On April 19, 2004, Weinstein was appointed an honorary Commander of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his contributions to the British film industry. The award is ‘honorary’ because Weinstein is not a citizen of a Commonwealth country. In October 2017, following multiple sexual assault allegations against him, it was reported that steps were being taken to possibly strip Weinstein of his CBE.

On March 2, 2012, Weinstein was made a knight of the French Legion of Honour, in recognition of Miramax’s efforts to increase the presence and popularity of foreign films in the United States. On 15 October 2017, President Emmanuel Macron announced his intention to revoke the award in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations.”

“For decades, movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was one of the richest and most powerful men in Hollywood—a VIP status that

helped insulate him from sexual harassment allegations, according to some of his recent accusers. Weinstein's net worth has been estimated to be between \$240 million and \$300 million. Weinstein has been married twice. In 1987, he married his assistant Eve Chilton. They divorced in 2004. They have three children: Remy (previously Lily) (born 1995), Emma (born 1998), and Ruth (born 2002).”

“In 2007, he married English fashion designer and actress Georgina Chapman. They have a daughter, India Pearl (born 2010), and a son, Dashiell (born 2013). They own multimillion-dollar homes across the country, including a waterfront Connecticut mansion where they hosted a fundraiser for Barack Obama.

Since 2000, Weinstein has donated an estimated \$2.3 million to Democrat politicians and millions more to charitable organizations, further spreading his personal influence. On October 10, 2017, Chapman announced she was leaving Weinstein after the sexual harassment accusations.” (Business Insider and Wikipedia, modified)

After reading the tortured summations of over 40 women spanning many years, it would be difficult to conclude that Weinstein hasn't got some sort of severe, abnormal physiological and psychological problems regarding his sexuality. On the other hand it would also not be wrong to conclude that for many of his accusers the desire for celebrity and all it could bring was not a contributing factor at least with some of the alleged encounters. Especially since Weinstein's modus operandi had been well known for many years. Taking into account the tender age of many of these women you can say that this talented, very rich, very powerful, unattractive, middle aged man, forced himself on their naivety and vulnerability using their career-dreams as a bargaining chip to satisfy his

personal sexual needs. Psychologically speaking, it may have been that very vulnerability that induced Weinstein's salaciousness. Physiologically, it could be that his Endocrine System is fouled up, Nonetheless, brutes and bullies generally prey on weakness in order to dominate. Actually, they are in fact cowards. What ever the reason, the law must be served. The industry he helped make, has disowned him.

In my experience I have never known an actor or actress who wasn't always playing a part. Some have certain natural idiosyncrasies or physiological features that stand out against the competition which makes them more valuable to their studio. The "great" actors and actresses of the late thirties, forties and fifties are examples of that phenomenon, like Bogart, Hepburn, Wayne, Grant, Crawford, Stewart, Davis, etc. They always seemed to be playing themselves. Many stories were even written around their personal characteristics.

The story usually explains the cast of characters. A good actor or actress can sometimes enhance the characterizations with their natural inclinations and actually improve the story. An experienced performer takes on the character with such convincing performances from their real lives, you forget their acting. A good director lives every part with his performers— always with him or her in mind, the intention is to tell the tale in a believable way as the director sees it cooperating with his or her cast. The producers, the directors, the actors and actresses, everybody on the set or location, or behind the scenes, is doing their part, telling the story. Actually they are all tools of the story itself bringing to life the imagination of the author. Fact, fiction or history is reborn, recreated in the art of the cinema for our entertainment.

Every gifted writer knows that truth is stranger (and in many ways more entertaining) than fiction. One gets to know a lot about authors' personality from their work. There is a lot of truth even in fiction. Like every art form, movies are made to enrich our lives or at least should be. When they deviate from human dignity and common decency on the screen or behind the scenes, good-people who persevere, will choose other productions that don't insult them or try to compromise their ethics. In 1969-70 Cinema Verite got it right: "When reality became entertainment everything changed." Reality, particularly raw reality is not art in the truest sense. "Art is the making or doing of something whose purpose is to bring pleasure to people through their enjoyment of what is beautiful and interesting, or things often made for this purpose, such as paintings, drawings, or sculpture," and yes, movies. (Cambridge) Many things may be of "interest," what is "beautiful" though, can be argued by educated philosophers and critics regardless of the fact that most of us arrogantly feel that ours is the only criticism that matters. I suppose cage-fighting could be considered artistic and an Indy car a beautiful machine. I can understand that; but I'll never argue the point.

One thing seems certain: Hi-diddle-dee-dee— There's no business like show business like no business I know,
Everything about it is appealing, everything that traffic will allow...