

Voting for Omelas

a catechistic dialogue

by Kem Regik

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MMXXVI

Kindly Redistribute

Sinfidence (n.)

- *more than trustlessness, a measurement of negative trust; the opposite of confidence*

from Latin: "sine" (without) + "fiducia" (trust)

" Don't do anything illegal

Beware of the eagle

That's got you by the neck

Don't do anything you shouldn't

And you never can say 'aw heck!' "

- *Charles Manson, "Don't Do Anything Illegal" (Lie: The Love and Terror Cult)*

Socrates Nostri Temporis: (Entering into a polling place during an election and preparing to cast a ballot)

Euthyphro Nostri Temporis: (Noticing him enter, and moving to speak to him)

ENT: I thought you didn't believe in electoralism, why are you here casting a ballot?

SNT: Voting alone is not electoralism, you are thinking of a dependence on voting.

ENT: Fair enough, but you *are* weaseling. Have you not decried the running of candidates for office and the electoral support of their campaigns?

SNT: Of course I have.

ENT: Then how can you justify your casting of a ballot? Surely you've given your support, in such an action, to a candidate and their campaign.

SNT: That depends on what you mean by "support".

ENT: An expression of confidence in their ability to perform the tasks of the office, a discernment of competency against other options.

SNT: I could agree this is one component, sure.

ENT: Are there more?

SNT: Well, the premise of a political campaign is usually framed around a set of promises, actions or attitudes defined for the term ahead of time.

ENT: Fair enough, but this makes your hypocrisy worse. You're now not only supporting but *trusting* a candidate.

SNT: I wouldn't say that. My ballot is cast sinfidently, I expect them to betray my trust.

ENT: Why would you hold this expectation?

SNT: Because the moment they do, I am empowered to punish them. Choosing a candidate unlikely to betray my trust is likely to deprive me of delivering that punishment.

ENT: So you purposefully vote for someone you hope does you harm so that you have an excuse to do them harm?

SNT: Of course, as is my civic obligation. Any opportunity to aggress upon the State should be taken.

ENT: Wait, but earlier you said the other component is a discernment of competency. Why not choose an incompetent candidate, who is likely to fail or betray you early in their term, so as to deliver punishment more often?

SNT: My desire to deliver punishment should be understood as preference for quality over quantity. Trust is a thing built over time, so betrayals are much less satisfying when little has been built.

ENT: Satisfying?

SNT: As in, the emotional catharsis of revolutionary retribution. The degree of cruelty accessible to me, ethically, scales with the severity of the betrayal. Early or minor backstabbing might only give me mechanisms for lower-order violences.

ENT: Lower-order?

SNT: Less cruel.

ENT: What do you mean by cruelty?

SNT: Sufferings intentionally in excess.

ENT: This sounds sadistic.

SNT: Yes, that's the point.

ENT: So you are preemptively determined to engage in sadism against the State and its Agents, to the extent that you make electoral decisions that favor the likelihood of your engagement in this sadism? To what possible end?

SNT: The eagerness to engage in this sadism serves as the ultimate check on corruption. The candidate knows, when I cast a ballot in his favor, that I am watching their every move in hopes of spotting the first available justification for punishment. This information motivates them to never give me a justification, so as to preserve their own life.

ENT: But you said you specifically select for those most likely to betray your trust, isn't this a contradiction?

SNT: No, it's where idealpolitick touches realpolitick. By committing ideologically to the assumption that all candidates wish to do me harm, and then that their doing harm unto me gives me justification to harm them retributively, I can influence the cost-benefit analysis for any individual opportunity for corruption.

ENT: What if they never give a justification? We return again to the issue of competency.

SNT: Well, I suppose one must be willing to be incorrect, and that is the tail end of the statement made in the casting of a ballot; "I know you'll betray me, and hope to return that harm ten-fold. Prove me wrong."

ENT: This sounds like gambling and hoping the House wins.

SNT: Of course, except I'm the House, so I always win.

ENT: Except when the candidate *does* betray your trust.

SNT: How so? I already told you that outcome is desirable.

ENT: Regardless of your desire to punish the betrayal, it still causes you real harm. When the House loses here, everyone on the gambling floor loses money.

SNT: Perhaps, but the delivery of punishment in such a case discourages betrayals from future office holders. The next candidate will see a stain of blood on the desk and be less willing to risk their own safety to betray my trust.

ENT: And if it doesn't?

SNT: The accumulation of blood stains on the desk will. Like tree rings, each successive delivery of punishment grows the legitimacy of the Sword of Damocles as wielded rather than merely suspended.

ENT: By you?

SNT: By all of us. Each additional acceptance is a pass across the blade with a whetstone.

ENT: I'm starting to think *you* might be the psychopath, rather than the candidate.

SNT: Perhaps, but better me than them.

ENT: Why is that?

SNT: Because you're not voting for me to be given the power to declare war.

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