

What I Have In Common With John Galt  
A letter by William Missouri Downs

July 6th, 2019

Dear World,

The problem is not Trump. Voting him out, or impeachment will not change this country. The American people are the problem. They are dominated by an oligarchy of multinational corporations that control everything from news to nutrition. Through the internet, these conglomerates stalk, spy on, and control the masses better than any dictator or god could ever hope. We now live under the greatest propaganda machine the World has ever known.

I see no difference between Nazi Art that depicts statuesque idealized Nordics who are happy because they've picked the perfect Nietzschean society and the ExxonMobil banner hanging at my local gas station that depicts a husband and wife joyfully driving down a mountain road towards the sunrise, her chin tilted towards the open window and the pollution-free air, his eyes grinning with confidence because he's picked the right gas (by the way, neither wearing seat belts.) Albert Speer, admitted at the Nuremberg Trials, "Through technical devices like the radio and loudspeaker, eighty million people were deprived of independent thought. It was thereby possible to subject them to the will of one man."

Living in such a controlled world, I feel like an uninvited guest. In Walmart, I take hold of the lubricious handle of the shopping cart and watch what is left of America. Most are broken people who don't know that the gerrymandered system is stacked against them. They don't know that if they combine their votes and money with millions of their neighbors, it still won't count because Citizens United allows a minute number of moneyed to control the process. They don't know that massive climate change is just moments away. Nor do they know that it's already too late. But they continue to wear their flag-covered T-shirts and fly old glory from their pickups, not knowing that the less a government does for the people, the more patriotism it demands.

In everyday life, absurdities surround me. On Sunday morning, I hit pause on Fareed Zakaria; moments later, my corporate-controlled frozen TV screen lights up with ads for Spider-Man, Into The Spider-Verse, Dumbo, and something called Venom - movies that are no better than intellectually devoid supermarket checkout rags. I open my medicine; inside are 30 tiny pills surrounded by 80% dead air - the box is five times larger than it need be so that it won't be lost on the acres of shelves in the fend-for-yourself megastores. I drive down the mountain road towards the sunrise, but I can't enjoy my ExxonMobil gasoline because I must defend myself against desperate redneck F-150s and win-at-all-costs BMWs that cut me off, tailgate and play chicken. Their crazy driving only highlights their desperation. I think they somewhere, deep down, sense that the end is coming.

I've watched my country be dismantled. Ayn Rand inspired oligarchical elites have privatized public assets, eroded consumer protections, and jumbled "freedom" with "laissez-faire." We now have a country where everyone is accountable, but "they" don't provide everyone with the education, connections, or safety factors needed to be accountable.

Perhaps after an intermission, I will overcome my stage fright, but for now, I must hit pause. Like Ayn Rand's John Galt, I must go to my Colorado hideout and watch the world flame out.

"Flee, take refuge in your innermost self, in your work, flee to where you are no more than your own being, not the citizen of a State, not a plaything of this infernal game, where alone your bit of intellect can still function rationally in a world gone mad."

- Stefan Zweig