

## II. The Revelation of Xavier

**Describing in the words of his first true prophet how, when, and where Larry revealed himself, how X-HB was tested, and after much torment and self-doubt accepted Larry as the one true Larry.**

Truth be told, there is really not much to tell. I was reared in a fundamentally irreligious home but imbued by my parents with a strong sense like that of Santayana<sup>36</sup> that the Universe and God were much the same.

I was certainly aware that Existence is passing strange, and I suppose my name itself left me unsatisfied to rely on poetry to replace the religion that replaced the magic as both Frederick Nietzsche and Iris Murdoch wished. So I buried myself in studies both scientific and philosophic. Well into middle-age, the pressures and pleasures of an active academic career left me content to look no further.

As I approached retirement, and being reminded of the old sobriquet that an atheist is nothing more than a seventy year-old agnostic, I began to feel a spiritual itch. At first I put it down to dyspepsia and an over-active bowel--due in large part to my wife's passion for fibre. But all medicaments, potions and more dubious remedies did nothing but increase my

---

<sup>36</sup> "My atheism, like that of Spinoza, is true piety towards the universe and denies only gods fashioned by men in their own image to be servants of their human interests." George Santayana (1863-1952)

yearning for a religion to belief in; one that passed muster for such as Jefferson.<sup>37</sup>

Then one night while dulling my itch with good whiskey and bad television, I heard a voice telling me that there was a God and his name was Larry, and that Bertrand Russell was right, but not completely. Lord Russell, long after giving up Mathematics, had written

*"And if there were a God, I think it very unlikely that He would have such an uneasy vanity as to be offended by those who doubt His existence."*  
**(What is an Agnostic? 1953)**

which sentiment always cheered me up, and also

*"Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing -- fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand."*

**(Why I Am Not A Christian, 1957)**

which sentiment usually cheered me down. But then Larry went on, in a voice that sounded more like George Carlin than Martin Luther.

---

<sup>37</sup> "Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blind-folded fear." (Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826, July 4)

*"What most of you folks don't get is that I'm fully in favour of intelligence and quite against fear."*

I was convinced that I had heard a real voice inside my head. But was it the voice of a Deity? Which Larry?

I started thumbing through the channels on my almost-500-channel universe. In rapid succession I watched Larry Bird sinking foul-shots effortlessly on the ESPN Classic Network; Larry David behaving like a healthy Woody Allen on HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*; a lovelorn Laurence Olivier as Heathcliff<sup>38</sup> on Turner Classic Movies; a B-movie-handsome Laurence Harvey in his best role as the brain-washed SFC Raymond Shaw in the original *Manchurian Candidate* on the History Channel; and so it went.

"Close but no cigar!"<sup>39</sup> For a few minutes I wondered if Larry King could be my new friend and imagined God; wonderfully reassuring and soothing in his bright tie and braces but he was so clearly too-able to switch effortlessly from talking somewhat seriously to Hillary Clinton or Donald Rumsfeld, to nattering with Rosanne Cash and Madonna to be my sort of God.

I turned off the TV and fell into a restless sleep. Over the next few days, I checked the biographies of every "Larry" in *Who's Who in the World*. I googled related strings such as "Who is

---

<sup>38</sup> "What do they know of heaven or hell, Cathy, who know nothing of life?" (Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*).

<sup>39</sup> It is first recorded in print in Sayre and Twist's publishing of the script of the 1935 film version of *Annie Oakley* (Wikipedia).

Larry?" incessantly and found no peace.<sup>40</sup> Lawrence Bragg<sup>41</sup> seemed plausible briefly as did Lawrence Lessig. Less briefly I fancied Lawrence Durrell, author of the Alexandria Quartet.

I tried going cold turkey and re-read most of *Prophets* and too much of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. But every so often *my* Larry would say something so reasonable and yet a-tinge-inspiring that I would restart my hunt.

Perhaps Larry's last name, not first, was Lawrence and he was the explorer (T.E.) of Arabia, or the author (D.H.) of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*<sup>42 43</sup> and *Sons and Lovers*.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps she was Sarah Bates Lawrence after whom the fine American liberal-

---

<sup>40</sup> I found 38 meanings for Lawrence's at Dictionary.com, including the actress Gertrude and four for Laurence.

<sup>41</sup> (Sir William) Lawrence Bragg (1890–1971) was the Australian physicist who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1915 with his father Sir William Henry for the development of x-ray crystallography. Bragg was director of the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge when the structure of DNA was discovered.

<sup>42</sup> Written in 1928, it used the word 'fuck' and as such it was only published in English in 1960 and then banned briefly until found guilty of literary merit! The verdict was soon to be immortalized in Tom Lehrer's 1965 song, *Smut*.

<sup>43</sup> Phillip Larkin's poem "[Annus Mirabilis](#)" begins with a reference to the trial:

*Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(which was rather late for me)  
-Between the end of the "Chatterley" ban  
And The Beatles' first LP.*

<sup>44</sup> "Mrs Morel always said the after-life would hold nothing in store for her husband: he rose from the lower world into purgatory, when he came home from pit, and passed into heaven in the Palmerston Arms." From *Sons and Lovers* (edited out of the 1913 edition, restored in 1992).

arts College is named. Could he be Ernest (E.O.) Lawrence<sup>45</sup>, the inventor of the cyclotron? Mayhap, (s)he was Lauren Bacall, or Stan Laurel; or not a native English speaker: a St-Laurent, a Lavrentiev, or Yuri Zhivago's great love Lara Antipova? All were fascinating people, some I viewed as demigods, but none of them seemed the stuff of God.

One night after a few weeks of such frenzied activity, and frequent berations from my usually tolerant wife, I fell into a deep sleep. Twelve hours later I awoke feeling supremely calm and wonderfully rested. Even better, I knew Larry was the real, the one Larry. I had become a believer! From that time on my belief has never wavered and the following years have been my most productive and most-fulfilled--the word "happiest" is not high in my personal lexicon.

Since that day I have experienced doubt but never conflict nor anxiety. With that firm belief I was transfixed by an equally firm obligation to spread the message of Larryism. Yet I would be remiss if I did not remind you that Larryism is a religion for those who are--or at least aspire to be-- rational.

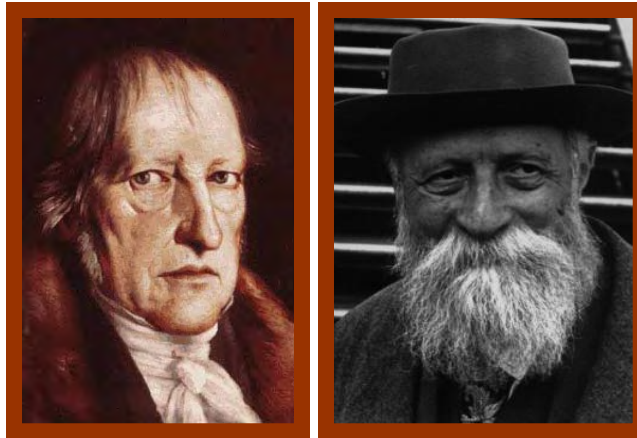
X-HB, Halifax, NS  
August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006

---

<sup>45</sup> The various Lawrence Laboratories in the USA are named after the 1939 Nobel physics prize winner, he lived from 1901-1958.

And so my *Dear Reader* you find in front of you (in some medium) the little pamphlet in which I have recorded for posterity the fundamentals of Larryism. May they serve you as well as they are serving your humble servant and acolyte, Xavier Hegel-Buber.<sup>46</sup> I am saddened, however, by the excessive religious zeal being exhibited by some Larryists. Larry has asked me to remind you that "*The plural of 'anecdote' is not 'evidence'*"<sup>47</sup> and please to keep thinking for yourself.<sup>48</sup>

X-HB, Halifax, NS  
August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011




---

<sup>46</sup> The left-hand picture is of my idealist philosopher and Lutheran namesake **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich** Hegel (1770-1831). The right-hand picture is of my Jewish philosopher and social critic (*Ich und Du*) ancestor **Martin Buber** (1878-1965) for whom I have greater admiration. How I came to share their names is a tale for another day.

<sup>47</sup> Alan L. Leshner, publisher of *Science*, speaking at the Canadian [Federal S&T Forum](#), Oct 2, 2002, Aylmer Quebec.

<sup>48</sup> Gandhi, when asked what he thought about Western civilization, replied "It would be a very good idea." Gandhi's *seven social sins*: "Politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice."