

Mundus Vult Decepi & 2 More

by [Esther Cameron](#) (November 2024)



Moses and the Messengers from Canaan (Giovanni Lanfranco, 1621–24)

Mundus Vult Decepi*

The disciples of lord Moses have been far between and few,
Those stubborn unobliging ones who stick to what is true.
They hear the emperor's new clothes extolled effusively,

But still the emperor's birthday suit is all that they can see.

When nonsense is served up to them they're prone to spit it out

With "Bunk" or "Bosh" or "Balderdash" or similar term of doubt.

With such appalling manners they're unwelcome and no wonder;
They can only dream of Moses, who was backed up by God's thunder

And so contrived to get his point across—but that was then,
And no man knows when or whether such a thing will be again.

But the epigones of Aharon are quite another matter,
For many have caught on that to get on you need but flatter.
There's ne'er a fad so fatuous it cannot draw a train
Of true believers who must surely know their creed is vain—
The Golden Calf fools no one, for the people saw it made,
But still they dance around it with tumultuous accolade
As the deity who delivered them—from reality, of course—
And they always act surprised when it turns out a Trojan horse.

But the real thing would demand they put their egos to one side

And it might offend the bullies, of whom all are petrified;
Which of these considerations weighs the more, it's hard to tell,

But either way, the social mind seems bound up in a spell,
Like the drunk observed beneath the streetlight searching for his key—

"No, I lost it somewheres back, but here it's easier to see.""

*the world wishes to be deceived (Latin)

Paging Isaiah

If I could slow-talk you into hearing
the fibrillation of an incorporeal heart,
then the language you hold would peel off
and you would walk, naked-tongued, through the city.

And if you could be brought to see, through your blindspot,
the reticulation of an incorporeal brain,
you'd fight your way through invisible brambles till
you came to the clearing where the Authentic Voice commands.

And this communication is sealed with the seal
of the Prime Minister of Utopia; also with a kiss
from the eternal Old Maid of the Universe,

who approaches, her car drawn by quaggas and passenger-
pigeons,
who waits amid the ruins of her bridal feast,
whose voluminous locket holds your lost face too.

On a School Performance of *Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

I saw the children of the many nations
Whom history, the scatterer of design,
Had carried to this place, take up their stations
And sing in chorus, braided in a line:
Of Joseph and his brothers and the flow
Of fate that drew them to the Nile's domain
Sang voices out of Laos, Mexico,
And Africa and Europe's blended strain.
Then thought I of that tiny nation still
Clamped to its parcel of ancestral land
Amid a sea of those who wish them ill
And with so few in sight that understand.
What gain have all if these should lose their fight

Whose story still is told to set things right?

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