

THE EQUITY MARKET

by

Willard Thurston

The naïveté of modern journalism is that reporting can be both equitable (fair to all concerned) and accurate (all known facts presented unedited); the shrewdness is that equity (fairness) sells to a multicultural society. I liken the dilemma to the principle of uncertainty in particle physics, in which both the position (read philosophy, culture) and momentum (deeds) of a sub-atomic particle (an individual) cannot be known simultaneously. One must make a choice: to be steeped in the philosophy (if only an attitude) changes fundamentally the deed; to isolate the deed distorts or refracts the philosophy or attitude. (This is not to say all philosophies or attitudes are wise or estimable.) Put another way, fairness in journalism implies that truth is often somewhere in the middle, that neither side in a confrontation is 'right', and that hegemony itself is abnormal, is 'unbalanced'. The requisite and assurance of drama!

Indeed, fairness, for many journalists is accorded only to those who espouse the idea of equality (oneness, wholeness) for all in the first place. For instance, any buoyant, ample, non-plaintive non-indigenous community that believes itself unique, worth preserving, and practices candidly and successfully some form of discrimination for maintenance, is usually considered tainted. The intervening variable is that moral truth is relative — no one culture can identify or sustain it. Yet if such truth is so relative, so too the ability to recognize it and the stature to honour it. How then can one negotiate, and negotiate with what, and who's left to decently abide by the settlement? So far there is no proba-

bility theory for political negotiators to determine the 'probity' of what's going on.

But we can say with some certainty that only the anarchist gives both relativism and negotiation high priorities. Such negotiation is destined to fail because it tends to create more relativism, and in turn, more anarchy. When truth is deemed to 'lie in the middle' (blind to both position and momentum), the current deviant, the one challenging the convention or the status quo, always has the advantage. In the end only he has an ongoing claim to truth: equity, parity, no-special treatment become the onus on all — in the growing 'wronged' categories of humans.

More fluently put, less the purview of modern physics and the muddle of social 'science', accepted or tolerated historic actuality (as close to reality as we come) in journalism, ever reliant on the given or available facts, rarely emerges from the all-purpose veneer of fairness. The constrictions of time and place are simply insurmountable.