



# Desperate Haste

by George Lunt

**"Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises?" ... Henry David Thoreau.**

These lines were written while Thoreau was living in hut at the edge of Walden pond near Concord, Massachusetts, between 1845 and 1847. Even then, this individualist philosopher recognized the problems of society's materialistic value system.

It seems no one listened as we see the beginnings of the twenty first century with the "Corporate Alien" dictate of "desperate haste." Companies go in and out of business, they merge to form bigger companies and exert an ever growing influence on the general public. Products come and go as there seems to be an ever growing need to innovate.

Marketing dictates our entire existence: from politicians and statesmen, whose campaigns cost millions to ordinary citizens whose lives are being entirely led by the commercialism of today's media. The few that have acquired large amounts of wealth are setting the standards for the rest of us so that their wealth would continue to grow at our expense.

It's not enough for one family member to earn a living these days. It seems that we're all hurrying to work and hurrying back home on our workdays. Traffic rush hours are starting earlier and ending later. We're always in a hurry to get somewhere in our cars. Some of us can't just drive; we must chat or conduct business on our cell phones. It seems that many drivers usurp the rights of the lowly pedestrian. The auto seems to have the right of way because it's bigger than the non mechanized walking individual.

Kids don't just go out and play, like people of my generation used to do. Now kids have to be kept active with school sponsored activities, so parents must also drive them back and forth from school, to school and from one activity to another. Everything is so rushed, there seems to be very little time to get to know something really well.

There is no shortage of cars on the streets these days. People only walk far enough to get from their car to the store and from the store to their car. Even if the store is a couple of blocks away, they still take their cars. There are very few pedestrians, and these poor souls must yield the right of way to most drivers or face death or serious injury. Hit and runs are becoming very common. Drivers hit someone because they're in too much of a hurry. They leave the scene because they can't bear to face the financial and psychological burdens imposed by the complexity of modern laws.

When you consider all the news sources, if you did nothing but read for twenty-four hours per day, you still would miss quite a bit of news. Bloggers are encouraged to post every day, so that people wouldn't get bored with your blog. We are living in an age of information overload and "desperate haste."

It seems like everyone is desperate to sell us something. Our emails are bursting with discounts on everything from Viagra to substantial home loans. They promise to make us millionaires for \$49.95. They give us more credit than we could handle so that we remain poor but buy things as if we were rich. They place spyware on our computers to track our buying habits.

The rise of the Personal Computer was, in itself, an exercise in desperate haste. Twenty-seven years ago there was a computer called the Commodore 64 that ran with 64 kilobytes of memory and was able to run basic office functions. Today's computers are being sold with from 1 Gigabyte to 4 Gigabytes of memory and this number is still growing as newer software gets developed. From 64K to 1G, today's memory needs are about 16,000 times greater than that of early machines. The disk storage went from the single-sided 5.25 inch floppy storing 180K to commonly available 1 Terabyte and larger hard disks. Disk storage has increased about 5 million fold in twenty-seven years.

You may claim that this is truly progress, but it is actually too much progress in too short of a time. Much of this progress was done to continually obsolete old equipment and sell new equipment. It also adds to the frustration of people trying to learn new software and just as they get good at it, it becomes obsolete.

Because everything was done in such a hurry, the systems designed are relatively inefficient. They must be constantly patched to keep from being taken over by viruses and spyware. I believe that we could have had extremely efficient systems consisting of an old IBM PC containing an 8086 processor, 640 Kilobytes of memory and 30 Megabytes of storage. But because there is no efficient software written for this type of system, it finds itself in a museum.

The meteoric rise of the popular Social Network, Twitter is another example of our current need to rush through life. We have no time to adequately express our thoughts in meaningful phrases. We only have time for ideas we can text with 140 characters or less, the allowable length of a Twitter post.

It seems the harder we work, the less time we have to stop and smell the roses. The more we rush, the poorer and more frustrated we become. As the world gets more corporate, the pace of our lives will quicken even more.

Today there is no value, no idea, and no purpose that doesn't have its roots in some financial scheme. As long as we worship the corporate alien god we call money, our lives will continue to move with "desperate haste."

Mr. Thoreau had a suggestion for us if we want to challenge today's overly fast paced environment. He said "**If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.**"

**George V. Lunt** is someone who feels the world is getting too corporate. His writings relate to the individual's struggle with big government and big corporations. His website is <http://www.corporate-aliens.com>.

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