

MARK LEE FORD

Freedom



FREEDOM

What is freedom? Are you free?

Mark Lee Ford attempts to answer these questions by using axioms from physical law and existence to derive the concepts of freedom, sovereignty, and money. Having aspects of a treatise, "Freedom" is a practical guide for managing one's life by understanding these concepts and threats to them. It culminates in Ford's take on how life works and life's meaning.

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Books by Mark Lee Ford

A Treatise on Leaders

Mandy & Allie

Everyone

Freedom

My Rubric

MARK LEE FORD

Freedom

EDITED BY

LENNOX SAMUELS

THE MONEO COMPANY

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FREEDOM

You exist.

To do so, you consume and expend energy. Both activities are executed at the cellular and sub-cellular levels. Thought arises at those levels¹ and, from thought, will.² Therefore, your will cannot be split from your existence because your will is your existence.

When you direct your energy at any purpose for a duration of time from your life, you are transmuting the energy and time into a product that is, by the physical law of the conservation of energy, equivalent to the energy and time. The transmutation process is called “labor.” It is a process of your will. Thinking, loving, speaking—all manner of doing things and making things—are your labor. The products of your labor are made from what you once were. The products that you are about to make during the next second are made from what you—your energy, time, and will—are now. The process is irreversible.

¹ What is the border of your existence (e.g., where and when does your body start and end)? The answer to this question is necessary for establishing that your “will” cannot be split from your existence, which in turn is the basis for establishing one’s claim of dominion over the products of one’s labor.

The border of an individual’s existence is fuzzy. Microbes in the human gut, for example, express proteins that influence neurons and, perhaps, some aspect of one’s will. And there are factors outside one’s body that can influence one’s will, such as other people, organisms, and the environment. But the delineation of one person’s will from another has to do with whose resources—whose life’s energy and time—are involved in the transmutation process.

² The faculty by which a person decides on and initiates action

Your labor cannot be separated or “alienated” from your will; it is inalienable.³ But the transmutation process alienates the products from your existence while you are creating them by your labor. You can then trade your products for those of other people to acquire time and energy from their lives. You also can take their products by coercion. And they can do the same to you.

Your life story is a chronicle about how you decide to allocate your existence into products by means of your labor and what you or others do with those products. Indeed, the life stories of each of the 107 billion humans that have ever existed are based on the matter of who had dominion over the products of whose labor. If you have dominion over the products of your labor, then you are said to have “individual sovereignty.”

What, then, is freedom?

The dictionary defines freedom as “the power of self-determination attributed to the will of the individual.” But the definition is impractical because “the power of self-determination” is the same as “the will.” All mentally competent people have the faculty—the will—to decide an action and initiate it. When held at gunpoint, for example, you can

³ In social contract theory, this is incorrectly called a natural right. Natural rights do not depend on the laws or customs of any particular culture or government (as do legal rights) and can be forfeited. Because labor cannot be separated from will due to physical law, an individual cannot forfeit his labor. To resolve the error in social contract theory, one must refine the definition of “natural right” to distinguish between labor and the products of labor in the way that I have done.

choose to obey or resist the gunman. If you resist, he might kill you. The options “resist” or “obey” might not be appealing, but appeal is only a matter of degree; it does not negate the existence of your will, the options available to you, and, therefore, your power to choose an option. “Free will” is redundant because will is intrinsically free.

But the products of labor can be controlled by anyone. A man is free only when all the products of his labor are subject to his will alone. Such a man has dominion—sovereignty—over the products of his labor.

Therefore, only sovereign individuals are free, meaning *free to choose the disposition of the products of one’s labor*.

So are *you* free?

The answer depends on who has dominion over the products of your labor: you or someone else. There also are degrees to which you might have dominion over some of your products, but not all.

Though organisms are several, many of them act jointly—they make communities that are based on an agreement among the members. Organisms create a protocol among themselves that governs their behaviors. Each organism in the community sustains (or even improves) its existence by contributing to and deriving benefits from all other members of the community while not impeding fellow organisms in the community to do likewise. The protocol arises as a consequence of the natural state of existence of each organism in the community and, therefore, the properties of the protocol are congruent with physical law.

Man is one such organism.

Among humans, one such agreement is that a man has dominion over the products of his labor, but he cannot usurp another man's dominion over the products of *his* labor. This agreement is called a "right."⁴ All rights and morality either come from this one or they contradict it. A common (though flawed⁵) way of expressing this is "Only the individual has the right to his labor" or "Only the individual has the right to alienate his labor." Killing someone, for example, would violate this agreement because it eradicates the elements that are necessary for his labor to function: the individual's will, his energy, and his time.

The products of your labor are the results of *everything* to which you have decided to allocate your existence, from loving someone to relieving an itch at the tip your nose. Some are transitory such as thinking. Others are more enduring such as making a piece of pottery. Falling in love might be more like the former; staying in love, the latter.

None of this means that other people value the products of your labor. Nor does it mean that you are obliged to trade the products of your labor. It only means that you can do with them as you please: trade, save, even squander them. You are free to do anything that you want with the products of your labor as long as you do not usurp another man's right to do as he pleases with the products of his labor.

⁴ A legal right

⁵ As justified in an earlier footnote, the precise expressions should be "Only the individual has the right to the products of his labor" and "Only the individual has the right to alienate the products of his labor."

This essay and the others herein will help you to answer “Do you have dominion over the products of your labor?” Your answer sets the meaning of your life.

Often, those who complain of being oppressed are free, those who think they are in power are actually in bondage, and those who profess to help others want control over those in need of help. One needs the brains to see one’s situation for what it is, not for what one wants it to be. Very few people have that ability and, of those, a vanishingly small number has the guts to do something about it. I wrote this book for the people who have both.

Is life short?

Seneca wrote, “Life is long if you know how to use it.”

If I gave you ten times your natural lifespan, it would still be short. If I cut your lifespan by half and showed you how to manage what remained, your life would be more than long enough.

When you trade three tomatoes for one onion or \$20,000 for a car, are you trading goods? It might look that way, but you are trading what was a portion of your existence—some time and energy from your life as directed by your will—for someone else’s in the form of products that each of you has made.

By laboring to make products that are more valuable to others than yourself, then trading them for products of other people’s labor that are more valuable to you than to them, you can accomplish more of what you want in your finite lifespan than you could otherwise do alone. Although each person’s

lifespan is finite, trading the products of your labor for another person's increases the utility of the finite time and energy available in both lives because the will is, for all practical purposes, an infinite resource. Only sovereign people can accomplish this.

To create the person who you want to be in life, you must manage your life correctly and, to do so, you must first understand freedom, sovereignty, money, totalitarianism, and life.

"Sovereignty" means that only you may decide what to do with the products of your labor, which are the physical incarnations of what you decided to do with your life's energy and time according to your will.

"Money" is a way to represent the products of your labor using a currency or other financial instrument, making it easier for you to trade your products with those of other people. Whenever you buy something, you convert your money into the products of other people's labor, just as they take time and energy from your life when they convert money in their possession into the products of your labor. Business is the act of two or more parties bargaining for the products of each other's labor that they perceive are more valuable than their own. Time—our life's time—is the currency of our lives.

"Totalitarianism" has to do with people who want dominion over all the products of your labor. They operate by trickery and coercion. Protect yourself by neutralizing totalitarians early. Your freedom is yours to lose.

"Life" means deciding how to direct your labor to imbue meaning into your existence.

SOVEREIGNTY

If you have dominion over the products of your labor, then you are a sovereign person.

One's desire for individual sovereignty comes by way of an impetus that is common to all organisms. Every man seeks to reduce his entropy, which manifests itself in his behavior to maximize his own economic interest.

The human cell has a natural state of existence: it consumes and spends energy and has will. The cell directs its energy at some purpose (e.g., to read and write the instruction guides in its genes, make proteins, and do all the other jobs that a cell must do) during some time from its life. This is labor, albeit at the cellular level, but labor nevertheless.

The cell is also a social organism. It forms communities⁶ with fellow cells to maximize its survivability by trading the products of its labor with them. The relationships between the cells are cooperative and competitive, but not predatory.

To do their jobs, each cell needs the energy and time from other cells that have been transmuted into products by cellular labor. Just as we use currency as a physical means to store and trade the products of our labor, cells have a currency for storing and trading the products of their labor. Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is the currency of intercellular commerce. Each molecule

⁶ Just as man's communities take the forms of towns, cities, states, and countries, cells' communities, for example, take the forms of tissues, organs, and systems.

of ATP carries a tiny packet of energy, which is used in every aspect of a cell's work.

The cell “buys” supplies and services from other cells and “sells” to other cells the supplies and services it manufactures. To power the manufacture of just one medium-size protein, for example, the cell uses the energy contained within approximately 2,000 ATP molecules; millions of ATP molecules per second power everything on which the cell labors. Though the human body contains approximately 250 grams of ATP at any given time, all of its cells trade the body's weight in ATP molecules every day. The cell can even accumulate energy by using its membranes as batteries. All of these activities are commerce and wealth on the cellular level.

The cell is the most basic unit that we know that has dominion over the products of its labor—sovereignty. In physics terms, the cell seeks to lower its entropy, as with humans and all other organisms. In economics terms, the cell seeks to maximize its own economic interest in the cellular economy. And in doing so, tissues, organs, and systems rise to their maximum potentials of prosperity, such as health, productivity, and longevity.

Sovereignty at the cellular level must be protected for cells to survive and prosper. In other words, the cells must be protected from each other (e.g., from not taking what does not belong to them), and their communities likewise must be protected from each other. Cancer is an example of what arises when the protection fails. Though cancer cells respect each others' sovereignties in the way of normal cells, they usurp normal cells' sovereignties.

Among cells, cellular sovereignty is sacrosanct. The governance to ensure sovereignty is powerful, but strictly limited to protecting against the usurpation of sovereignty between individual cells and between cellular communities. It ultimately protects the entire body from existential threats (e.g., a bacterium, an attacking animal, or another human).

At the cellular level, the governance is enforced, for example, by cells of the immune system that neutralize miscreant cells.⁷ As with all other cells, the cellular enforcers trade their products with other cells—using ATP as currency—during the execution of their duties. The enforcers never dictate to other cells how to do their jobs or commandeer their jobs.

For the governance to work correctly, it is kept close to the constituents—the individual cells—where most threats against a human are encountered. A man cannot dictate to any given cell or cells in his body what is best for them to perform their jobs. Nor can he interfere in transactions between the cells as they trade with each other in the ATP economy at the cellular level. This governance configuration preserves individual sovereignties of cells, which enables the entire body to survive.

What happens when one attempts to compromise the cellular governance to favor one part of the body over another? A trade-off occurs, always at the expense of another part, which is difficult to detect, if not impossible. Is there any drug or therapy without a side-effect? Does satiating oneself by overeating not have consequences?

⁷ At the level of the entire body, the individual's consciousness manages the governance, such as the "fight or flight" response or by using one's intellect to fight cancer.

Let's turn our attention from the cellular scale to the human scale.

As with the cell, man survives in communities. To do so, the governance in human communities protects against the usurpation of sovereignty between people and between communities. It also enforces the rules of governance impartially as a referee. Members of a community achieve these governance objectives by way of the mechanism of government.⁸ Any other involvement of the government in the affairs of individuals requires the usurpation of individual sovereignty, which compromises man's ability to reduce his entropy. The outcome: his potential for survival will always be suboptimal than if he is free to choose.

The dealings between people in their private capacities are no less complicated than those between the cells inside people. So why would some people think that they have special knowledge and abilities that justify them to usurp their fellow man's sovereignty? Such people behave as do cancer cells; they violate another's sovereignty by force and for their own agenda. The outcomes are, tragically, the same as with cancer.

I am hard-pressed to think of a single case of such interference existing among normal cells. Cell A does not commandeer ATP from Cell B to give it to Cell C while keeping some ATP for itself in the process.

Yet, this is what governments do when they levy taxes. Government representatives intrude on private transactions

⁸ As with cells of the immune system, the government is a group of individual humans, not an omniscient entity.

between other individuals to usurp what is being traded (i.e., the products of the individuals' labor). The intruders justify themselves in two ways: the belief (or pretense) that they are helping the individuals or, more commonly, the belief (or pretense) that they are serving the greater good of all the members in the community.

Therefore, avoid being drawn into arguments about differences in economic systems, such as capitalism versus collectivism. These words obscure the supreme importance of what is being traded (a portion of one's existence) and who decides the conditions of the trade (the individual or someone else). There is one natural system arising from the natural state of existence of all organisms: individual sovereignty. All other economic "systems" are degrees of negation of the one natural system. Communism, socialism, democratic socialism, pure democracy, and fascism are all variations on the theme of negation. There is no spectrum from left to right. All are equivalent in their *modus operandi*: the usurpation of individual sovereignty.

These days, public health officials in Western democracies are enamored of "collective values of society," using the notion to usurp individual sovereignty and impose measures that they claim are for the good of all members of a community. They never talk about helping a specific person with a name and face, but only about helping faceless populations based on anonymous population data.

First, society does not have values,⁹ unless there is some kind of societal sentience that is unknown to us in the same way that cells in our bodies are unaware of our sentience. Not to say that such sentience does not exist, but if it does, it is of no practical use today because we know nothing about it and are not able to ask it “What are your values?” It is analogous to a small group of cells in your appendix asking you, “What are your values?”

Second, it is undeniable that individuals *do* have values, consciousness, and sentience.

The burden of proof of any measure is on the shoulders of those advocating the measure, not on the person from whom they want to usurp sovereignty to implement the measure. Even if it could be proven that a measure is in an individual’s interest, the final decider is the individual, not the public health official, who must have the self-discipline not to violate the individual’s sovereignty.

⁹ One can prove that only individuals—not collectives—can have values. “Value” is one’s judgment (i.e., decision) of what is important in life. “Share” is a part or portion of a larger amount that is divided among people. “Collective” relates to all the members of a group. Because “value” is a decision, it is of man’s will. A man cannot divide or alienate his will, nor can he aggregate it with other people’s wills. Therefore, a “value” is indivisible and inalienable, and likewise cannot be aggregated. To wit, a group of people cannot have “shared will” and, therefore, also cannot have “shared values.”

The error arises when people confuse “having a thing in common” with a “shared thing.” A group of individuals can have a value in common, but that is not a “common value.” Values exist only unto the person. One man’s values might very well be the same as that of another, but they are not “shared values.”

There is no greater act of violence, depravity, and narcissism than for one man to usurp another's sovereignty. Cancer cells do it to normal cells all the time. But even a cancer cell does not do it to his brother.

MONEY

Money entwines your life with the rest of humanity's lives—past, present, and future.

It coils itself just as tightly around those who fight to amass it as those who struggle to shun it. Even when we do not spend money, we are still using it, often unwittingly. To cleanse oneself of money, one would have to either abandon the rest of humanity or require humanity itself to reject its very nature.

When it comes to money, we behave rationally one moment and insanely the next. We dream, hope, and fret about it. We agonize about how to get it fast while laboring over it for years. To squeeze money from our fellow man, we cajole, deceive, and lie. And when that does not work, we pray or kill for it, or both. We are miserly and magnanimous in the same breath. We build and demolish nations, empires, and civilizations with and for money.

Despite the pervasiveness of money in our lives, are any of us its master?

We are most familiar with physical money (in its myriad incarnations: cold cash, stocks, bonds, goods and services, and so forth), and with its attendant concepts such as finance, economics, and accounting. Nevertheless, we mystify money, at once trivializing and demonizing it with well-intentioned maxims and parables, many of which are false, if not delusional. "The love of money is the root of all evil." "It is better to give than to receive." Evidence all around us screams to the contrary.

Religion admonishes us about our relationship with the material world—in short, our attachment to money. How many people have believed for millennia that money is an evil, dirty thing? When one man becomes rich, the platitude goes, another man suffers. Therefore, for the good of our souls and the greater good of humanity, we should all give up our possessions and take up an ascetic way of life to build riches for some plane of existence that follows death.

We try to deny money's supreme importance in our lives, usually when things do not go our way. We blame greed or money itself when we fail with money, whether it is on the scale of a man not paying his debts or billions of people living in destitution, mired in ignorance, disease, strife, and all manner of suffering. Of course, we never think of ourselves as greedy, or at least as not as greedy as the next guy.

Yet, religion's authors and adherents, and others who want to usurp individual sovereignty to organize society along their personal utopian lines, are flummoxed by money. What they dismissively and incorrectly call greed is man's instinct to survive, the same instinct that impels all creatures to reach desperately for the last gasp of breath at the moment of death. The instinct is neither moral nor immoral, but merely the universe at work.

What, then, is money?

We have yet to devise a way to stop time, but money is a way to bottle time, at least temporarily, allowing time to be used later.

Only one form of time can be bottled with money: time from a human's life. Money is a way to store an amount of time

and energy from your life in the form of the products of your labor¹⁰ for conversion into the products of someone else's labor for the benefit of yourself (or another person), later. Thus, we cannot pay ourselves with money for our own labor, which is why inflation occurs when politicians print money to buy things. The money they print is not equivalent to the products of anyone's labor, the actual time and energy from someone's life.

Why do we need money?

For any good that we want, we must have the expertise, energy, and time to create it by the transmutation process of our labor. Consider, for example, producing something as seemingly simple as an onion. One could learn how to grow the onion, design and make all the equipment to grow it and, even before that, mine and process all the raw materials to make the equipment. When all that is accomplished, one could then grow and harvest the onion. But it would take centuries for one person to do all of this alone.

Each of us, however, has only eight decades or so to live. We spend approximately one-quarter of our lifetime maturing into

¹⁰ When you direct your energy at any purpose for a duration of time from your life, you are transmuting the energy and time into a product that is, by the physical law of the conservation of energy, equivalent to the energy and time. The transmutation process is called "labor." It is a process of your will. Thinking, loving, speaking—all manner of doing things and making things—are your labor.

As for the products of your labor, energy and time from your life are consumed and transmuted into the products. They are a portion of what you once were because the products you are about to make during the next second are made from what you are now. The process is irreversible.

adulthood and battling illness and old age. Half of the remaining three-quarters is spent sleeping or at rest. This leaves approximately three-eighths of all the time that we have in our lives to make things as fully functional adults.

Because we cannot stop time or lengthen our lives indefinitely, the only other avenue available to us is to acquire time from the life of someone else to make what we desire during our own finite lifetimes. Not only can we trade, accumulate, and relinquish time from our lives for that of our contemporaries, we can do so with time from the lives of people who have lived before us. Future generations can do the same with time from our lives.

In other words, time is the currency of our lives.

But to accomplish all these things with time, two other ingredients are needed: our energy and our will to direct the energy at some purpose during some time from our lives. The process of doing this is called labor, and it results in a product that is equivalent to the time and energy from our lives that we used in the product's creation.

We use money to represent the products of our labor, a way to symbolically store time and energy from our lives. You can convert the money in your possession into the products of other people's labor, using time and energy from their lives for the good or service that they have made for you, just as they can convert money in their possession to use time and energy from your life when you labor for them.

Once we see beyond the physical form of money, the gamut of man's behavior vis-à-vis money is easier to understand: it is the instinct to survive and reproduce. On your deathbed, what

would you do to buy an extra year, a day, or even a second more of life? Some people would fight for it or kill for it, while others would selflessly give their time and energy to their fellow man because of compassion. Since we are mortal, we try to use time from other's lives to increase the efficiency of what we can do in our lives and to achieve what we cannot accomplish alone.

We have many problems with money as a way to store time and energy from our lives.

Think of people marooned on a deserted island with a bottle of water. They might drink when they should be rationing, or drink more than their share when others' backs are turned. Some people are better at collecting more water than others, while some feel entitled to a bigger ration or even to the ration of another. Their desire for the water increases in proportion to their anticipation of it quenching their thirst instead of the exact, minimum quantity that is needed to keep them alive. Some might give their ration to others because of love, pity, guilt, desperation, inspiration, or fear, whereas others might commandeer rations for the same irrational reasons. The castaways might argue over who should be the custodian of the bottle and how rations should be decided. The bottle itself might have problems. It might leak or shatter easily. If it does not have a cork, the water might evaporate even when no one is drinking; fewer people's thirst can be quenched tomorrow than today.

Analogous to the case of the water bottle, money as a bottle of time and energy from a man's life has similar shortcomings:

1. *Money is a promise.* It obliges us to commit some time and energy from our lives to do something for another person, but the fulfillment of the obligation is only as strong as our word;
2. *People work with different efficiencies.* Even if the difference is a mere nanosecond, it will accrue and eventually result in noticeable differences in wealth among people and nations; and
3. *We are irrational.* We cannot precisely calculate the time, energy, and efficiency that a person uses from his life to make a good. The farther a buyer is from the creation of a good, and all the other goods and services that are needed to make it, the farther away from reality is his evaluation of the good's value. We substitute the irrationality of sensory and emotional cues for this lack of information.

Why do we want more money?

The universe as a whole naturally tends towards disorder.¹¹ All organisms, however, increase order “locally” (inside each one) to survive long enough to reproduce. In doing so, they

¹¹ The second law of thermodynamics states that the entropy (a measure of disorder) of a closed system will never decrease. As Sir Arthur Eddington put it, “The law that entropy always increases holds, I think, the supreme position among the laws of Nature.” Life does not violate the second law, but physicists have been stumped by why life should arise in the first place. Recently, Professor Jeremy England has proposed that life exists because the law of increasing entropy drives matter to acquire lifelike physical properties. Matter restructures itself to dissipate increasingly more energy.

minimize the expenditure of their own time and energy while maximizing their use of energy from other organisms and the environment. This self-interest appears to be the most efficient way for each organism to create the local order in the universe necessary for life to arise and grow. Man is no different. He seeks to lower his entropy by maximizing his use of the time and energy of other organisms (including his fellow man's) while minimizing the expenditure of his own. Because money is a way to store and trade time and energy from our lives, man treats it as he does any other source of time and energy.

As such, money might be the most precious of all inventions. Not only has money improved our success at survivability and reproducibility, it has enabled us to go beyond them. When people trade, they are bargaining for the products of other parties' labor that they perceive are more valuable than their own.¹² It is the only way that we have to improve the general prosperity of mankind by increasing the size of the pie through increasing the efficiency of our use of the finite time and energy in our lives. In doing so, we have been improving our health and lengthening our lifespan, giving us even more time and energy to use in our lives.

Humans have been able to increase their overall prosperity (e.g., longevity, mitigation of risk from natural forces, health) through the power of intellect rather than biological evolutionary means alone. Money as a proxy for storing and using time and energy makes this possible. Nature is replete

¹² My definition of business

with these economies, such as cells using and trading adenosine triphosphate (ATP) among themselves.

Money might be the seed of civilizations.

To understand this, imagine that I buy a good from you with money, and then you burn the money. What has happened? Have we lost merely paper? No! An equivalent amount of your life's time and energy, transmuted into products using your labor, will have to be used to recreate the same product to sell again. You have lost time and energy from your life. But there is another cost. The progress of your community is impeded because of the additional cost of having to recreate something. There is an opportunity cost. You could have used that time and energy to create something better to advance your community.

Likewise, if people do not use the proxy fairly (e.g., by printing or stealing money) then everyone's prosperity suffers. The efficiency of storing time and energy is compromised. Bubbles, booms, busts, recessions, and the like are inefficiencies caused by our irrational decisions, the shortcomings of money, and the usurpation of individual sovereignty.

Time—our life's time—is the currency of our lives. Your wise investment of your time and energy pays manifold returns on the balance sheet of life.

TOTALITARIANISM

You are the greatest risk to your freedom.

Your sovereignty entitles you to the rewards of the products of your labor because you are free to do as you please with the products. But risks come with the rewards—risks to your products, sovereignty, and existence. You can try to mitigate the risks by yourself or pay someone to do it for you, in which case the only way to pay is to use your sovereignty as currency. In other words, you can relinquish a portion of your sovereignty to other people in exchange for their services of safety to protect whatever remains of your sovereignty.

In any transaction, buyers and sellers hold each other accountable. A greengrocer who passes off a wormy apple might give a refund or replace the apple when confronted by an angry buyer. If the greengrocer does not make amends, the buyer might be out of pocket so services of safety can be useful when someone does not keep his end of a deal.

How so?

Suppose the buyer and seller of the apple buy services of safety from all other members of their community; that is, from the community's government. In that case, there is an opportunity to enforce evenly the terms of the agreements between all buyers and sellers in the community in their private transactions.

As with the apple, buying and selling services of safety is also a transaction. There are many examples. Courts of law protect the sovereignties of people standing before the court,

meting out punishments to criminals and awarding damages to victims. Parents protect their young children by limiting their sovereignty in exchange for food, shelter, love, and so on. The courts and parents take payment only in the currency of sovereignty.

But such services have limitations. Using one's sovereignty as currency is different from using the products of one's labor as currency. The government's terms are tough: lifetime subscriptions, non-refundable, and non-cancellable.¹³ If someone complains about the services, the government might demand more of everyone's sovereignties to pay for the improvements. Moreover, members must relinquish to the government some or all of their right to use force, thereby giving the government a monopoly on the use of force over the members.

The services can also be corrupted. When the buyer of the wormy apple complains, representatives of the government might use their monopoly on the use of force to make the greengrocer replace the one wormy apple with ten bushels of good apples, while taking a cut for themselves in the process. Even worse, if the government happens to be dominated by totalitarians, it will steadily ratchet up the price of the services of safety until the members of the community have no sovereignty left.

What, then, is a totalitarian?

¹³ Most children merely outgrow the services of safety that are provided by their parents.

Not all sellers of services of safety are totalitarians, but all totalitarians are sellers of such services. Totalitarians are either ideologues or con artists. The totalitarian ideologue understands criticism, but not risk. The totalitarian con artist understands both. And each type survives by selling services of safety and accepting payment only in the currency of sovereignty.

Totalitarian ideologues do not understand risk because they lack logical reasoning abilities and, therefore, do not have a sense of proportion. They fear everything that can happen *will* happen so they end up peddling a bogus solution to protect against a fictitious threat, both of which are concocted by totalitarian con artists. Ideologues are convinced of the absolute correctness of their opinions because they believe they are more virtuous than everyone else, including the people they purport to help. Even people who can see through the con might cooperate; nobody wants to be fingered for being less than virtuous in an atmosphere of ideological hysteria. Whatever the reason, someone is always willing to go along with an ideologue, relinquishing his sovereignty in exchange for protection.

Ideologues drive themselves to fanaticism because they fear criticism more than the fictitious threat itself. They start by asking people to relinquish some sovereignty as payment for the protection. Then they demand it. Eventually, they usurp sovereignty capriciously, destroying anyone who cannot be recruited as a fellow ideologue, believing that absolute control eliminates the threat and, therefore, eliminates criticism. Meanwhile, ideologues are blind to their own hypocrisy. A few achieve a measure of introspection if their blinding zeal burns

out. Only then can they see the destruction they have wrought on their fellow man. Those few become cynics, that is, if they survive to escape the monster that they helped to create.

The totalitarian con artists are shrewd manipulators who thoroughly understand risk and, therefore, can orchestrate the entire scam. They manufacture a fictitious threat and an ideology to go with it so as to whip sovereign individuals into a fear-stricken frenzy, inducing them to relinquish their sovereignty as payment for protection. Whereas totalitarian ideologues are clumsy and imitative, totalitarian con artists are deft and creative. Ideologues vastly outnumber con artists; the latter rise on waves of the former. Con artists know that ideologues can become cynics so con artists destroy ideologues after having used them. After the victims have relinquished a sufficient amount of their sovereignties, totalitarians—be they ideologues or con artists—snatch the rest by force.

I have nothing to say about totalitarians that operate on the scale of a Hitler, Stalin, or Mao that has not already been said by others. Here, I expand the definition of the totalitarian to include anyone who wants dominion over all the products of a man's labor, even if the scale of the usurpation is limited to one person.

How can you protect your freedom?

As with cancer, so it is with totalitarians: early detection provides the best chance for survival. Totalitarians germinate under your nose. But your accuracy of detection depends on your ability to see people as they are, not as you want to see them, and your courage to act on what you might find. Do not look for the obvious. By the time you spot the next Hitler,

Stalin, or Mao—the Stage IV cancers—you will have already lost everything. Strangers, acquaintances, friends, and even family can usurp your sovereignty. The cult leader. The manipulative co-worker. The bombastic boss. The overly zealous professor. The priest. The abusive parent, spouse, or child. Many people do not even realize that usurpation is happening to them. Most, however, fully know when they are usurping.

Start your search by looking in the mirror.

State and the currency of sovereignty

As with “money,” most people do not understand “state” and “government.” Understand these concepts to understand how totalitarians operate. Only then can you rid yourself of totalitarians, including the many small-fry that can make everyday life miserable.

When people form a community, they are executing a transaction with one another. Their respective sovereignties—their existences—are the currency of the transaction. Each man buys benefits from everyone else by relinquishing a portion of his sovereignty to an abstract entity called a community or “state.” In this way, the community is said to have sovereignty. As a practical matter, however, the members of the community must delegate a group of individuals from the community to exercise the community’s sovereignty. The group is called a “government,” which has the political authority to oversee the rules for the transaction and a monopoly on physical force to enforce the rules.

The premise of doing this is to create services of safety: to protect one member of the community from harm by another, to protect the entire community from harm by another community, and to apply the rules for all members of the community evenly. Each member uses a portion of his sovereignty as currency to pay for the protection.

To execute the transaction, members of the community must agree with one another to establish the rules about “Who decides who gets what and at what price?”. Central to the agreement is: (i) the rules to admit, eject, and punish members; (ii) the amount of sovereignty that each member must relinquish to pay for benefits from the community; (iii) the benefits that each member should receive; (iv) the delegation of representatives of the members to the government (e.g., by election, heredity); and (v) the representatives’ powers (e.g., limited, autocratic). The agreement and the transaction that it governs form the basis of all communities, not just countries and provinces, but also tribes, towns, companies, churches, clubs, and even families.

Keep straight the difference between the tangible and abstract parts of the agreement.

Each man’s will, the products of his labor, and his dominion over the products of his labor (i.e., his sovereignty) are tangible. The state and government do not have will and, therefore, cannot make decisions, have values, incur costs, or pay benefits. Instead, the members of the community must select representatives, and each member must relinquish a portion of his sovereignty to the representatives to make decisions on his behalf. The relinquishment of sovereignty by

each member and the receipt of it by all the representatives is possible only by means of the abstract devices of state and government.

“Abstract” does not mean useless. Because the state is the proxy for all members of the community, people can join or quit the community (e.g., by birth, death, immigration, or emigration) without having to put all members through the trouble of renegotiating the terms of the agreement among all parties every time. Con artists, however, fabricate logical fallacies based on the abstract devices—“society’s values,” “social justice,” and “social responsibility”—to trick people into relinquishing their sovereignties, thereby turning them into ideologues.

For the agreement to work, all of its definitions, rules, tangible parts, and abstract parts have to be squared with the manifestation of physical law in humans (e.g., existence, will, labor) and human behavior. Because of the second law of thermodynamics, man always economizes his expenditure of labor while maximizing the returns from his labor. In any community, therefore, each member will maximize the products of labor that he takes from other members of the community while minimizing his payment to the other members from the products of his labor. Greed, fairness, morality, and so forth, are irrelevant; the behavior is an outcome of physical law. Each member will, for example, encourage representatives in the government to be favorable to his self-interest.

Agreements can come in different forms, such as a messy entanglement of ancient religious provisions and modern secular ones, or even rules that parents establish for their

families. Agreements can be non-verbal, verbal, written, or a combination thereof. If the agreement is not congruent with the manifestation of physical law in humans, the community will be inherently unstable and it will eventually collapse. Totalitarian “agreements”¹⁴ are unstable because totalitarians thrive on concocting fictitious threats to sell a bogus solution about protection of sovereign individuals.

Hitler, for example, accused Jews of being an existential threat to Germans to sell his bogus solution of National Socialism, his services of safety or protection by way of the state. Even though the threat was fictitious, he made it real in the minds of most German citizens so they voluntarily paid for the solution with part of their individual sovereignties. After they had spent (i.e., relinquished) a sufficient amount, Hitler snatched the rest by force. Their version of the agreement led to a global war with other states, the eradication of two-thirds of the Jewish population in Europe, the ruination of Germany, and death and destruction elsewhere throughout the world.

Monarchs

A monarch is a totalitarian who persuades a sufficient number of superstitious members of a community that a supernatural deity (or deities) has influence over their lives and that the deity has granted the state’s political authority to the monarch to act on the deity’s behalf. The grant is a bogus solution wrapped in

¹⁴ There is no political spectrum from “left” to “right.” There are only degrees of inconsistency with physical law. Marxists and fascists are the same.

the false promise (or threat, depending on one's viewpoint) of life after death. What believers want the most (e.g., immortality, paradise, nirvana, reincarnation) contains what they think threatens them the most (punishment). The threat and solution are almost the same—the totalitarian con artist's masterwork.

Grandiose when mature, new monarchies originate from small groups—loose associations, tribes, clans, and so on. As with any community, each member relinquishes a portion of his sovereignty to the state in return for benefits from all the other members. They delegate representatives to take on the job of governance. The totalitarian, however, convinces a sufficient number of members that he represents their god or is their god, then uses the accordant political authority to usurp the sovereignties of everyone in the community. His sleight of hand is an old fraud known as “the divine right of kings.” And do not be fooled by the argument, “So and so is not really a god. He is just a symbol.” If the totalitarian acts in the manner of a god and people treat him as one, he has perpetrated the fraud.

In older monarchies, decades or centuries of aggrandizement obscure the banality of their origins. The divine right of kings becomes axiomatic in the minds of the members of the community, not necessarily all of them, but a sufficient number, to sustain the fraud and the usurpation of sovereignty by coercion.

Emperor, king, pope, sultan, maharaja, tzar, shah, caesar, pharaoh, mullah, priest, rama, supreme leader, sapa inca, spiritual leader—these, and thousands of more titles, all mean “monarch.”

Why are some people willing to believe the totalitarian's story to the point of relinquishing their sovereignties?

Superstition is cowardice, fear, and intellectual laziness. Cowards know that death is final. It petrifies them. Life does, too. The con artist or ideologue promises to the coward what he wants most: the benefit of immortality after death at the cost of his sovereignty—his existence—today. So the coward takes comfort in the totalitarian's promise of heaven, paradise, reincarnation, or other fanciful fictions of this kind, a "second chance" that excuses him for not sorting out his life today. The coward does not buy the benefit; he buys only the promise of a benefit that he has convinced himself will be honored after he dies. And he uses the currency of his sovereignty to pay the totalitarian's bill. Whenever people believe in a deity or deities, they want an agent of the real world—a living human being—to be an intercessor to (or representative of) their imaginary supernatural world. The monarch's role in this ancient and absurd play is that of the agent.

Monarchs can be duped into believing the fraud, too.

The entourage of aristocrats, clergy, and other court figures isolate the monarch from the general population, thereby hiding from both parties the truth behind the divine right of kings. The clergy restrict the monarch to religious rites and rituals, brainwashing him to believe in his divinity. The entourage selectively breeds heirs from young monarchs—boys, really—and women from the entourage, further tightening the entourage's grip. In the public foreground, the monarchs are enthroned as boys and abdicate in their teens or twenties to the next boy in line. Regents behind the throne are the real power.

The clergy's job is to maintain the story of the fraud so as to give the regent the political authority over the state—the members of the community.

Like so, the divine right of kings hardens into an axiom in the minds of a sufficient number of members of the community, and is passed on as a virus of the mind to subsequent generations. The trick is effective, which is why it has been used for millennia to establish, sustain, and expand kingdoms, empires, and dynasties.

The Intelligentsia

The intelligentsia is the “they” in the everyman's half-pleas, half-criticisms of the kind “Why don't *they* do something about (such and such)?” “Why don't *they* find a cure for cancer?” “Why don't *they* fix the school system?” “Why don't *they* make healthcare free?”

But the everyman can never land a punch because he howls his petition into the air as if the omniscient, omnipotent entity called “they” can hear and do something on his behalf. “They” is faceless and, therefore, unaccountable to the proletariat. Unfortunately, this situation allows totalitarians among the intelligentsia to usurp sovereignties with abandon. In the 20th and 21st Centuries, totalitarians from the intelligentsia have perpetrated a fraud similar to the “divine right of kings” by duping victims into believing that the victims are intellectually and morally inferior to “they”—the intelligentsia.

Why do totalitarians flourish among the intelligentsia?

In general, gifted children desire the world to be logical and fair, and are frustrated with the mundane or repetitious. Praised incessantly from childhood for being smarter than other children, some of them end up believing it by the time they leave university. Worse, they dare to believe that they are morally superior to those whom they call uneducated.

Formal education finishes the job by eradicating the child's powers of critical thinking and discernment. Schopenhauer wrote:

...with artificial education¹⁵, the head is crammed full of concepts by being lectured and taught and through reading, before there is yet any extended acquaintance with the world of intuitive perception. Experience is then supposed subsequently to furnish the intuitive perceptions to all those concepts; but until then, the latter are falsely applied and accordingly people and things are judged from the wrong point of view, seen in the wrong light, and treated in the wrong way. In this manner, education produces distorted and biased minds, which is the reason why in our youth, after much learning and reading, we enter the world partly as simpletons and partly as cranks, and then behave nervously at one moment and rashly at another. For our minds are full of concepts which we now attempt to apply, but almost invariably introduce in an ill-judged and absurd way. This is the consequence of that

¹⁵ Schopenhauer contrasts artificial education with natural education (i.e., experience, rather than theory): "*concepts* should arise through abstraction from *intuitive perceptions*, and hence the latter should exist before the former."

*ὑστερον πρότερον*¹⁶ whereby we obtain first of all concepts and last of all intuitive perceptions, in direct opposition to the natural course of our mental development. For instead of developing in the child the capacity to discern, judge, and think for himself, teachers are merely concerned to cram his head full of the ready-made ideas of others. A long experience has then to correct all those judgements which have resulted from a false application of concepts. Seldom is this entirely successful; and thus very few scholars have the ordinary common sense that is frequently found among the quite illiterate.

Molded by parents, teachers, and professors, some of these children can mature into monsters who inflict suffering on others. Jouvenel postulated that intellectuals abhor having to produce something to satisfy the needs of others. Hayek observed that intellectuals think that everything has to be designed by human reason.

Intellectuals cannot comprehend that a positive outcome for the largest number of people can only come by way of the messy, unpredictable, unfathomable, and uncontrollable natural world of free choice. Such a world is the antithesis of their abstract concoctions of centrally planned systems that they want to impose on others by force. The same behaviors that made them “gifted” in the first place have a trade-off: intolerance of what they perceive as the illogic and unfairness of outcomes from individuals’ free choices. Impelled by

¹⁶ Confusion of the earlier with the later (“putting the cart before the horse”)

intolerance, they irrationally escalate their commitment to usurp more sovereignty in a futile attempt to control the uncontrollable, thereby moving deeper into totalitarianism.

Intellectuals with a totalitarian bent among the intelligentsia are the so-called educated who profess to help society, but in their hearts want to control the lower classes they despise. It is a mindset of self-loathing because most of them have risen from the lower classes during the past several generations. True narcissists with limitless arrogance, totalitarian intellectuals are enamored with their intellectual prowess. Do not look for them among the butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers. Those who unclog your toilet, cut your hair, and slaughter animals for your table are typical of the “uneducated” victims. Totalitarian intellectuals pound them into submission using arguments from authority and intellectual bullying. The oppressors will manipulate their victims to feel so deeply inferior and dependent that the victims will even enthusiastically support them.

This stripe of totalitarian rules from the powerful, intractably indivisible and uniform institutions of our day, namely, academia, government bureaucracies, the media and entertainment industries, Wall Street, and large companies. They are rife among the “experts”: scholars, jurists, policymakers, regulators, scientists, educators, economists, journalists, artists, physicians, priests, filmmakers, writers, and the professional management class. They are the most privileged and powerful in society, yet whine about having hardships of class, race, and sex—matters having nothing to do with them and everything to do with the “lesser” mortals that

they loathe and try to control. Spot them by their hypocrisy of falsely accusing their victims and opponents of doing what they are doing themselves.

In the totalitarian intellectual's game, his gain comes at your loss. Because he cannot trade¹⁷ the products of his labor in any market based on free choice, he imposes a quid pro quo onto you by promulgating a lie that your individual sovereignty can only come at the loss of another person's. The totalitarian intellectual muddles people's understanding of freedom, saying and doing anything to undermine anyone struggling to protect one's own life. Individuals who recognize the scam and try to protect their sovereignty are the first targets; the totalitarian intellectual uses the lie to defame them, branding them as stupid, immoral, fanatical, selfish, and so forth. By doing so, he usurps sovereignty under the false premise that usurpation is necessary to protect sovereignty. In an attempt to be virtuous, victims end up believing and supporting this premise to their own ruination.

He will then promote a false doctrine that his institution (i.e., himself) has the authority and wisdom to bestow and revoke rights on the individual. He erodes individual sovereignty by pushing for laws with terms and conditions that establish his dominion over you, leaving you without recourse in perpetuity. He skillfully empowers himself to expropriate the

¹⁷ The products of the labor of the intellectual are ideas, most of which are valueless to his fellow man. Unlike a barber who gives a bad haircut or a bricklayer who sets a poor foundation, intellectuals pump bad ideas into the community without the slightest accountability for the damage caused.

products of your labor by engineered consent, of which Edward Louis Bernays wrote:

If the opinions of the public are to control the government, these opinions must not be controlled by the government...Under modern conditions of political advertising and manipulation, it has become possible to talk of the engineering of consent by an elite of experts and professional politicians. Consent that is thus engineered is difficult to distinguish in any fundamental way from the consent that supports modern totalitarian governments. Were the manipulated voter to become the normal voter, the government he supports could hardly be said to rest on his consent in any traditional sense of that word.

When totalitarian intellectuals do not have enough converts to advance their agenda, they broker opportunistic alliances with totalitarians from any other class or corner of society, even those they despise. The political movements of totalitarian intellectuals then become a bizarre patchwork of illogical, contradictory ideologies. At the first opportunity, they savagely attack each other to win supremacy. Riddled with factions, the movements project their strife onto the populations that they strive to control; the populations end up tearing themselves apart.

Vaccinate yourself against totalitarians from the intelligentsia—and from becoming one yourself—by recognizing that usurpation of another man's sovereignty is justified only when it is in defense of one's own sovereignty. Something

might very well be the right thing to do, but a man's existence and the products of his labor are his and his alone to do with as he pleases, not what you and I think is best for him or anyone else. The usurpation of the products of any man's labor—his very existence—in the name of benevolence is an abomination to the existence of man. The right of individual sovereignty must have primacy and be sacrosanct. The individual must be free to choose as he sees fit, providing that his choices do not usurp the sovereignty of another person.

Bosses and colleagues

Totalitarians among the intelligentsia chip away at your freedom over many years—for example, making systems that make you wait six months for surgery or surprise you with an unfunded pension when you retire. In the workplace, however, totalitarians usurp your sovereignty by ripping away energy and time from your life hour by hour.

Officious bosses and colleagues proclaim that they are experts in this or in charge of that, boasting about their years of experience and credentials. They could never make the cut as totalitarians in the intelligentsia so they become the unknown and no less ugly equivalent in a company, holding ideologies of rules and “the company way” above your head. They tread on your neck while grabbing for the next rung in the company's hierarchy. Most slip off. Undaunted, they try again tomorrow.

Totalitarians at the office never modestly assist employees who struggle, going instead for high-handed admonitions, finger-pointing, and bullying. They cluster for the attack.

Behind closed doors their chests swell as they work themselves up for another go at the employees, reveling in contempt and frothing with ridicule when their target is not within earshot. Large companies having prestigious brands are filled with such people.

Human resources departments, traditionally the dumping ground for incompetent employees who could not be fired, are now the training grounds for totalitarian ideologues who promulgate political ideology and company doctrine over individual sovereignty.

Deep in the guts of such men is a gnawing insecurity. It is the feeling of not being good enough or even self-hatred. They are “failed totalitarians.” They shiver when they allow themselves to consider this insecurity for a fleeting moment, but then they bury it deeper. Such men gladly trade their sovereignty for pride. They promulgate ideas and ways that elevate themselves over other people: ways and ideas that diminish everyone. They will keep trading their sovereignty until they have exhausted everything in their lives and the lives of those around them because their insecurity—their fear—is boundless.

Parents

Children have a natural curiosity, which is the spark of all inquiry. The existence of a question impels the child to undertake a quest for an answer. To do so, the child draws upon his talents to discover—to create—his answer.

“Quest” might bring to mind arduous searches only of the polar expedition kind. Simply put, quest is the effort by any person to answer any question, large or small. Tougher quests come from the more difficult questions because the child must draw upon more of his talents to discover (really, create) his answer. The need for imagination and resourcefulness are intrinsic to the quest. The child feels some anxiety, perhaps even pain or stress, as he moves through his quest. But those feelings are replaced by satisfaction, even joy, from the denouement after discovery of the answer. One can see this cycle even in infants; they experience anxiety in their quest for nourishment followed by the satisfaction of drinking from the breast.

The cycle of curiosity, question, quest, and discovery, and the emotions that accompany it, are instrumental for a human to create meaning in his life. Meaning starts with survival (as in the example of the breast-feeding infant) and reproduction, but then moves into the realm of dreams and ambitions, and striving to fulfill them. Unfortunately, by the time many young adults reach university, they say they have no dream in life and never had one. An 18-year old who has never had a dream in life is the handiwork of a totalitarian parent.

When parents raise a child, they usurp the child’s sovereignty, necessarily so. When done correctly, parents impose constraints, but do not provide all the answers, or at least not readily. Under parental oversight, the child can repeat the cycle of curiosity, question, quest, and discovery while experiencing the emotions that accompany the cycle. The

emotions deepen with each iteration, nourishing the positive behavior.

Totalitarian parents crush the possibility of the cycle from ever developing in the child. The overbearing type of parent imposes hardline constraints. The emasculated type lets the child run wild. Both types impose all the questions and the answers on the child, albeit in different ways, but with the same outcome. Teachers do the same. When the child graduates from high school, his natural curiosity has been eradicated along with his tenacity to delay gratification. He has no enthusiasm for inquiry and, therefore, no feelings from the cycle that are necessary for him to create who he wants to be in his life. Well-conditioned as a social media automaton, he is ready for what awaits him after high school.

To compound the problem, parents, teachers, and professors encourage students to take university courses from many fields to open their minds to new ideas and possibilities, believing that some kind of answer about what to do in life will magically pop out. Under this premise, and devoid of curiosity, legions of students enter universities, which are merely diploma factories. The students are listless, boring people who are ready to be indoctrinated with ideologies by totalitarians among the intellectual class. Professors award top marks to all students, even though the students do and ask nothing. When asked why they attend university, students mutter that they want money, and to earn money they need a job, and to get a job they need a university degree.

All students graduate, staunchly believing that they have accomplished something of great importance. At graduation

ceremonies, parents clap like seals for their children's "accomplishment" without a modicum of self-reflection about the travesty that they have visited upon their children. Meanwhile, on the graduation stage, faculty and administrators in academic regalia glance at each other sideways, wondering how long they can keep up the farce and milk the cash cow before the jig is up.

The child of the totalitarian parent is doomed to live his life without knowing that he has sovereignty, let alone that his sovereignty has been usurped. And the only way that he can discover his predicament is by having natural curiosity, which was driven from him early in life. Such a child is well-prepared to obey and serve for life all the other kinds of totalitarians described in this essay.

LIFE

How life works

No two people are identical. Therefore, neither opportunities nor outcomes can be equal.¹⁸

If you are looking at life as a game of winners and losers, you are mismanaging your life. It is not a game; there is no playing field to be leveled. Understand the role of inequality in the universe lest you usurp someone else's sovereignty while depriving yourself of the only avenue for creating who you want to be in your life.

Life arises from matter and information.¹⁹ Differences in matter and information among organisms, including humans, provide the impetus for each organism; all are subject to the laws of physics. Of the 7.8 billion humans alive, no two are identical in matter and information.

Equal application of rules to members of a community is necessary to protect individual sovereignty, which gives rise to freedom of opportunity²⁰ for the individual. Still, it does not produce opportunities that are equal for all members of the community nor equal outcomes for them—nothing can. Opportunities, a set of circumstances that makes it possible to

¹⁸ Here, equal means “like in quality, nature, or status.”

¹⁹ As put forth by Professor Paul Davies.

²⁰ A sovereign individual is free to take advantage of an opportunity that he creates for himself.

do something, are created by individuals for themselves, not given by others or the state. There are always differences in information among people, including the differences you use to create and execute opportunities unto yourself alone. You can either try to take advantage of opportunities that you create for yourself—even if they are minuscule—or stagnate.

In societies that have, in large measure, freedom of choice and the equal application of rules to its citizens, most rich people are rich because they are qualified to be rich, not because they are thieves or lucky.²¹ Competency ultimately prevails; it might take decades or generations to see the results. This condition applies to their descendants, too. Few men can keep, let alone grow, the wealth that they inherit. Wealth comes as a by-product of the self-directed flourishing of one's creativity and its value to others. The rich measure value according to the power of one's creative abilities, not by an amount in a bank account. A dollar to them is just as valuable as one to the next man, but they know that they can create more value to others no matter how much—or little—money they have. They also know that creating value for others is the only mechanism by which one can create the person that one wants to be in life.

²¹ Do not conflate the creation of wealth with the totalitarian usurpation of sovereignty. A rich man is not equivalent to a totalitarian, nor is a poor man. Totalitarians are rife in all classes of society; a father who forces his daughter into an arranged marriage is one of the numberless examples. In the case of totalitarians who are rich, they know how to create value and how to take it. The totalitarian who is poor knows only to take it, and even that he cannot do well.

By contrast, men who nickel-and-dime, fight tooth-and-nail over money and are jealous of success, are inept as creators. They are obsessed with squeezing money from others because they think it is the only way to get it. Real totalitarians, they are the first to take what is not theirs, the kind who advocates that the government does it at gunpoint on their behalf. Instead of improving themselves and fighting to correct any unequal application of rules, they blame others for the outcomes that arise from their own faults and try to tip the rules in their favor. They believe that one who has lots of money values it less, thoughtlessly brushing away that each cent is derived from one's very existence.

If you wring your hands over prices, your salary, your stock value, how to split the bill at a restaurant, the wealth of others, and so on, you are squarely in the latter category. A man's desire and anxiety about money are inversely proportional to his ability to create value for his fellow man.

Creating prosperity

Why is it so difficult to become rich?

Opportunities do not fall on your head like apples from a tree. You must create them by yourself for yourself. Unfortunately, people are prodigiously creative at self-delusion. By the time most come to understand how life works, if ever, little time remains for developing the abilities to manage their lives correctly. They die before they can fully create and exploit opportunities for themselves.

At any point in your life, have you fretted over the wealth of even one of the 90 percent of the people in the world who are poorer than you?²² Of course not; so why concern yourself with anyone richer than you?

It is common for people to compare themselves to others, dislike what they find, and then delude themselves with a poverty mindset. In other words, they wallow in passivity, awaiting direction or salvation from non-existent deities while celebrating the abysmal outcomes from such behavior. To do so, they believe, makes them more virtuous than others, and lands them a preferred seat in the afterlife. Another ideological delusion is that one is a victim in the fictitious world of “one man’s loss is another man’s gain.”

The poverty mindset is passed from generation to generation; parents infect their children with it, crippling them for life. Infecting one’s children with the virus of the poverty mindset is a greater abomination than putting them in chains. At least the slave knows that he is enslaved. Family, friends, and members of the community incessantly use culture to reinforce the poverty mindset, making it almost impossible to shake oneself free of it. Even if such a man figures out how life works and begins to manage his life correctly, it will take him years to crawl from poverty. If he wants to catch up in his lifetime, he will have to make up for what generations of his ancestors failed to do.

²² 50 percent of American households have net worths greater than 90 percent of the world’s households. The poorest 20 percent of American households are richer than 50 percent of the world’s households.

Prosperity comes by way of managing your life correctly to create the person who you want to be, not by comparing yourself to others, nor by chasing money or recognition. Reflect deeply on how you must improve yourself by your own hands. It is never too late to begin to manage your life. As the adage goes, “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” Do not grumble. Get on with the job.

You are the most significant risk to your journey to prosperity. Not knowing oneself and fretting over people’s opinions are the biggest follies. Yes, someone will always try to drag you down and dissuade you from taking action to manage your life. Anyone who says that something cannot be done merely means that he does not know how to do it. Every person is also fighting a personal battle that you and everyone else know nothing about and, therefore, you cannot even care about, so why think that the reverse is not true?

No one is the least bit concerned about your dreams, opinions, troubles, successes, failures, appearance, or social media posts. If you are worried about what other people think about you, don’t; because they are not thinking about you at all, —which means that you should not be thinking about yourself either. Focus on what you are creating, not on yourself. Self-esteem is irrelevant. What matters is self-reliance, and being self-reliant is a choice.

On your journey to prosperity, do not try to be a hero, for example, by attempting to replace the status quo with your design for a better world. You will end up crushing another man’s sovereignty. No one wants to live under your design just as you do not want to live under his.

Instead, sort yourself out and get the basics right. Understand how life works and then intelligently take advantage of the status quo to achieve your objectives. At most, help individuals personally, not en masse, and promote individual sovereignty. It is the only way to achieve prosperity for yourself, your loved ones, and your community. Positive change to the status quo comes only by the choices of sovereign individuals; otherwise, you are just replacing one totalitarian with another—you.

Finally, it is sometimes more economical to give people what they wrongly demand from you. Even if you are in the right, you may pay a higher price by not doing so, because the accordant dependency can crush your will to create. Betrayal can come only from those you trust, and strangers will trust you more than your friends will do. The value of your state of well-being and satisfaction, which arises from your creation of who you want to be in life, is far greater than whatever others can demand of you.

How to manage your life

You can test the value to your life of anything (or anyone) that you are considering to do (or include) in your life:

- Can you use it to maximize your sovereignty?
- Can you use it to improve your abilities?
- Can you use it to optimize the use of all your abilities to create the person who you want to be in life?

To the ends above, intellect, will, and collaboration are the abilities that you must have to manage your life correctly.

Leadership is not just for commanding an army or running a company. Leadership abilities are just as necessary for running your life correctly and for preventing other people from usurping your sovereignty to become someone who you do not want to be. “Intellect” and “will” are related to what we can control: our decisions. “Collaboration” is about things we cannot control, but that we can influence: other’s decisions.

“Intellect” concerns your faculty of rational thought: how you decide the outcome you want and what you must do to produce it most efficiently. Examples of the skills having to do with intellect are natural curiosity (e.g., to learn and experience), logical thinking (e.g., to analyze, hypothesize, and sympathize), and all other powers of intellect that give rise to insight about causations (e.g., to make solutions and plans).

Your intellect will quickly develop if you are naturally curious about things and have a thirst for exploration. But be sincere and organized in your quest so you can learn more than a smattering. Carefully choose fields that interest you, not things that you feel obligated to study. Plan when to know them and to what depth. Do not restrict yourself to books and classrooms.

People with unusual blends of skills have more source material to be creative so cultivate your expertise in at least two disparate fields that you can somehow connect. Learn combinations of things that you find pleasurable. The possibilities are infinite, such as a researcher who knows some accounting or a machinist who speaks a second language.

Combine hobbies of cello-playing, soap-making, aromatherapy, fashion jewelry, and cheese connoisseurship. Why not! Above all, do not think of yourself as a failure if your interests attract you to another field or urge you to return to school, no matter your age. The luckiest classmates of all are 80-year-olds and 20-year-olds who study together!

Do not be dissuaded by envious people who are quick to jab anyone who tries new things. We have all heard remarks such as: “She studied engineering and worked in a famous company. Now she is manager of a perfume shop. What a waste.” She does not stop being an engineer by working in a perfumery. Instead, she adds expertise in perfumery, sales, and customer relations to her engineering expertise.

“Will” pertains to your ability to act upon your sense of agency to produce your desired outcome. Examples of the skills having to do with will are: self-discipline (e.g., not to usurp another’s sovereignty, to regulate one’s emotions, to listen), honesty, humility (e.g., to obey laws, ethics, or another person; to admit ignorance), and courage (e.g., to disobey laws, ethics, or another person; to proceed into the unknown, ambiguous, or contentious; to assess oneself).

“Collaboration” has to do with your ability to convince others to help you to produce your desired outcome. Examples of the associated skills are compassion and emotional intelligence (e.g., to influence and persuade by one’s communication of messages).

While developing your abilities to manage your life, the following simple credo will serve you well:

- Don't grumble; get on with the job.
- Admit your ignorance.
- Get the basics right.
- Never lie.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

At age 30, we think that we still have enough time to change the course of our lives. We compare our progress with that of other people regarding career, marriage, lifestyle, and so on. We make ambitious plans—professional and personal—and work hard to fulfill them.

By our late thirties, we know that most of our plans have missed their marks. No matter what, some of the unexpected outcomes can be very good. And we always make new plans, anyway. Singles, however, might start to agonize about being left behind. They worry about whether they will ever marry, let alone be able to have children. Pile on other unfulfilled dreams, a dead-end job, and pressure from parents to marry, and the urgency to do something, anything, to change one's life intensifies. Even those in marriages or long-term relationships might wonder if they have a future with their spouse.

In our forties and fifties, we know mortality well. Some of our friends have already died. Birthdays fly by, and we sense our bodies deteriorating. "Why am I here?", "How long will I live?" and, "What should I do with the rest of my life?" are questions on our minds.

What is the meaning of this journey that is sometimes beautiful, often painful, and always uncertain, one that we incessantly question and struggle to change to our liking?

If happiness is vital on this journey, and if happiness comes from creating who we want to be in life, how can we know who we want to be, or what to do to get there?

The answer comes from understanding how to manage our lives.

“Life is short” is a dangerous fallacy. People who have convinced themselves that life is short will try to change their lives by drastic means, as if frantically scrambling for an emergency exit. One might have an affair, end a relationship, or leave town for a new life. It is exhilarating to think that one is finally breaking free, finding credence in the bad advice common from well-intended friends. Transitory lovers are the worst influence; they instigate escapism with adulation. But life almost always worsens for the “escapee” and shatters the lives of those who truly love her or him. The friends and lovers, meanwhile, go unscathed. It is a great pity that so much unnecessary heartbreak is created by free people attempting to escape an illusory jail.

If you convince yourself that life is short, your lifetime will indeed shorten. Life is intrinsically neither short nor long. If you manage your life correctly, it will extend sufficiently to allow you to create whoever you want to be, whatever your age. As Seneca wrote, “Life is long if you know how to use it.”

Aristotle said that happiness is a state of well-being that comes when all your abilities flourish, a mentally and physically arduous undertaking in creativity, not the popular notion of happiness as pleasure or contentment. Your creative products are the outward signs of your will, in other words, who you are. They are anything that you can make from your mind, heart, and hands: a relationship, technology, a family, music, a negotiation, raising a child, a venture, spirituality, a meal. Anything at all. How people react to your creative products will

feed back to your psyche and enhance you. As you continue your journey in life, you will want to add interests, knowledge, and experience to feed your creativity.

The vision of who you want to be develops incrementally inside you from doing this, not by declaring, “From today, this is who I am!” Sometimes the incremental steps are planned, sometimes not. People who are better at it are more satisfied than people who are not. In other words, satisfaction is a measure of how well we are managing our creation of our lives.

Improving our abilities is necessary, but insufficient, to make our creativity flourish. Nor is it enough to manage our lives. Something beyond abilities—beyond the intellect—is needed.

People draw out the best in each other only when they love each other with a quality of love rooted in honesty and sacrifice. Oxford professor Terry Eagleton has said that love is the reciprocity between people that allows their abilities to flourish. Compassionate treatment of others is a condition for our own thriving.

This quality of love, therefore, is indispensable for reaching our optimum creativity. It is the only way for us to create who we want to be; while creating, happiness as a state of well-being will naturally arise within us. And we will know it because we will feel satisfied about what we are creating despite the necessary struggle and pain from the act of true creation.

The way that we progress through this journey is how we create meaning in our lives, and for the lives of those accompanying us. It is never too late to manage the creation of your life to achieve a state of well-being and satisfaction.

People will disappoint you. They will fall short of your expectations and irritate you. Maybe you feel that they let you down, wasted your time, and did not help make your dreams come true.

But if they love you, and if their love genuinely comes from honesty and sacrifice, despite all their shortcomings, then do not deride or reject them. Reciprocate their love; if it is difficult, it means that you have more work to do on yourself. Love is always in short supply, but only by our choosing.

Granted, understanding how to love from a position of honesty and sacrifice is harder than the intellectual side of adding new interests, knowledge, and experiences. But giving up on someone who loves you means that you are giving up on yourself. For it is only through love reciprocated with other people, no matter their faults, that you can achieve meaning in your life.

And if you think that you have lost the person and the love that came with him or her, fear not. By their very nature, they are forever recoverable; it only depends on your will to recover them.

The universe is, for all its glory and beauty, appallingly dumb. It is beholden to change without design. In all this, and perhaps more, the love of which I write is the only immutable thing, beyond the reach of all natural forces. The purpose of the universe is what you decide it to be. For in a universe that otherwise knows only change—dumb change—love is the only fixed point that enables you to thrive with a change of your own making—intelligent change—to have a meaningful life.

APPENDIX

EXAMPLE APPLICATIONS

HOW MUCH MONEY IS ENOUGH?

You spend your existence to gain existence. Know how much money²³ you will need to create the person who you want to be. Otherwise, you will be mismanaging your life, in part, by not creating sufficient value for others.

A good pilot does not take off, then decide the destination and try to fly as far as he can on whatever fuel he happens to find in his aeroplane. Yet, people do something like this all the time with their lives. There is no relationship between a salary (i.e., the fuel that happens to be in your aeroplane) and the amount of money you will need to create the person who you want to be in life (i.e., your destination). A job, career, or profession is not your destination; it is your aeroplane, perhaps one of many that you will need for your journey.

Redefine the problem. Your life's work is to create yourself so do not put the cart before the horse. Before you undertake anything to earn money, visualize a typical day in the life of the person who you want to be, then try to estimate the amount of money that you will need to create who you must be to create that outcome. When will you need the money? What will you risk to obtain it? The amount, timing, and risk comprise your financial objective.

The more effort you put into visualizing your day, the more accurate and useful your estimate will be. Where do you want to do whatever it is that you want to do, and for whom? With whom do you want to do it? Who do you need to cut from your

²³ Literally, the time and energy from your life

life? How will you know when you have finished creating yourself? Does one ever stop creating oneself? Pay particular attention to the mundane, too, such as daily routines. Do you want to wake up at the same place and time every day or roam the world and live by a schedule that always changes? How do you want the answers to these and other questions to change as you age?

Your degree of urgency to create the person who you want to be sets your pace and, therefore, the risk (i.e., pain) you are willing to endure and the skills (i.e., intellect, will, and collaborative abilities) you will need to reach your destination. Funding your creation of yourself may require you to do things that take you far afield of your destination for many years. Success depends on how good you are at developing your intellect, will, and the collaborative ability to manage your life correctly and to create value for others during your journey.

Venturing is a way of life to create your life

Why do entrepreneurs establish companies? Does it not make more sense to be an employee, live frugally, and save money to fulfill one's financial requirement?

The entrepreneur believes that he can make more money by his own hands than if he invested his money in another company under someone else's control. His belief might be well-justified because of his abilities or it might be rooted in his hubris. No matter, the entrepreneur's conclusion is correct. Laboring as an employee will probably not produce the money he wants by the time he wants it and within his risk tolerance.

The likelihood of an entrepreneur reaching his financial objective depends on his strategy and execution of it. He does not have such control as an employee or investor.

The employee thinks of salary as a way to buy things and to save money. When times are tough, the employee frets about his inability to make ends meet, not about impeded creativity.

By contrast, the entrepreneur creates opportunities to satisfy his creative ambitions. He uses the money that he makes from the products of his labor to create even more opportunities and value for others and, therefore, more money for himself. When the entrepreneur is short of money, he is annoyed that his creative output might slow down.

Entrepreneurs' lives are entwined with their ventures. Relationships, finances, and health suffer. Entrepreneurs claw their way up and fall repeatedly—mentally, physically, and financially exhausted. Family and friends will be drawn into the venture, whether or not they like it. They will vehemently try to persuade the entrepreneur to quit and take what appears to be the more sensible path as an employee.

Why bother?

Venturing is a way of life, but not for its own sake. It is a way of life to create a life—the person who you want to be. The crucible of venturing ablates layers of self-delusion and irrationality, forcing you to face yourself. You will learn how life works and who you are today, in part, by beginning to see yourself in others and others in yourself.

For the true entrepreneur, his answer to “How do I want to spend my day?” is a measure of the person he wants to be. His

answer to “How much money is enough?” is the cost to create the person he wants to be.

CONTEMPLATIONS FOR JAPANESE WOMEN

You can never know how to create the person who you want to be until you have done so. Whatever worked for someone else will never produce the same outcome for you, even if you replicate everything exactly. And that is the way it must be for life to be what it is in order for you to exist. What, then, should you do with your life? The answer comes by way of three questions that Japanese women most ask of me.

**Yuki, the middle-aged mother:
“What must I do to be happy?”**

Yuki must work to make ends meet. Rent, food, and household expenses devour whatever is left over from her husband’s salary after taxes. Despite their double income, Yuki and her husband are not making financial headway. Already in her forties, Yuki feels that she is just treading water in the rising tide of expenses from raising two children in the current economic environment.

Mountains of tedious clerical work fill Yuki’s weekdays. She slogs alongside other middle-aged Japanese “Office Ladies” at a large manufacturer in Osaka. Each month on the 25th, the company credits Yuki’s bank account with ¥320,000, and the universe debits 30 days from her lifespan. Stability is never a problem; at the office, Yuki will spend the next ten years as she did the last.

Yuki works 16 hours per day. Half of the hours are unpaid: the job of a housewife. Housework, dressing skinned knees, and caring for the children's dog are all in scope, as are all things that pop up on the domestic front. Tasks having to do with the children take the most time. Yuki packs her children's schedules as tightly as she does their lunch boxes: public school, cram school, piano, ballet, kendo, swimming, choir, soccer, and a generous sprinkling of visits to the doctor.

Yuki's husband has shackled himself to his job, meaning that he takes no risks. Yuki rebukes him whenever he mentions any opportunity that might offer him some personal growth and a bit of fulfillment. Growth only comes with risk, and Yuki tolerates no risk to the steady cash flow that feathers her nest. Because the husband fears Yuki more than having to wallow in intellectual laziness at work, he has resigned himself to provide only two things for his family: a steady paycheck and good intentions. He plays the Japanese "Salaryman's" role well, including dumping domestic matters in Yuki's lap.

Yuki's marital relations are polite and platonic. Romance is dead. Long past using fatigue and lack of mood as excuses, Yuki bluntly says that she loves her husband only as a family member. For the past five years, since the birth of her second child, Yuki has rejected intimacy. She bunks with her children and billets her husband to a solitary futon in the master bedroom.

Though Yuki has convinced herself that her desirableness is in an irreversible freefall, she yearns for affirmations to the contrary. A male acquaintance eagerly provides them. Yuki thinks she has not crossed the line, but she is already in a full-

blown emotional affair. The intimate tone of her social media messages—half of which denigrate her husband—would permanently damage his psyche if he could catch wind of them. And if that did happen, Yuki would feel bad only because she was caught, not for having shattered spousal trust. Indeed, she feels justified, even righteous, about what she is doing.

Yuki feels constant pressure to be a model mother and wife. Her circle of acquaintances and so-called friends jab each other around the clock with well-crafted social media posts depicting the fictitious idyllic lives of perfect mothers and wives. For example, one woman recently managed to send her children to a well-known, expensive private school in Tokyo. News of this drove the members of the circle into fits of envy. Yuki tends to be more competitive than envious. Besides, her main interest is the betterment of her children, and she worries that they will suffer later in life because she cannot afford the ¥3,000,000 per annum tuition. It is frustrating for her, and she directs her temper at her children and husband. Yuki does not like the person she is becoming.

Yuki has everything that she has ever wanted: children, husband, home, and friends. She did everything she was supposed to do in the right order and at the right time so why is she feeling empty? Why the malaise, Yuki? She longs for freedom without children yet loves her children and wants to be a good mother. Her life is in a rut, and she cannot put her finger on the reason.

Despite her quandary, Yuki knows her ambitions. Having a good relationship with her family is essential to her. She wants money to live well, and she wants to be treated like a lady by her

husband. Yuki wishes that she had the knowledge and confidence to change her life to achieve her goals.

Yuki asks herself, "What must I do to be happy?"

**Akari, never married and of childbearing age:
"How do I find the confidence to be who I want to be?"**

Akari, in her thirties, has lived with her parents in Tokyo from birth. Japan's most prestigious investment bank granted her the so-called privilege of working for it. Trained as an engineer, she now works as a secretary to a group of male investment bankers. Friends and relatives tell her that she is lucky. Akari is expected to be grateful.

For their entire lives, the bankers have been praised by parents, teachers, and professors as smarter and, therefore, better than everyone else. One can almost forgive the bankers for believing it, were it not for the heinousness that springs from their arrogance. The bankers are sincere only in their pursuit of money. Their predecessors funded with gusto Japan's aggression during World War II that destroyed their country and others, profiting handsomely from it and multiplying their bounty to this day. Rules, like sacrifice and compassion, are for minions and subordinates. Perpetuating a century-old tradition in their company, they hire like-minded successors.

The bankers never look Akari in the eye, nor speak to her, unless they are ordering her around or bullying her. Even those who sit an arm's length away will communicate to her by email rather than talking to her directly. Once a day, Akari opens her mouth, and then only to brush her teeth after lunch. The

bosses' derision extends to after-hours drinking sessions, officially optional and practically mandatory, filled with lechery, drunkenness, and cigarette smoke. Failure to attend invites more bullying. As did Caligula, the bankers abuse for sport—because they can—and to remind themselves that they are alive.

On the personal front, Akari is deeply in love and fully committed to someone who feels likewise about her. Beaten senseless in a similar professional environment, he left it, having decided that entrepreneurship is the only path to sovereignty and, therefore, happiness and prosperity for Akari and himself. Everything that he does is for the two of them, working as hard and fast as he can to reach the goal. His love for Akari is what keeps him going during the darkest hours.

Despite his enormous effort for many years, and having overcome obstacles that are insurmountable for most people, he still does not have two cents to rub together. There is no end in sight to the obstacles before him. Success seems impossible, at least in Akari's eyes. At one time, she thought of him as brilliant, inspiring, and handsome. Aging and obese, he now looks broken, even a loser. Akari feels a twinge of contempt.

Akari feels that her life has stalled. She very much wants her own family and has been waiting patiently for years for her man to rescue her. But she is beginning to think that he does not love her, that he rejects her, that he does not want marriage, none of which is true. Meanwhile, her coworkers drag her through misery. Every day, the bankers bleed Akari's confidence from her and, along with it, her zest for life. Heretofore shy and cheerful, Akari is now cynical and

argumentative, prone to mood swings, and thinks the whole world is against her. She also has developed a cruel streak.

Akari is taking matters into her own hands. She is an explorer, keen on improving herself, and continually tries her hand at new things in her spare time. She wants her hobby and work to be the same. Despite her man's apparent failures at venturing, entrepreneurship has captured her imagination. Akari confines herself to her bedroom in the evenings, a sanctuary where she studies and expands her abilities. Though she has little money to spend on herself, Akari still makes a go of it. She has a vision of how she wants to spend her day and of the person she wants to be. But taking the first step is hard for her.

Akari asks herself, "How do I find the confidence to be who I want to be?"

Shiori, single and in menopause:

"What's the point of all of this?"

Shiori is your name, a female office worker in Tokyo, Age 52, some college education, and never been married.

Weekdays at 6 a.m., you awake sluggish and tired. You squeeze your morning preparations and chores into every minute as the clock counts down to the 8 a.m. commuter train departure. Onboard, you endure the suffocating crush of other commuters for 40 minutes while your train lumbers from your home station in Setagaya Ward to Tokyo Station near the Marunouchi Financial District. Upon arrival, the doors slide open, and you spill from the train, shoved by a surge of exiting

passengers into a torrent of commuters on the platform. The current sweeps you toward the station exit.

When you eventually reach your office building's lobby, already exhausted, you join one of several long lines to pass through a security gate, only to queue for another ten minutes at the elevator bank. Squashed again, you become transfixed on the floor indicator as the elevator crawls up the skyscraper, stopping at each floor.

Once on your floor, you find your desk among a sea of others in a colorless, fluorescent-lit room. It resembles economy class in an aeroplane, but instead of a TV screen and a tray table, you are given a computer and a desk. Male coworkers grunt "Good morning," then dodge your eyes, uttering nothing else to you all day.

For the next ten hours, save for a few breaks and lunch, you have to put up with emails, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint slides. Your afternoon slips into other drudgery. Meetings drag on as a dozen people nod obsequiously to the soliloquy of a pompous section chief.

You can leave the office at 3 p.m. because you have finished all your tasks, but you dare not. No one else dares either. Everyone waits until the boss leaves on a whim, inevitably well after 7 p.m. Only then do your coworkers surreptitiously slip out the exits. In the late evening, your workday finally ends. You are shoved from behind into another crammed train, this time for the ride home.

Once home, you enjoy some solace from the affection of your toy poodle. In the evening after household chores, you eke

out some time for hobbies. Your imagination and creativity might flourish in the few precious hours before bedtime.

Your head hits the pillow around midnight, with you wishing for the day to come when you can pursue your hobby as a full-time job: selling cosmetics, designing websites, planning weddings, teaching cookery, or whatever else interests you. Until your liberation day dawns, you live for Friday nights and the weekends.

You receive ¥344,000 monthly from the ¥500,000 that you rightfully earned. The missing amount was taken by force: taxes, pensions, healthcare premiums, and the like. And another 10 percent in consumption tax is taken from you whenever you spend your money as you choose. You want all of this to feel natural, which is just enough to delude yourself from recognizing the bad deal that you are getting from so-called social benefits. Despite years of hard work, your net worth is paltry.

Parents still harass you to marry. “We’re worried about you,” they claim, though they cannot (nor feel obligated to) offer a shred of evidence to justify their worry. That your mother’s acquaintances have grandchildren is a nagging reminder to your mother that she has none. Her jealousy, resentment, and despair spill onto your plate. It is a concoction of her ideological fear of being left outside the group and her natural programming to perpetuate the species.

As for men, you have had several multi-year relationships. Your hopes having been dashed at the end of each one, you feel that suitable men always are beyond reach. Coworkers suss you out for matchmaking dinners. Company drinking sessions

produce a few affairs. One of them is with a married man who becomes your steady. You try to convince yourself of a future with him by turning a blind eye to your lonely Sundays, which he always spends with his family. What you believe is moot anyway because you threw away your negotiation advantage when you granted him sexual access, as has been your habit with men since you were 19. This time you blew your leverage in the Palace Hotel after dinner on the third date, but not before you posted a photo of the evening's expensive French dinner on Instagram to outdo your peers. Your reward: 35 likes. Meanwhile, he got what he wanted. And you keep giving him more.

As for what you want the most—children—the desire lingers, but now it is an impossible dream. Reminders are everywhere: a group of mothers chatting outside a pre-school, elementary school children in uniform around you in the train, the university matriculation ceremony of your nephew. But that impossibility is gradually being replaced by another: not being alone in old age. You hope that your story will end differently from the identical cases around you. But it can never be so, and you know it. Tokyo life is too homogeneous to allow it. You will die alone at an advanced age.

The fear of life being short has become a monkey on your back. You desperately try various things to live a fuller life, but the results are dubious. Dreams seem perpetually out of reach.

You ask yourself, “What’s the point of all of this?”

Contemplations

Why are you here?

You exist to survive and reproduce for the benefit of the human race. As with men, you are not here to run companies, perform surgery, or cook dinner.

In doing so, you are executing a very, very old program within you and without meaning beyond the perpetuation of our species. The program exists for you to execute it, and you exist because the program exists. The only way to stop the loop is to terminate your life. Even then, the program continues to run in your offspring, if you have any.

Thought arises from the program and, from thought, will: your agency to direct your energy for some time from your life at some purpose. The program executes itself within you mostly autonomously, but you can control or even negate parts of the program.²⁴ Your will is the source of your life's meaning beyond the program of survival and reproduction; the purpose of the universe is what you decide it to be. Your will enables you to be a company president, physician, or housewife.

The program runs silently and implacably in the background in every cell, tissue, organ, and system in your body, and between your body and other people's. A non-sentient, non-conscious program impels a sentient and conscious organism: you. Because your noisy consciousness is consumed with your decisions, it drowns out your awareness of

²⁴ You might also be able to change the program itself.

all of this, especially the program's outcomes. The program is deaf to *all* your beliefs, including those from your politics and religion. You are more likely to blame what goes wrong in your life on other people rather than your inability to reconcile what your will desires and what the program impels you to do. And this blind spot is the source of all your problems and opportunities.

The program has been written during the past 4.5 billion years, the time that it took for you to evolve from the first life form on Earth. In fact, there are many programs, at least as many as there are people, and the programs continue to adapt by rewriting themselves unrelentingly within each of us and between each of us. But what has been written, has been written. All programs have the same central theme. As sure as the program marches inexorably forward to kill you—a slow death over an 80-year or so lifespan for most people—it optimizes the perpetuation of our species. In doing so, the program minds nothing else, including your opinions, hopes, and dreams. The universe is oblivious to your personal fulfillment, or any organism's for that matter, so you will have to create it for yourself if you want any.

But how?

Happiness as a state of well-being

Happiness is a state of well-being that comes when all your abilities flourish in creativity.

Your creative products are the outward signs of your will; in other words, who you are. They are anything that you can make

from your mind, heart, and hands: a relationship, technology, a family, music, a negotiation, raising a child, a venture, spirituality, a meal. Anything at all. How people react to your creative products will feed back to your psyche and enhance you. As you continue your life journey, you will want to add even more interests, knowledge, and experience to feed your creativity.

The vision of who you want to be develops incrementally inside you from doing this, not by declaring, "From today, this is who I am!" Sometimes the incremental steps are planned, sometimes not. People who are better at it are more satisfied than people who are not. In other words, satisfaction is a measure of how well we are managing our creation of our lives.

Happiness as a state of well-being comes about when our abilities are flourishing at their creative optima, a mentally and physically arduous undertaking. In this state, a feeling of satisfaction can arise within us. The satisfaction has to do with the fulfillment of our expectations about our creative ambitions. We might even suffer because we are forced to confront ourselves, including our ugliness, while we create. We also make trade-offs during this struggle to create who we want to be. Your story comes from the trade-offs you decide to make on your journey, which is different from the next person's.

But how can one be happy while toiling, even suffering?

Do not confuse happiness as a state of well-being with the conventional definition of happiness as pleasure or contentment, which can only come, if ever, from the finished products of your creative undertakings. In other words, you must accomplish something before you even have a chance to

feel pleasure or contentment. Beware of the folly of going by the conventional definition of happiness. Thinking happy thoughts and being with happy people cannot make you happy; you have to create something of your own to provide the basis for such feelings.

Will is all that you need to pursue your dream of who you want to be. And if you are reading this sentence, you have will. You have everything that you need so start the journey by deciding to take the first step toward being who you want to be, even if you do not know who that person is. You are not supposed to know at the beginning. That is the whole point of the journey. You are the clay; your will is the potter. Something as extraordinary as happiness cannot be molded from anything less.

Returning to the program, your vision of who you want to be will sometimes align with the program and other times collide with it. If you do not understand who you are as a human and as a woman, you cannot achieve a state of well-being, let alone sustain it. This lack of understanding is your blind spot. To argue against the program is the same as accusing the force of gravity of injustice because you fell and hurt yourself. Without understanding what you want versus what the program impels you to do, you might repeat the fall.

You need not be a slave to the program, or at least not an absolute one. The program impels countless organisms to eat countless others every second, all of which have some intelligence. Many express compassion and love. Is that fair? For a program without sentience and consciousness and, therefore, no capacity to conceive of justice, fairness is a non sequitur. The

fact that vegetarians exist proves this. But it also shows that sentient and conscious organisms can negate the program by choosing not to eat animals. Nevertheless, negation can only ever be a matter of degree. After all, even vegetarians must eat other organisms to survive.

The limits of your influence on the program might leave you feeling nihilistic. Do not despair. Even though we still need the program to survive, we have outgrown the program (or at least parts of it) in a way that chipmunks have yet to do. Even though the program for survival and reproduction is inescapable, you can overrule its parts that stand in your way of creating meaning for your life.

Your blind spot

Within your body, a non-sentient, non-conscious program resists any decision that you make that runs contrary to survival and reproduction. Test yourself if you do not believe this to be true. In the battle of your will versus the program within you how long can you stave off hunger or thirst against the instinct for survival?

Reproduction is the same. When you are in childbearing years, the program impels you to reproduce. Of course, you can choose not to have children. But do not fool yourself into thinking that you can neutralize the program from prodding you. The program is written to perpetuate the species, not to make your life fulfilling. Your body's 30 trillion cells will dog you until you can no longer reproduce, after which they and you eventually die. After your childbearing years, regardless of

whether you had children, the program is finished with you. Your will is free to pursue the most logical objective at that point, which is not to be alone in old age.

The biggest source of angst arising from your blind spot comes by way of your sense of justice or, in the eyes of men, your lack of it. The program has no justice; it runs for the benefit of the species, not you.

Examples abound. A childless woman approaching the end of her childbearing years might break an otherwise successful long-term relationship with one man if she feels that she has more reproductive upside with another. Her attendant resentment toward the first man, whether or not it is based in reality, makes the transition decisive in her mind. She eradicates trust built over years to charge ahead with the new man. All of this is done for the potential of having a baby—a person who does not yet (nor may never) exist. Men will see this as unjust and irrational, ignoring the contribution to the mess from compulsions driven by the male's half of the program. The jilted man might be traumatized permanently, but the woman will think herself to be wholly justified and not feel the slightest remorse. If the program had sentience and consciousness, it would agree with her.

Likewise, a bride's ostentatious display of herself at her wedding might be less of a celebration than a declaration to female guests of her reproductive competitiveness and territory. In front of women, mothers might deliberately overact with affection toward their young children for the same reasons. If a childless and ostensibly liberated woman feels a pang on either

occasion, she is not betraying her political beliefs; it is the program egging her on to “get with the program,” literally.

The program is practical and ruthless in its rationality. But for whom is it rational?

Program-driven behavior is rational for the perpetuation of the species but can be irrational for, and contrary to, personal fulfillment. The program provides you with objective judgment in the present moment for our species’ long-term benefit, not for short-term justice in the interests of any individual’s life, including yours. “The Devil made me do it?” Not quite. Your blind spot is buried under all the resentment you might have about what you feel are other’s transgressions against you, and the heinous things that you might be doing to them.

As with vegetarians in a carnivorous world, men will say that such behavior is unjust. While there is no shame in behaving according to the program, something that all of us are born into, there is misery from not understanding it. Admitting the program exists does not diminish you as a woman. The program is running in men, too, or more precisely, throughout all men and women. It gives rise to some behaviors common to men and women, and others that are specific to each sex, such that men and women can survive and reproduce as a complement.

The program makes you *Homo sapiens*, but it does not give you humanity. The outcomes from the program can make your life miserable. You have the power to decide the purpose of the universe for yourself, not what a dumb, automated program blindly executes. But this is not new. Man has been doing so for as long as he has had will. Individual fulfillment cannot come from the program. It comes from how you rise above the

program while allowing the program to execute what it must for us to continue to exist as individuals and as a species. You must be aware of the blind spot in your life.

The program generates instinctual love within you for procreation and raising children such that they can do the same when their turn comes one day. It then forgets you after it uses you, leaving you to die and rot. But you are conscious and sentient. You can go beyond instinctual love and choose to love with honesty and sacrifice, and being compassionate, all of which are far outside the program's algorithm. Loving someone means to take custodianship of a person who is on the road to certain death, just as the person reciprocates likewise for you.

Rise to this if you seek happiness as a state of well-being. Do not let the blind spot between your will and the program drag you down by ruining your compassionate and just treatment of others.

Love and compassion

Love rooted in honesty and sacrifice along with compassionate treatment of others are essential for your abilities to flourish in creativity. Like so, a state of well-being known as happiness can develop within yourself as you create who you want to be in life.

Do not be frightened to offer love and compassion, but be discriminating as to whom you help. All men are driven by physical law to pursue their economic²⁵ self-interest so do not become bitter when they fall short of your expectations for

²⁵ Meaning the time and energy of one's life

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reciprocation. Just as lawsuits are a cost of doing business in the United States, unrequited love and compassion are the costs of creating your well-being. And if so-called friends are to abandon you, let it happen because of your honesty.

Eradicate social media from your life

Nothing debilitates the development of one's creativity and, therefore, one's state of well-being more than social media. It destroys your focus, consumes your time, and warps your personality in aid of someone else's profit. How many times have you checked your phone since you began reading this essay? You are frittering away years in trivial chatter and in crafting a fictitious person to compete with other narcissists who are caught in the same trap. All of this you do under the pretext of being connected to people and sharing valuable information.

Fortunately, it is easy to neutralize immediately—delete the applications now and do not look back. Find the courage within yourself to eradicate social media from your life. The sun will still rise in the morning.

Choose self-reliance

Do you love yourself? Do you hate yourself? Do you respect yourself? Are you proud or ashamed of yourself?

A self-reliant person thinks of himself or herself as much as a stone would think of itself. Self-reliant people inherently depend upon themselves—their decisions—to do whatever they

must to achieve a state of well-being known as happiness. If you are not thinking about yourself at all, then you are likely self-reliant. Self-reliance is a choice.

Confidence is only a whim

You might feel that you lack the confidence to create who you want to be. Are you worried about what other people will think about you? Is there something that you want to do, but do not know how to do it?

People's opinions are hard to slough off, but 2,000 years ago, Epictetus offered his solution, which holds true to this day:

What is to cry and to weep? An opinion. What is misfortune, or a quarrel, or a complaint? All these things are opinions; opinions founded on the delusion that what is not subject to our own choice can be either good or evil, which it cannot. By rejecting these opinions, and seeking good and evil in the power of choice alone, we may confidently achieve peace of mind in every condition of life.

If you do not know how to do something, learn it. No one ever has all the information needed so make some assumptions to fill the gaps, plan as best you can, then get on with the job of becoming who you want to be. You can refine your assumptions and plans as you go. Yes, missteps can be costly, but you will quickly learn to make better decisions and less expensive errors.

When you fail—and you will fail many times—you will recover, and life will go on.

What people call a lack of confidence is intellectual laziness. “I am waiting for the right time” or “I need time to prepare myself” are excuses. It is easier to quake in fear, point to obstacles, or grumble rather than do. “Doing” requires thought, focus, and tenacity, all of which is hard work. Even those who work tirelessly can be intellectually lazy. Meanwhile, incompetent people can be supremely confident.

Confidence is only a whim. Self-reliance is what counts.

Death is final

All that you can accomplish for yourself and your loved ones is accessible only by the precious seconds that remain in your life. By adopting the mindset of death being final, you compel yourself to industriousness today, squeezing value from every second of your life because you know that it might be your last.

The most ineffectual people are those who think that they have a second chance after death or that a supernatural entity is always on guard to rescue them if they get into trouble. Live your life as if your death will be final. No heaven. Or hell, for that matter. No reincarnation. No second chance. In other words, do not dawdle as if you have a spare life in the bank.

There is nothing wrong with wishing for life after death, but keep straight the difference between your hopes versus what is likely to be true. Have the courage to face the reality that your happiness is entirely in your hands. Your zest for life and creativity will soar, as will your humanity.

When things go in or against your favor, there is no purpose or grand scheme behind it, no reward or punishment from gods or supernatural forces. You are merely seeing a consequence of a decision that you made as a self-reliant, sovereign individual. You will find nothing more exhilarating because there is nothing more liberating than knowing that your destiny is in your hands.

Beware of cultural devotees

Take seriously only the few things that are indispensable to your well-being: your sovereignty, purpose, and promises. Your culture is not one of them, and be very careful to protect your sovereignty against cultural devotees who act with authority to usurp it in the name of your culture.

All cultures are rife with inane beliefs, so beware of devotees who use arguments from authority to pressure you to conform, arguments such as “Our culture is ancient” or “This is our way.” The more broken a person is, the more zealous he becomes about his culture. This is one of the marks of an ideologue. But do not overlook the con artists who know the truth and use it to manipulate you, too.

The cultural devotee forfeits his sovereignty at the drop of a hat, then tries to drag everyone else down to reassure himself that he is virtuous. For example, parents and friends who incessantly pressure a woman to marry according to a certain custom, then cajole her to have children, are doing so for their own sakes, not hers.

Excuse no aspect of culture from logical criticism. Question everything and everyone, at least quietly to yourself, especially cultural beliefs that you have long held to be true.

Embrace change

Change always prevails.

You can surf the wave of change or be drowned by it. People who stick to their way of doing things are deluding themselves with a false sense of stability. They fare the worst when change rips the delusion away. Avoid their folly by becoming comfortable with uncertainty. Use change to catapult yourself toward your goals.

Every decade or so, a so-called calamity befalls the world. COVID-19. The Lehman Crisis. The burst of the Dot-com bubble and, a decade before it, the Japanese asset price bubble. And on and on. People rush for shelter during such crises, unable to cope with change. The status quo is set back on its heels and recedes like low tide. Adaptable individuals who thrive on change find opportunities in plain sight before the high tide of the status quo floods in again, covering the seabed for another decade.

Most change is not as dramatic. It runs subtly and slowly in the background, easy to ignore until its weight, accumulated over years, crushes a person. This kind of change is the stuff of unfulfilled dreams, broken relationships, unemployment in middle age, and poor health.

The first few lines of Reinhold Niebuhr's "Prayer of Serenity" goes:

O God, give us the serenity to accept what cannot be
changed,
The courage to change what can be changed,
and the wisdom to know the one from the other.

If you turn the prayer into a pledge to yourself, instead of asking a god to dole out serenity, courage, and wisdom, you will find yourself accomplishing many things merely by doing what all organisms do: relying on oneself to adapt to change.

Do not try to change others

Acknowledge others for what they are and then let them be. You need not like them. By all means, coax, persuade, cajole, argue, appeal, and do everything necessary (short of usurping sovereignty) to enjoin them to follow you, if that is what you want. But that is not the same as trying to change someone.

When a person changes, it is by way of his own journey that has nothing to do with your ambitions for him. By recognizing that it is difficult for you to change people, you can focus instead on cleaning up your own act by developing your self-reliance and creative abilities.

People to be with

If you find yourself desirous of the company of so-called elite people—the rich, powerful, and famous—ask yourself why you would not want to spend your time with a pig farmer instead. Politicians, celebrities, and captains of industry cannot help you. There is no osmosis of success.

Seek out wise and creative people from all walks of life: craftsmen, laborers, the learned, the so-called “uneducated,” and so on. People who do things that interest you are important for your journey, not people with title and fame. Rather than chasing trends and being a socialite, seek people whose lives you admire, not because of their material goods and social status, but because of their character and creation of value for others.

How to create opportunities for yourself

Creativity does not work on a schedule. One does not wake up and say, “Today, I shall be brilliant!” To create opportunities for yourself, adopt an explorer’s mindset—a zest for inquiry and discovery.

Curiosity is the spark of all inquiry, which propels us through our lives on courses that have more meaning than just survival and reproduction. It impels you to undertake a quest, a creative endeavor for which you must apply most or all of your talents (i.e., will, intellect, and collaborative abilities) to find an answer. The struggle of the quest is painful, but you will feel driven to stick with it because a state of well-being known as happiness will well up inside you. And when you find the answer—really, create the answer—it is a moment of discovery, which produces the feeling of satisfaction, if not exhilaration. You will have created value for yourself. And you can do likewise for others. Apparently, this is the only way for any human to create value for another.

What happens if you are not curious? Bored and apathetic, you will stumble through a colorless life, living only to squeeze

value from others rather than create value for them and yourself.

Most students, for example, enter university without a smidgeon of natural curiosity. They matriculate only because they blindly follow a process of what to do after high school, or their parents force them, or some other apathetic reason. Devoid of imagination, such students say they do not even have a dream in life nor have ever had one, not even as a child. The spark of inquiry was never kindled in their hearts. Exploration cannot occur without curiosity. Encouraged by professors and university administrators, they dawdle for years, taking courses while believing that some kind of answer about what to do in life will magically pop out. The only ones who benefit from this inanity are academicians who line their pockets from it.

If a child has not developed the feelings that arise from the cycle of curiosity, question, quest, and discovery by the time he is in university, he is unlikely ever to do so. Most people will have at least an inkling about the feelings, even though their quests and discoveries might have been squashed by poor choices in life.

Therefore, reawaken and cultivate those feelings in yourself. Immerse yourself deeply in fields that interest you, not just by theoretical study, but by practical action of working in those fields. Do not put yourself in a pigeonhole, nor let others do it to you. Instead, boldly explore fields that are totally different from each other, no matter what detractors say, because the best opportunities come from seemingly different things. You are planting the seeds for creating opportunities for yourself. It might be slow going at first, but as you age, your creativity will

soar and you will have more opportunities than you had ever imagined.

Life-long learning nourishes the explorer's mindset. Formal education is important, but knowledge is essential. There often is little upside to attending a top-ranked university. Knowledge is available everywhere for free. Carefully select the sources of knowledge and advice that you need to advance your quest to creating who you want to be.

If you are keen on going to university, set your sights on modest schools having lesser names. The quality of the learning experience is often superior to what the big leagues have to offer. Judge the faculty by their ability to go beyond the textbook and teach you how to reason. They know that books do not have the answers to most questions, but they can help you to find the answer for yourself. They also know that processes and rules do not cover most situations in life.

Allow the world to be your tutor for life. Do not be scared by settings that feature foreign languages. You will find some way to communicate. Read voraciously. Write articles. Deliver a speech. Volunteer. Join clubs. Attend a conference. Enter competitions.

When you travel, try to take a short course or undertake an activity involving some aspect of the local culture, instead of rushing to visit as many tourist spots as possible. Sports or some kind of exercise should be in your portfolio always. Try things that you dislike or are unfamiliar, not to convince yourself to like them, but to avail yourself of more creative connections. Be forthright. Most important, live in the richness of diverse

experiences, and you will be able to create opportunities for yourself.

Do not merely work hard

Do not confuse “working hard” with “doing work of value.” Unless you can see a connection between the sweat of your brow and your value to someone, you are jeopardizing your well-being.

Suppose you are buried deep inside a bureaucracy and cannot hear the voice of the market. In that case, you are missing opportunities to improve your abilities to allow your creativity to flourish. You cannot achieve a state of well-being known as happiness by working hard under those conditions.

Never mind the prestige of an employer’s brand. Avoid companies that project a feeling of paternalism over their employees. Seek companies that shun the seniority system in favor of systems that allow workers to make their companies productive and profitable. Work hard on work of value.

Broken English is OK

Use your English, even if it is broken.

Japanese limits your sources of information and the number of opinions and ideas available to you. Add English to find novel ideas from abroad. You might be able to use those ideas to advance your prosperity in Japan or to take ideas from Japan to create new opportunities overseas. Diverse thoughts are

essential for your creativity, which is a more enticing reason for studying English than studying the language for its own sake. Learn English well enough to talk to people who can help you to broaden your perspectives.

Learning is essential for people of all ages, and English broadly expands the vista for understanding new things. Always keep learning. It does not matter if the topics are offbeat or arcane, as long as you like them and feel satisfied by learning them.

Adopt an entrepreneur's mindset

The Japanese Salaryman dwells in the stability of the company's processes. Like a tick that digs further into a dog's skin when one tries to pry it out, the Salaryman becomes more intransigent when facing change. If the host shakes off the tick—or dies—the tick dies. So it goes with the company and its Salarymen. Hardship, such as a corporate reorganization or unemployment, can send them reeling.

Entrepreneurs, however, design and implement solutions for their livelihood. They thrive on innovation and change because they dwell in the market, which is forever changing. Their adaptability is always improving. Over time, they become resistant to market volatility and can handle discouragement more pragmatically—abilities that are essential for achieving prosperity.

An entrepreneurial mindset can help you develop the wisdom and stamina to exploit the vagaries of business such as periods of unemployment. Wean yourself from dependence on

a steady paycheck by becoming self-reliant before the market wrenches your job from you when you least expect it.

A trend among Japanese women is to moonlight on a venture of their own design based on some personal interest (e.g., aromatherapy, pet products, cosmetics) until revenue from the venture is comparable to the income from their day jobs. At that point, they pursue the ventures full-time. Most are lifestyle ventures.

One need not create a company to embody the best qualities of entrepreneurs in one's life. An entrepreneurial mindset can help you to distinguish yourself, even if you decide to work in someone else's company, especially when people begin to associate financial gains for the company with your solutions. But save time by seeking people with entrepreneurial mindsets and their companies. Do not spend your best years trying to change or endure hardheads who are content to stagnate inside dinosaur companies.

Take responsibility

In Japan, following the rules absolves one of all sins. It is the perfect propitiation to family, colleagues, the community, and even the country for all one's transgressions, no matter how egregious the outcome.

As long as one follows the rules one is blameless. If one takes the higher road by going outside the rules to prevent harm or render help, such a person will be chastised: "You are lucky to have avoided failure this time, but you didn't follow the rules." He will have a black mark on his name.

Following the rules is a wicked ideology that reduces a man to a coward. A man must suppress his humanity to follow the rules and knowingly do what is wrong. How much pain and destruction are meted out daily by lazy cowards who cringe under cover of the rules? How many good people are punished for doing the right things that can prevent harm?

As the adage goes, “If you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything.” The first thing to fall is your sovereignty, followed by your humanity. If you do not take responsibility for your decisions and fully accept the consequences, you will wallow in a subhuman pit. All that you seek, foremost of which is well-being, can be yours when you take full, individual responsibility for your decisions, regardless of rules and consequences.

Satisfaction = Reality – Expectations

Imagine a beautiful woman at a bar who smiles invitingly at a man. The man’s imagination carries him away. He saunters to the woman and offers to buy her a drink. She rebuffs him with a blunt “No!” and turns her back.

The man’s expectations were high, but the reality was that the woman was uninterested in him. The truth or fact of the situation was worse than his expectations of it so he felt unsatisfied.

A few days later, he returns and sees a different woman at the bar. She shoots a deadpan look at him, then stares blankly into her drink. He is still stinging from the first woman’s rejection, but he knows that he must climb back in the saddle.

Bereft of expectation, he forces himself to ask her if he can refresh her drink. With an enthusiastic smile, she accepts his overture.

The woman of the second encounter was genuinely interested in the man despite her demeanor. The reality of the situation was much better than his expectations of it, and so he came away feeling immensely satisfied.

When reality is better than our expectations of it, we feel that we have gained something. Conversely, we feel a loss when reality turns out to be worse than our expectations. The size of the surprise—and the emotions that go with it—is proportional to the difference between reality and our expectations.

Can we ever truly know reality?

Reality is the world or state of things as they exist. It is difficult to know factual reality with absolute certainty—even the act of observing reality changes reality. One can only say that something is more likely to be true or less likely to be true, not what is or will be true.

Our will controls our expectations about reality. Expectation is a decision, a kind of speculation about reality. We decide what reality is likely to be and what it means for us. Our decision has two parts: the likelihood of thinking that something is true (or will happen) and its value to us.

It is difficult to keep our expectations grounded, especially regarding people's behavior. Being social organisms, humans swim in each other's emotions and machinations, good and bad, such as irrationality, logic, sincerity, and duplicity. Intentionally or not, we continually influence our fellow man's expectations, nudging them to be out of tune with reality.

To get around this problem, should we not just set our expectations to zero? Try, but you might find it impossible to be of any practical value. Instead, control your expectations according to the precept: “What you hope to be true may not be the same as what is true.” When reality turns out to be better or worse than your expectations, try to learn why. You will set more realistic expectations for the next time. If you are perpetually unsatisfied, then you lack an understanding of human nature in yourself.

THE FRAUD OF MONARCHIES

The divine right of kings persists as an axiom in the minds of enough people to allow 44 nations, states, and provinces to have monarchies: in Asia (13), Europe (12), North America (10), Oceania (6), and Africa (3). They exist as absolute, semi-constitutional, constitutional, subnational, or commonwealth realms.

In the United Kingdom, for example, 90 percent approve of Queen Elizabeth II, but 40 percent of the population is agnostic or atheist. Elizabeth herself believes *Dieu et mon droit* (“God and my right”), the motto of the Monarch of the United Kingdom. For her and many of her subjects, coronation is akin to a sacrament of the Church of England, which she also heads. Her crown, scepter, and orb are devices of the fraud. There are innumerable other devices that arose over centuries and became bound to every atom of British culture and society. As it is with the symbols and regalia of all monarchs, so it is with their grandiose buildings and monuments: St. Peter’s Basilica, the Kofun tumuli of Japan, the Pyramids, and countless others. The edifices are simultaneously intimidating and inspiring, a psychological trick indispensable to hoodwinking people about the divine right of kings.

Queen Elizabeth II, Emperor Naruhito, and Pope Francis steadfastly believe that they are serving their subjects and are committed to doing so for life. They, too, apparently are duped by the fraud. Do they and likeminded monarchs warrant criticism?

To answer, start by considering that billions of people have affection for monarchs whom they think are good people, dedicated to “their” subjects, and inherently better than any politician. Monarchs are also cultural bastions.²⁶ The British Monarchy, for example, is a global brand that represents things “British,” many of which are products made in the United Kingdom and important to its economy. Advocates of constitutional monarchies further argue that citizens have dominion over their individual sovereignties; the monarch is powerless and “just a symbol of the people,” a kind of grandmother or grandfather to the nation.

These, however, are all clumsy attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable: the divine right of kings and sovereignty of the individual. To illustrate the point, compare The Constitution of the Empire of Japan (1889) with the The Constitution of Japan (1947).

The preamble to The Constitution of the Empire of Japan proclaims the fraud of the divine right of kings unambiguously:

The right of sovereignty of the State, We have inherited from Our Ancestors, and We shall bequeath them to Our descendants. Neither We nor they shall in future fail to wield them, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution hereby granted.

as do all 17 articles of its first chapter, such as:

²⁶ The entourage is adept at making an ordinary person seem larger than life. That is its job, after all, in the fraud.

Article 1. The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.

Article 3. The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution.

After World War II, Japan's divine right of kings was hammered at American gunpoint into an American-style social contract. The result is The Constitution of Japan. Its preamble sets forth the axioms of the social contract for its parties, that is, Japanese sovereign individuals:

We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet...do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances, and rescripts in conflict herewith.

But the first article of The Constitution of Japan introduces two contradictions:

Article 1. The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.

“The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State” contradicts the axiom of the “State,” which is an abstract device. The state is without will. Therefore, only things without will (e.g., inanimate objects, such as flags, anthems, or representations of dead historical figures) or people who are not parties to the social contract can be used to symbolize it. For “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State” to be logically consistent with the axioms of the social contract, either the emperor cannot have will (i.e., he is dead) or he cannot be a party to the social contract (i.e., he is an alien or a slave).

The Emperor is alive and is not an alien. Is he a slave, then? Even though the Emperor does not vote, there is no constitutional prohibition of his suffrage. Second, he can refuse or abdicate his position. Thus, the Emperor has individual sovereignty and is a party to the social contract. He is not a slave. “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State,” therefore, is a logical contradiction of the axiomatic definition of “state.”

The second contradiction has to do with “unity of the People.” Many things, such as language, religion, and even the concept of a social contract, can cause people to have the same opinion on some matter or matters. But “unity of the People” is a logical fallacy of the same kind as “society’s values,” proven

earlier.²⁷ “People” or “society” do not and cannot have “values” or “unity.” “Unity of the People” sets down a falsehood as an axiom, which states that each sovereign individual who is a party to the social contract *must* have the same sentiment a priori on some matter or matters, and then further imposes a symbol—the Emperor—on that fictitious situation. “Unity of the people” directly contradicts the premise of a social contract and the very definition of individual sovereignty by removing the individual’s dominion over the choice of his sentiments.

The only way to resolve both contradictions is to redefine the axiomatic definition of the “State” from being an abstract device to being a living sovereign individual as in The Constitution of the Empire of Japan, Article 4. In other words, invoke the divine right of kings.

Today’s Emperor is a gentle soul who, by the first line of the Constitution of Japan, is a symbol of nothing tangible (i.e., the abstract device of the State and the logical fallacy of the “unity of the People”). Practically, all of these legal contortions and mental gymnastics are designed to preserve one thing in the transition from The Constitution of the Empire of Japan to The Constitution of Japan. The Emperor is the chief shaman-priest of the Shinto religion and the supreme religious leader in the country: the bogus solution to the threat of the finality of death. In other words, the Emperor is the perfect distraction, drawing attention from what man fears most.

But from what is he used to distract attention?

²⁷ See the essay, “Sovereignty.”

His ancestor, Emperor Meiji, was used by the totalitarian con artists of his day²⁸, as has been done to generations of his predecessors for millennia. The divine right of kings is not used by the Emperor. Instead, he is an instrument of it. Totalitarian con artists use the divine right of kings as a tool to subjugate sovereign individuals.

When they wrote The Constitution of the Empire of Japan, totalitarian con artists surreptitiously institutionalized their power:

Article 17. A Regency shall be instituted in conformity with the provisions of the Imperial House Law. The Regent shall exercise the powers appertaining to the Emperor in His name.

as was repeated almost verbatim in the The Constitution of Japan:

Article 5. When, in accordance with the Imperial House Law, a Regency is established, the Regent shall perform his acts in matters of state in the Emperor's name. In this case, paragraph one of the preceding article will be applicable.

The Regents, and their entourage of aristocrats, priests, industrialists, military strongmen, politicians, and others behind the scenes, have always run the show. The fraud of the

²⁸ For example, the Samurai Oligarchs of the Satsuma and Choshu clans, who ruled behind the throne as members of the Privy Council

divine right of kings is the linchpin on which their power behind the throne hangs. Eliminate the symbol of the ideology—the Emperor—and the ideology itself unravels. The totalitarian con artists lose control.

And so the divine right of kings endures, despite Emperor Hirohito's renunciation of personal divinity, and all the constitutional expressions having to do with the will and sovereignty of the people. This situation should not be surprising. After almost total annihilation of Japan by conventional and nuclear warfare, Japanese totalitarians—con artists and ideologues alike—were intransigent about removing any aspect of the divine right of kings in The Constitution of Japan. After millennia of hoodwinking individuals, the totalitarian con artists had everything to lose. Then as now, totalitarian con artists had no compunction about sacrificing innocents and totalitarian ideologues after having used them to acquire and maintain control by using the fraud of the divine right of kings.

The people have been so bamboozled for centuries by those acting with the divine right of kings that they cannot comprehend their natural state of existence and the concept of sovereignty. The ideologies promulgate this. The concept of sovereignty has been beaten out of the population for so many centuries that they have yet to show they know what it is, how to safeguard it, and how to exercise it.

Again, none of this is unique to Japan. It is the basis for every monarchy in all cultures and all times.

The central premise of all monarchies is incontestable. One person—the monarch—holds the state's political authority, and

does so based on the abjectly fraudulent claim that a deity ordained it. Whether or not the monarch made the claim does not negate the fraud. The man who understands that his sovereignty and his existence are the same will not tolerate an iota of the usurpation of it, even if the usurpation is said to be symbolic or benevolent. You cannot love someone who has the prerogative to usurp your existence. By definition, a monarch is a totalitarian, whether he exercises his prerogative directly or is used by those behind the scenes to do so.

Totalitarian ideologues and con artists alike will attempt to justify the divine right of kings by ascribing benefits to the so-called good deeds of their monarch. What is there to criticize, for example, about an elderly monarch's visit to a disaster area to inspire the victims—indeed, the nation—with a demonstration of dignity and resilience in the face of calamity?

Test the totalitarian's claims, at least quietly to yourself, with three questions²⁹:

1. What is the evidence for their claim?
2. What is the true cost of the "benefit?"
3. What is the alternative?

The claims of monarchists resolutely fail all three tests. Beware, too, of how they fail the tests, most of all the second one. The true cost is not that of supporting a royal household and the attendant civil service bureaucracy; rather, it is your life.

²⁹ Few if any policies that proponents claim are for the public good—including policies having nothing to do with monarchies—can pass the three tests.

Wherever monarchies exist, there are ways to preserve the many things of practical and sentimental value that have become intrinsic to culture because of the fraud, while dispensing with the scam itself. Those things of value need not be sacrificed to promote individual sovereignty. Still, they are incontestably subordinate to individual sovereignty, which has primacy over all cultural constructs, no matter what their age or culture of origin. No man should ever be required to justify his sovereignty—his existence.

**The American social contract as
an antidote to monarchism**

The Founders of the United States created an agreement or “social contract” among all its citizens; that is, the members of their community. The agreement is based on a set of axioms that are congruent with the laws of physics as manifested in human behavior.³⁰ The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution (in its original form) comprise a social contract or all terms and conditions necessary and sufficient for people to

³⁰ Some argue that the Constitution is a “living document” that changes meaning according to the needs of society. The argument is flawed. The Constitution is, in fact, a set of contract provisions based on axioms of physical law as manifested in human nature, and the Framers included a process to change the provisions. The axioms and contract provisions comprise a complete and internally consistent axiomatic system on which to base a legal system to govern the transaction. The original words, therefore, cannot change meaning. It does not mean that the resultant legal system will be internally consistent or consistent with the contract. Consistency depends on the self-discipline of the parties to adhere to the axioms and the mechanism to change the contract.

form a community and execute the transaction: “Who decides who gets what and at what price?” The rule of law, separation of powers, recognition of individual rights, and separation of church and state are examples of the rules.

As for the transaction itself, the Constitution’s Framers (authors) stated it in a cover letter,³¹ which accompanied their draft of the Constitution:

It is obviously impracticable in the Federal Government of these States to secure all rights of independent sovereignty to each, and yet provide for the interest and safety of all. Individuals entering into society must give up a share of liberty to preserve the rest. The magnitude of the sacrifice must depend as well on situation and circumstance, as on the object to be obtained.

The sovereign man uses a portion of his sovereignty as currency to buy services from the state (i.e., from all other members of the community). Because the Constitution is also fully congruent with the manifestation of physical law in humans, each member’s purchase of maximum benefits from all the other members of the community can be accomplished at the lowest cost to each member’s individual sovereignty.

A non-member can apply to be a party to the social contract. If he is qualified according to criteria outlined in the social contract, the parties to the social contract (i.e., the members of the community) can admit him. In other words, he

³¹ The Letter of Transmittal to the President of Congress

becomes a member of the community—the state—and is called “a citizen of The United States of America.” The *only* reason for one to join the community is to be allowed to participate in the transaction. There are at least as many reasons as immigrants, but all reasons are incarnations of this one reason.

One can renounce one’s membership (e.g., citizenship) in a state. Practically speaking, one would just be swapping one state for another because the Earth is covered with states. Nevertheless, immigration and emigration happen every day because people see better benefits in another state compared to their own. The United States is the best example of a state that people prefer to join: each year, approximately 1,000,000 immigrate, and fewer than 5,000 emigrate. If your state does not allow you to leave, you are out of luck; you will have to attempt reform by political means or by force.

In modern times, unless we immigrate, none of us chooses to be subject to a state or to be a party to an agreement such as the Constitution—we are born into them. Some say that not having a choice makes any such contract void. The counterargument is that, from conception, the child is in a filial contract with his parents; they raise and protect the child in exchange for the fulfillment of parenthood and support and protection when they grow old. Children, in the course of their maturation, establish relationships with other members of the community and, by the transitive nature of the contract, enter into the social contract with all other members in the society.

Because the Constitution as a social contract contains everything that is necessary and sufficient to form a community and execute the transaction, all provisions are of equal

importance. Totalitarians are drawn to three provisions that are avenues to power when compromised for political expediency: (i) all sovereignty belongs to the individual except for the portion that he has explicitly relinquished to the state; (ii) the services of the state are limited to safety (i.e., the Framers deliberately excluded services of benevolence and charity); and (iii) the Framers established a limited democracy and included provisions to prevent tyranny of the majority.

The antidote has vulnerabilities. Totalitarian con artists use sophistry and ambiguity to deceive the ignorant who then become totalitarian ideologues. The con artists and ideologues have manipulated half the population of the United States to despise the other half. Half thinks that the Constitution must be expunged, while the other half clings to it. Certitude of opinion runs in inverse ratio to the certainty of knowledge: a measure of ignorance. Once a value in common to diverse peoples who had little else in common, the Constitution now reveals common ignorance.

It might be too late for Americans to reset the clock. As with all independence movements, unanswered grievances will escalate to secession and, therefore, violence.

AN IDEOLOGY IN MODERN AMERICA

The ideology

An example of an ideology prevalent in the United States today is the assertion that the Founders of the country were racists and ipso facto the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are “racist.”

Proponents of this viewpoint—perhaps as many as half of all Americans—claim that white heterosexual men of Western European descent established the country to perpetuate and expand the enslavement of people of African descent so as to satisfy their compulsive race hatred and extract economic value from their victims. Proponents further claim that slavery was unique to the United States and that people of African descent were unique as victims of slavery. Anyone with white skin³² in the present day United States has inherited privileges that are essential to success and well-being. The privileges are unavailable to people of other skin tones because of racism. Demands for settlement for damages to the victims include restitution, expunging the Constitution, and complete reformulation of the United States to eradicate inequality among its citizens.

³² Proponents have not explained how they distinguish between white and other skin tones. Their references to white people seem to be those of Fitzpatrick Scale Types 1 and 2; other skin tones, Types 3 to 6. It is unclear, for example, if a Jewish male who is Type 1 and a Holocaust survivor is in the white group.

Debunking the ideology

The ideology can be debunked in two parts. I first disprove the claims that people of African descent were unique as slavery's victims, slavery was unique to the United States, and the country was formed to perpetuate and expand the enslavement of people of African descent.

The genus *Homo* appeared approximately two million years ago. *Homo sapiens*, 200,000 years ago. First proto-cities, 10,000. First civilizations, 3,000.

From *Homo*'s emergence, hominids have been in a state of suffering in the struggle to survive and reproduce. The lives of almost all *Homo sapiens* who have ever existed have been arduous, punctuated by moments of happiness, peace, and well-being. Evidence from as long ago as the Neolithic Revolution and first proto-cities shows that our species' normal practice has been slavery, ideology (religious, political, and economic), the divine right of kings, castes, violence, and all manner of xenophobia, bigotry, racism, and prejudice—in other words, the usurpation of individual sovereignty. This behavior is congruent with evolutionary programmed behavior to survive and reproduce at the lowest expenditure of energy.

Two developments in man's evolution run opposite to this long-standing and ubiquitously bad behavior:

1. *Homo* formed communities approximately two million years ago; and
2. 244 years ago, man created a social contract among the members of a community to protect them from usurping

each other's sovereignty by asking individuals to use a portion of their sovereignties as payment for services of safety.

By 2020, the second development had directly or indirectly liberated 91 percent of our species from the historical norm of destitution and slavery.

To comprehend the magnitude of the second achievement, imagine compressing the 200,000 years of modern man's history into one year. *Homo sapiens* come on the scene on January 1, midnight. Almost all members of our species would be living in destitution until December 31 at 3 p.m., when the United States Constitution appears.³³ By midnight, only nine hours later, almost all humans would be lifted from destitution, resulting in the world as we know it today.

The story of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is about how such a monumental achievement came about, incongruous with the entire history of behavior of our species, and how disenfranchised people were progressively allowed to enter into the social contract.

The Framers did not write the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to sustain and promote slavery; its flourishing had been thoroughly secure and needed no such extraordinary measures to aid its continuance and expansion. Our species had already mastered slavery, having practiced it for millennia, as is done in parts of the world to this day.

³³ On this compressed time scale, slaves build the Great Pyramid of Giza in approximately 45 minutes on Christmas Day, less than a week before the appearance of the United States Constitution.

Instead, the Framers thrust the Constitution into the morass of man's bad behavior. Some people, mostly a group of European descendants in the United States, found a sanctuary for themselves in a community based on the social contract of the Constitution. Most of the bad behavior, however, continued worldwide, including in the newly created United States.

But parties to the social contract were able to bring more people into it by strenuous efforts over many generations. Variations of the contract were slowly disseminated worldwide and imitated. Some communities improved the lot of their citizenry, though most failed: old, bad habits are hard to break. That it took 189 years for all Americans to be full parties to the social contract seems like a long time if one fails to see it as part of the 200,000-year history of modern man.

As for debunking the rest of the ideology, I use six facts to refute fully the claim that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are "racist."³⁴ Ideologues seldom use words with the precision necessary to focus their claims. "Racist" is such a word. Totalitarian con artists conflate racist with xenophobe by design, whereas totalitarian ideologues do it from intellectual laziness. By using words imprecisely to accuse people indiscriminately, it is easier to usurp their sovereignty. For the avoidance of doubt, I use the dictionary's definition of

³⁴ Totalitarian ideologues make a logic error in their premise at the outset by anthropomorphizing the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the country in the problem definition. A contract cannot be racist, a society cannot have values, and so on. Totalitarian con artists use the logical fallacy to dupe people into relinquishing their sovereignties.

racist: a person who is prejudiced against or antagonistic toward people because of their race or ethnicity.

1. *Personhood was ascribed to slaves.* By the manner of their use of “person” in the Constitution, that is, without any modifiers having to do with sex or race, the Framers ascribed personhood equally to all people including those who were slaves: “other persons,”³⁵ “such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit,”³⁶ and a “person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof.”³⁷ The use of “person” is equivalent to every other instance of the word in the Constitution, thereby establishing the axiom of individual sovereignty and equal application of the law to all humans.
2. *Exclusion of race.* The Declaration of Independence (1776) and the original Constitution (1789) do not contain any words having to do with color, race, slaves, or slavery. The only two references to nationality, “Indians not taxed” and “Indian Tribes,” are about tax-exemption and commerce with members of an extant sovereign community, not a race. Compare this to the Confederate Constitution of 1861 that has one reference to “African,” three references to “negroes,” and ten to “slaves” or “slavery.”

³⁵ Article I, Section 2, Clause 3

³⁶ Article I, Section 9, Clause 1

³⁷ Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3

3. *Exclusion of property in persons.* There are no provisions, references, or allusions in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution having to do with property in persons.³⁸
4. *Measures contrary to slavery.* Three measures³⁹ contrary to slavery in the Thirteen Colonies were not prohibited by the Constitution: the manumission of slaves, the prohibition of a citizen to transport his slaves to any state, and the barring of Congress from interfering in the transatlantic slave trade.

³⁸ Critics assert that the Framers thought that a black man is three-fifths of a white man, which they say is incontestable evidence that the Constitution is “racist.” I contend that the three-fifths compromise was a brilliant device against the slaveholding states. Slaveholders wanted to count their slaves toward representation by population in Congress, yet continue to usurp their sovereignty. The device turned the slaveholder’s argument, based on private property rights, against them to reduce their representation in Congress while enjoining them to the social contract.

The critics’ argument is disproven as follows: (i) the Constitution has only one definition of “Person” (i.e., not one for slaves and another for free men), and a person is indivisible; and (ii) the provision applied to slaves—property—not free persons, including those who were black (i.e., “free Negro,” “free black” (freedmen) and non-whites that were born free). Federalist Paper No. 54 “regards them as inhabitants, but as debased by servitude below the equal level of free inhabitants, which regards the SLAVE as divested of two fifths of the MAN. We have hitherto proceeded on the idea that representation related to persons only, and not at all to property. But is it a just idea? Government is instituted no less for protection of the property, than of the persons, of individuals.”

³⁹ Excluding civil war

5. *Uninvolved with slavery.* After the American Revolutionary War, the Articles of Confederation replaced the divine right of kings. The Constitution was written to improve upon the Articles of Confederation by establishing a social contract, not to abolish nor expand slavery.⁴⁰
6. *Observance of sovereignty.* The federal government had no legal authority to compel sovereign states—essentially small countries with their own constitutions—to admit “other persons” (i.e., slaves) or anyone else to the social contract. Because each state was a signatory to the social contract, enfranchisement or disenfranchisement of any individual to the social contract at the federal level could only come through his state and according to his relationship to his state.

Implications of the ideology

The axiomatic basis, logical self-consistency, and completeness of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution as a social contract are impeccable.

Unfortunately, Americans are not working together to understand the people and circumstances surrounding the Constitution’s creation. The Founders were complex men who were dealing with complicated issues. To call everything racist

⁴⁰ Slavery would indeed expand dramatically under legislation that came after the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution before it was eventually abolished a century later.

blocks one from truthful and complete inquiry, masking a deeper problem that makes the abomination of slavery in the United States look minuscule by comparison. In the ideological hysteria that Americans have created for themselves, half are tearing down a workable system; half are clinging to it. Neither side shows that it understands what it is trying to expunge or defend.

Consider Thomas Jefferson,⁴¹ who owned more than 600 slaves throughout his life, yet roundly denounced slavery in his draft of the Declaration of Independence:

He [King George III] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where Men should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or

⁴¹ According to Monticello: "Jefferson wrote that maintaining slavery was like holding "a wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go." He thought that his cherished federal union, the world's first democratic experiment, would be destroyed by slavery. To emancipate slaves on American soil, Jefferson thought, would result in a large-scale race war that would be as brutal and deadly as the slave revolt in Haiti in 1791. But he also believed that to keep slaves in bondage, with part of America in favor of abolition and part of America in favor of perpetuating slavery, could only result in a civil war that would destroy the union. Jefferson's latter prediction was correct."

restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he has obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the Liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

Delegates from South Carolina and Georgia, and Northern delegates who represented merchants involved in the transatlantic slave trade, opposed Jefferson's passage in a fierce debate among all the delegates. Jefferson's passage was dropped in favor of the familiar passage about King George's incitement of "domestic insurrections among us."

Rather than looking under the bed for racists, Americans could be focusing on the central question of their time, as Jefferson and his compatriots had tried to do: "What portion of sovereignty should the individual cede to the state in return for what services?" Rather than asking questions loaded with unverified assumptions such as "Why didn't they abolish slavery in the Constitution?", Americans could be asking practical ones: "What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for the eradication of slavery?"

One might find, for example, that manumission is futile for large-scale emancipation because it depends on the whims of slaveholding sovereign individuals. Deeper thought might reveal that eradication of slavery has a better chance of succeeding if all the slaveholders and non-slaveholders (excluding slaves) in a

society have individual sovereignty and are joined to each other by a social contract. Change comes when individuals feel that their sovereignty is being jeopardized by differences of opinion on any issue, slavery among them.

Could the social contract have been installed if just some states consented to independence? Though achieving such independence would have been unlikely from a military standpoint, an independent state (or states) conceivably could have installed a Constitution and social contract with abolitionist clauses. But that is not a solution for eradicating slavery. Any issue—slavery included—would merely have continued in Britain and her loyalist states “as is.” But without unanimous consent⁴² to the Declaration of Independence, there could be no independence of all the states, and therefore, no chance of using the social contract to eradicate slavery one day entirely in the United States.

Simply put, when men are free to choose as sovereign individuals according to their self-interests, the entire community achieves a greater state of wellness and prosperity than if a few men decide for everyone. The trade-offs that come with freedom of choice are bitter. One will see all manner of suffering lasting for years, if not generations. The counter-intuitiveness of this phenomenon causes angst for compassionate people, giving rise to fights about humanitarian solutions that heal, equalize, comfort, nurture and so forth.

Despite the bitter trade-offs of being free to choose, there is one thing worse than the 200,000 years of slavery that preceded

⁴² New York abstained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

you: the prospect of another 200,000 years of slavery into which you might be among the first to “matriculate.”

A real problem arising from the Constitution

From the time of America’s founding until today, federal, state, and local governments have been enacting laws that egregiously violate the terms of the social contract. Examples in the legal system abound, as do amendments⁴³ to the Constitution itself.

Perhaps the first law to violate the social contract was a federal one about naturalization. As with all its other provisions, so it is with naturalization; the Constitution⁴⁴ did not mention race. The First Congress (1790), however, established a federal law that was incongruent with the Constitution: “any alien, being a free white person,” having met certain criteria “may be admitted to become a citizen thereof,” by application to common court in the state in which he resided.⁴⁵

How can this sort of thing happen?

Many of the laws such as the one above spring from racism. But most do not. Ideologues’ obsession about racism in the Constitution obliterates nuanced discussion and understanding about the actual vulnerabilities of the social contract, thereby allowing the most dangerous problem to slip by undetected.

⁴³ Unconstitutional constitutional amendments

⁴⁴ Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4

⁴⁵ First Congress, Session II, Chapter 3, Section 1, 1790.

The Declaration of Independence and Constitution comprise a social contract containing everything necessary and sufficient to form a community and execute the transaction of services of safety among the members of the community. The members pay for these services using a portion of their individual sovereignties as currency. Therefore, all the provisions are of equal importance.

But totalitarians are magnetically drawn to three of its provisions that are the source of ultimate power over the community: (i) all sovereignty belongs to the individual except for the portion that he has explicitly relinquished to the state; (ii) the services of the state are limited to safety, the Framers having deliberately excluded services of benevolence and charity; and (iii) the Framers established a limited democracy to prevent a tyranny of the majority and included provisions against a pure democracy.

You will find that practically every occurrence of a law that violates the social contract has arisen from someone compromising one or more of these provisions. Puffed-up with virtue, ideologues blunder into violating the social contract because they are in love with themselves for helping others. Meanwhile, totalitarian con artists violate it insidiously, usually while people are distracted by the ideologues. Regardless, the motivation is the same for the ideologues and con artists: control. Thus, the outcome is the usurpation of individual sovereignty and destruction of well-being.

Almost 250 years after the founding of their country, Americans are left with a Constitution and legal precedents that contradict and nullify parts of the original Constitution

and Declaration of Independence. Battles are fought between originalists and those who advocate a living Constitution (i.e., loose constructionism). The former group leaves economic, scientific, and value-laden judgements to the citizens to make according to the citizens' political process and in the citizens' capacity as sovereign individuals. The latter group usurps sovereignty to prescribe its values on 300 million citizens by a judicial hegemony, the most visible of which is the Supreme Court—a group of nine intellectuals who have no special qualification beyond any of their countrymen to decide such matters. The values of these two groups, the originalists and the living Constitution advocates, are fundamentally different. One group subscribes to the axioms that form the premise of the social contract—the nature of the very existence of the United States—and the other does not.

Political interests change, but human nature does not. If there are no universal axioms based on physical law and human nature that apply to all humans and in all times, there are no reference points to have any discussion that is congruent with the physical reality of the universe and our existence. There is no chance to have continuity of the country forward *and* backward in time⁴⁶ and, therefore, no chance to create a community in which the individual has dominion over the products of his labor—his existence.

If Americans eventually destroy their social contract, its epitaph shall surely read, “The road to hell *was* paved with good intentions.”

⁴⁶ See the essay, “Money.”

The end of sovereignty

A lesson from slavery in the United States and elsewhere is that anyone can perpetuate slavery, just as the lesson from the Holocaust is that anyone can perpetuate a holocaust. And because of the nature of man, someone is always attempting to do so. The impetus to be a totalitarian is a quality intrinsic to *Homo sapiens* as a species and is agnostic to race and culture.

Totalitarian con artists use sophistry and ambiguity to deceive the ignorant, from which totalitarian ideologies propagate like viruses. Ideologues throw everyone's sovereignty into jeopardy. As a result, half the population of the United States despises the other half. Half thinks that the Constitution must be expunged, while the other half clings to it. A measure of ignorance is that certitude of opinion runs in inverse ratio to the certainty of knowledge. Both sides are convinced of the correctness of their views. So far, the results have been appalling, as has been their treatment of each other.

The success of the Declaration of Independence and the original Constitution is in part about how disenfranchised people were allowed to enter into the social contract. As part of that, stable hierarchies are necessary for the proper functioning of the entire community. But stable hierarchies are not arbitrary. They arise naturally from individual competency—not from racism, sexism, or other forms of thirst for power⁴⁷—and are a consequence of the exercise of individual sovereignty within the framework of the social contract.

⁴⁷ Hierarchies not based on competency collapse from their inherent instability.

This also means that there are limits to the social contract's scalability; one cannot add members to the contract ad infinitum, because hierarchies flatten to a population's lowest common denominator of (in-)competence. To offset the flattening, an involuntary redistribution of private property is necessary, which violates individual sovereignty. The social contract breaks down.

Another limitation of the social contract has to do with the degree of democracy that the citizens establish. Today, Americans fanatically pursue a radical, pure democracy without having first read the founding documents of their own country, let alone the owner's manuals of failed democracies from antiquity to present. Having little capacity for self-reflection, they cannot see themselves as the booby traps in what they hope to build. Many aim to extirpate the Constitution, an instrument that allows each member of the community to create the maximum value for one's fellow citizens and, therefore, oneself by mitigating the part of human nature that usurps sovereignty. For Americans, the social contract is indispensable to their country's existence and coherence because America consists of people from the widest spectrum of cultures who have little if anything else in common on which to base a community.

The classical criticisms of democracy by those who were the first to experiment with it are explicit and accurate. The system devolves into mob rule then collapses. Individual sovereignty dies and totalitarians prevail. Slavery ensues. Only then will one realize that the one thing worse than slavery is the intractability of eradicating it.