Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our **POSITIVELY** by uniting our affections, the latter **NEGATIVELY** by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first a patron, the last a punisher.

Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries BY A GOVERNMENT, which we might expect in a country WITHOUT GOVERNMENT, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him out of two evils to choose the least. **WHEREFORE**, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows, that whatever FORM thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

In order to gain a clear and just idea of the design and end of government, let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest, they will then represent the first peopling of any country, or of the world. In this state of natural liberty, society will be their first thought. A thousand motives will excite them thereto, the strength of one man is so unequal to his wants, and his mind so unfitted for perpetual solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and relief of another, who in his turn requires the same. Four or five united would be able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the midst of a wilderness, but...
The animal-worship reached its utmost pitch of grossness and absurdity when certain individual brute beasts were declared to be incarnate deities, and treated accordingly. At Memphis, the ordinary capital, there was maintained, at any rate from the time of Aahmes I (about B.C. 1650), a sacred bull, known as Hapi or Apis, which was believed to be an actual incarnation of the god Pthah, and was an object of the highest veneration. The Apis bull dwelt in a temple of his own near the city, had his train of attendant priests, his harem of cows, his meals of the choicest food, his grooms and currycombers who kept his coat clean and beautiful, his chamberlains who made his bed, his cup-bearers who brought him water, and on fixed days was led in a festive procession through the main streets of the town, so that the inhabitants might see him, and come forth from their dwellings and make obeisance.

When he died he was carefully embalmed, and deposited, together with magnificent jewels and statuettes and vases, in a polished granite sarcophagus, cut out of a single block, and weighing between sixty and seventy tons! The cost of an Apis funeral amounted sometimes, as we are told, to as much as £20,000. To contain the sarcophagi, several long galleries were cut in the solid rock near Memphis, from which arched lateral chambers went off on either side, each constructed to hold one sarcophagus. The number of Apis bulls buried in the galleries was found to be sixty-four.

Nor was this the only incarnate god of which Egypt boasted. Another bull, called Mnevis, was maintained in the great temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, and, being regarded as an incarnation of Ra or Tum, was as much reverenced by the Heliopolites as Apis by the Memphites, A third, called Bacis or Pacis, was kept at Hermouthis, which was also an incarnation of Ra. And a white cow at Momemphis was reckoned an incarnation of Athor. Who can wonder that foreign nations ridiculed a religion of this kind—one that "turned the glory of the Eternal Godhead "into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay"?

The Egyptians had also a further god incarnate, who was not shut up out of sight like the Apis and Mnevis and Bacis bulls and the Athor cow, but was continually before their eyes, the centre of the nation's life, the prime object of attention. This was the monarch, who for the time being occupied the throne. Each king of Egypt claimed not only to be "son of the Sun," but to be an actual incarnation of the sun—"the living Horus." And this claim was, from an early date, received and allowed. "Thy Majesty," says a courtier under the twelfth dynasty, "is the good God ... the great God, the equal of the Sun-God. ... I live from the breath which thou givest" Brought into the king's presence, the courtier "falls on his belly," amazed and confounded. "I was as one brought out of the dark; my tongue was dumb; my lips failed me; my heart was no longer in my body to know whether I was alive or dead;" and this, although "the god" had "addressed him mildly."

Another courtier attributes his long life to the king's favour. Ambassadors, when presented to the king, "raised their arms in adoration of the good god," and declared to him—"Thou art like the Sun in all that thou doest: thy heart realizes all its wishes; shouldest thou wish to make it day during the night, it is so forthwith.... If thou sayest to the water, 'Come from the rock,' it will come in a torrent suddenly at the words of thy mouth. The god Ra is like thee in his limbs, the god Khepra in creative force. Truly thou art the living image of thy father, Tum.... All thy words are accomplished daily." Some of the kings set up their statues in the temples by the side of the greatest of the national deities, to be the objects of a similar worship.

Rawlinson, George. “Ancient Egypt”
Passage 3

From our present point of view, it is difficult to exclude perception from knowledge; at any rate, knowledge is displayed by actions based upon perception. A bird flying among trees avoids bumping into their branches; its avoidance is a response to visual sensations. This response has the characteristic of accuracy, in the main, and leads us to say that the bird "knows," by sight, what objects are in its neighbourhood. For a behaviourist, this must certainly count as knowledge, however it may be viewed by analytic psychology. In this case, what is known, roughly, is the stimulus; but in more advanced knowledge the stimulus and what is known become different. For example, you look in your calendar and find that Easter will be early next year. Here the stimulus is the calendar, whereas the response concerns the future. Even this can be paralleled among instruments: the behaviour of the barometer has a present stimulus but foretells the future, so that the barometer might be said, in a sense, to know the future.

However that may be, the point I am emphasizing as regards knowledge is that what is known may be quite different from the stimulus, and no part of the cause of the knowledge-response. It is only in sense-knowledge that the stimulus and what is known are, with qualifications, identifiable. In knowledge of the future, it is obvious that they are totally distinct, since otherwise the response would precede the stimulus. In abstract knowledge also they are distinct, since abstract facts have no date. In knowledge of the past there are complications, which we must briefly examine.

Every form of memory will be, from our present point of view, in one sense a delayed response. But this phrase does not quite clearly express what is meant. If you light a fuse and connect it with a heap of dynamite, the explosion of the dynamite may be spoken of, in a sense, as a delayed response to your lighting of the fuse. But that only means that it is a somewhat late portion of a continuous process of which the earlier parts have less emotional interest. This is not the case with habit. A display of habit has two sorts of causes: (a) the past occurrences which generated the habit, (b) the present occurrence which brings it into play. When you drop a weight on your toe, and say what you do say, the habit has been caused by imitation of your undesirable associates, whereas it is brought into play by the dropping of the weight. The great bulk of our knowledge is a habit in this sense: whenever I am asked when I was born, I reply correctly by mere habit. It would hardly be correct to say that getting born was the stimulus, and that my reply is a delayed response. But in cases of memory this way of speaking would have an element of truth. In an habitual memory, the event remembered was clearly an essential part of the stimulus to the formation of the habit. The present stimulus which brings the habit into play produces a different response from that which it would produce if the habit did not exist. Therefore the habit enters into the causation of the response, and so do, at one remove, the causes of the habit. It follows that an event remembered is an essential part of the causes of our remembering.

Russell, Bertrand, “The Analysis of Mind”
Confederations have existed in other countries beside America, and republics have not been established upon the shores of the New World alone; the representative system of government has been adopted in several States of Europe, but I am not aware that any nation of the globe has hitherto organized a judicial power on the principle now adopted by the Americans. The judicial organization of the United States is the institution which a stranger has the greatest difficulty in understanding. He hears the authority of a judge invoked in the political occurrences of every day, and he naturally concludes that in the United States the judges are important political functionaries; nevertheless, when he examines the nature of the tribunals, they offer nothing which is contrary to the usual habits and privileges of those bodies, and the magistrates seem to him to interfere in public affairs of chance, but by a chance which recurs every day.

When the Parliament of Paris remonstrated, or refused to enregister an edict, or when it summoned a functionary accused of malversation to its bar, its political influence as a judicial body was clearly visible; but nothing of the kind is to be seen in the United States. The Americans have retained all the ordinary characteristics of judicial authority, and have carefully restricted its action to the ordinary circle of its functions.

The first characteristic of judicial power in all nations is the duty of arbitration. But rights must be contested in order to warrant the interference of a tribunal; and an action must be brought to obtain the decision of a judge. As long, therefore, as the law is uncontested, the judicial authority is not called upon to discuss it, and it may exist without being perceived. When a judge in a given case attacks a law relating to that case, he extends the circle of his customary duties, without however stepping beyond it; since he is in some measure obliged to decide upon the law in order to decide the case. But if he pronounces upon a law without resting upon a case, he clearly steps beyond his sphere, and invades that of the legislative authority.

The second characteristic of judicial power is that it pronounces on special cases, and not upon general principles. If a judge in deciding a particular point destroys a general principle, by passing a judgment which tends to reject all the inferences from that principle, and consequently to annul it, he remains within the ordinary limits of his functions. But if he directly attacks a general principle without having a particular case in view, he leaves the circle in which all nations have agreed to confine his authority, he assumes a more important, and perhaps a more useful, influence than that of the magistrate, but he ceases to be a representative of the judicial power.

The third characteristic of the judicial power is its inability to act unless it is appealed to, or until it has taken cognizance of an affair. This characteristic is less general than the other two; but, notwithstanding the exceptions, I think it may be regarded as essential. The judicial power is by its nature devoid of action; it must be put in motion in order to produce a result. When it is called upon to repress a crime, it punishes the criminal; when a wrong is to be redressed, it is ready to redress it; when an act requires interpretation, it is prepared to interpret it; but it does not pursue criminals, hunt out wrongs, or examine into evidence of its own accord. A judicial functionary who should open proceedings, and usurp the censorship of the laws, would in some measure do violence to the passive nature of his authority.

De Tocqueville, Alexis, “Democracy in America”
Tis again objected, as a very absurd ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use toward the pursuit of greatness, riches and pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six. But this objection is, I think, a little unworthy so refined an age as ours. Let us argue this matter calmly: I appeal to the breast of any polite freethinker, whether in the pursuit of gratifying a predominant passion, he hath not always felt a wonderful incitement, by reflecting it was a thing forbidden; and therefore we see, in order to cultivate this taste, the wisdom of the nation hath taken special care, that the ladies should be furnished with prohibited silks, and the men with prohibited wine. And indeed it were to be wished, that some other prohibitions were promoted, in order to improve the pleasures of the town; which, for want of such expedients begin already, as I am told, to flag and grow languard, giving way daily to cruel inroads from the spleen.

'Tis likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public, that if we once discard the system of the Gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever; and consequently, along with it, those grievous prejudices of education, which under the names of virtue, conscience, honour, justice, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated by right reason or freethinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

Here first, I observe how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase, which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it, be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favoured nose, the deep-thinkers of the age would some way or other contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country, all our opinions of God, or a future state, Heaven, Hell, and the like: And there might formerly perhaps have been some pretence for this charge. But so effectual care has been taken to remove those prejudices, by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honour I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen who are now on the scene, seem to have not the least tincture of those infusions, or string of those weeds; and, by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext, is wholly ceased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy, whether the banishing of all notions of religion whatsoever, would be convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians, to keep the lower part of the world in awe by the fear of invisible powers; unless mankind were then very different to what it is now: For I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England, to be as freethinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a superior power to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement in a tedious winter-night.

Lastly, 'tis proposed as a singular advantage, that the abolishing of Christianity will very much contribute to the uniting of Protestants, by enlarging the terms of communion so as to take in all sorts of dissenters, who are now shut out of the pale upon account of a few ceremonies which all sides confess to be things indifferent: That this alone will effectually answer the great ends of a scheme for comprehension, by opening a large noble gate, at which all bodies may enter; whereas the chaffering with dissenters, and dodging about this or t'other ceremony, is but like opening a few wickets, and leaving them at jar, by which no more than one can get in at a time, and that, not without stooping, and sideling, and squeezing his body.

Swift, Jonathan, “Swift’s writings on religion and the church”
Under the influence of socialism, even progressive opinion, in recent years, has been hostile to individual liberty. Liberty is associated, in the minds of reformers, with laissez-faire, the Manchester School, and the exploitation of women and children which resulted from what was euphemistically called "free competition." All these things were evil, and required state interference; in fact, there is need of an immense increase of state action in regard to cognate evils which still exist. In everything that concerns the economic life of the community, as regards both distribution and conditions of production, what is required is more public control, not less—how much more, I do not profess to know.

Another direction in which there is urgent need of the substitution of law and order for anarchy is international relations. At present, each sovereign state has complete individual freedom, subject only to the sanction of war. This individual freedom will have to be curtailed in regard to external relations if wars are ever to cease.

But when we pass outside the sphere of material possessions, we find that the arguments in favor of public control almost entirely disappear.

Religion, to begin with, is recognized as a matter in which the state ought not to interfere. Whether a man is Christian, Mahometan, or Jew is a question of no public concern, so long as he obeys the laws; and the laws ought to be such as men of all religions can obey. Yet even here there are limits. No civilized state would tolerate a religion demanding human sacrifice. The English in India put an end to suttee, in spite of a fixed principle of non-interference with native religious customs. Perhaps they were wrong to prevent suttee, yet almost every European would have done the same. We cannot effectively doubt that such practices ought to be stopped, however we may theorize in favor of religious liberty.

In such cases, the interference with liberty is imposed from without by a higher civilization. But the more common case, and the more interesting, is when an independent state interferes on behalf of custom against individuals who are feeling their way toward more civilized beliefs and institutions.

"In New South Wales," says Westermarck, "the first-born of every lubra used to be eaten by the tribe 'as part of a religious ceremony.' In the realm of Khai-muh, in China, according to a native account, it was customary to kill and devour the eldest son alive. Among certain tribes in British Columbia the first child is often sacrificed to the sun. The Indians of Florida, according to Le Moyne de Morgues, sacrificed the first-born son to the chief...."

There is nothing analogous to these practices among ourselves. When the first-born in Florida was told that his king and country needed him, this was a mere mistake, and with us mistakes of this kind do not occur. But it is interesting to inquire how these superstitions died out, in such cases, for example, as that of Khai-muh, where foreign compulsion is improbable. We may surmise that some parents, under the selfish influence of parental affection, were led to doubt whether the sun would really be angry if the eldest child were allowed to live. Such rationalism would be regarded as very dangerous, since it was calculated to damage the harvest. For generations the opinion would be cherished in secret by a handful of cranks, who would not be able to act upon it. At last, by concealment or flight, a few parents would save their children from the sacrifice. Such parents would be regarded as lacking all public spirit, and as willing to endanger the community for their private pleasure.

But gradually it would appear that the state remained intact, and the crops were no worse than in former years. Then, by a fiction, a child would be deemed to have been sacrificed if it was solemnly dedicated to agriculture or some other work of national importance chosen by the chief. It would be many generations before the child would be allowed to choose its own occupation after it had grown old enough to know its own tastes and capacities. And during all those generations, children would be reminded that only an act of grace had allowed them to live at all, and would exist under the shadow of a purely imaginary duty to the state.

Russell, Bertrand, “Political Ideals”
Logic cannot have any empirical part; that is, a part in which the universal and necessary laws of thought should rest on grounds taken from experience; otherwise it would not be logic, i.e., a canon for the understanding or the reason, valid for all thought, and capable of demonstration. Natural and moral philosophy, on the contrary, can each have their empirical part, since the former has to determine the laws of nature as an object of experience; the latter the laws of the human will, so far as it is affected by nature: the former, however, being laws according to which everything does happen; the latter, laws according to which everything ought to happen. Ethics, however, must also consider the conditions under which what ought to happen frequently does not.

We may call all philosophy empirical, so far as it is based on grounds of experience: on the other hand, that which delivers its doctrines from a priori principles alone we may call pure philosophy. When the latter is merely formal it is logic; if it is restricted to definite objects of the understanding it is metaphysic.

In this way there arises the idea of a twofold metaphysic- a metaphysic of nature and a metaphysic of morals. Physics will thus have an empirical and also a rational part. It is the same with Ethics; but here the empirical part might have the special name of practical anthropology, the name morality being appropriated to the rational part.

All trades, arts, and handiworks have gained by division of labour, namely, when, instead of one man doing everything, each confines himself to a certain kind of work distinct from others in the treatment it requires, so as to be able to perform it with greater facility and in the greatest perfection. Where the different kinds of work are not distinguished and divided, where everyone is a jack-of-all-trades, there manufactures remain still in the greatest barbarism. It might deserve to be considered whether pure philosophy in all its parts does not require a man specially devoted to it, and whether it would not be better for the whole business of science if those who, to please the tastes of the public, are wont to blend the rational and empirical elements together, mixed in all sorts of proportions unknown to themselves, and who call themselves independent thinkers, giving the name of minute philosophers to those who apply themselves to the rational part only- if these, I say, were warned not to carry on two employments together which differ widely in the treatment they demand, for each of which perhaps a special talent is required, and the combination of which in one person only produces bunglers. But I only ask here whether the nature of science does not require that we should always carefully separate the empirical from the rational part, and prefix to Physics proper (or empirical physics) a metaphysic of nature, and to practical anthropology a metaphysic of morals, which must be carefully cleared of everything empirical, so that we may know how much can be accomplished by pure reason in both cases, and from what sources it draws this its a priori teaching, and that whether the latter inquiry is conducted by all moralists (whose name is legion), or only by some who feel a calling thereto.

As my concern here is with moral philosophy, I limit the question suggested to this: Whether it is not of the utmost necessity to construct a pure thing which is only empirical and which belongs to anthropology? for that such a philosophy must be possible is evident from the common idea of duty and of the moral laws. Everyone must admit that if a law is to have moral force, i.e., to be the basis of an obligation, it must carry with it absolute necessity; that, for example, the precept, "Thou shalt not lie," is not valid for men alone, as if other rational beings had no need to observe it; and so with all the other moral laws properly so called; that, therefore, the basis of obligation must not be sought in the nature of man, or in the circumstances in which he is placed, but a priori simply in the conception of pure reason; and although any other precept which is founded on principles of mere experience may be in certain respects universal, yet in as far as it rests even in the least degree on an empirical basis, perhaps only as to a motive, such a precept, while it may be a practical rule, can never be called a moral law.

Passage 8

In his deeply-interesting Romanes lecture, Professor Huxley has stated the opinion that the ethical progress of society depends upon our combating the "cosmic process" which we call the struggle for existence. Since, as he adds, we inherit the "cosmic nature" which is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, it follows that the "ethical nature" may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts. This is not a cheerful prospect. It is, as he admits, an audacious proposal to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm. We cannot help fearing that the microcosm may get the worst of it. Professor Huxley has not fully expanded his meaning, and says much to which I could cordially subscribe. But I think that the facts upon which he relies admit or require an interpretation which avoids the awkward conclusion.

Pain and suffering, as Professor Huxley tells us, are always with us, and even increase in quantity and intensity as evolution advances. The fact had been recognised in remote ages long before theories of evolution had taken their modern form. Pessimism, from the time of the ancient Hindoo philosophers to the time of their disciple, Schopenhauer, has been in no want of evidence to support its melancholy conclusions. It would be idle to waste rhetoric in the attempt to recapitulate so familiar a position. Though I am not a pessimist, I cannot doubt that there is more plausibility in the doctrine than I could wish.

Moreover, it may be granted that any attempt to explain or to justify the existence of evil is undeniably futile. It is not so much that the problem cannot be answered, as that it cannot even be asked in any intelligible sense. To "explain" a fact is to assign its causes—that is, to give the preceding set of facts out of which it arose. However far we might go backwards, we should get no nearer to perceiving any reason for the original fact. If we explain the fall of man by Adam's eating the apple, we are quite unable to say why the apple should have been created. If we could discover a general theory of pain, showing, say, that it implied certain physiological conditions, we shall be no nearer to knowing why those physiological conditions should have been what they are. The existence of pain, in short, is one of the primary data of our problem, not one of the accidents, for which we can hope in any intelligible sense to account. To give any "justification" is equally impossible. The book of Job really suggests an impossible, one may almost say a meaningless, problem.

We can give an intelligible meaning to a demand for justice when we can suppose that a man has certain antecedent rights, which another man may respect or neglect. But this has no meaning as between the abstraction "nature" and the concrete facts which are themselves nature. It is unjust to meet equal claims differently. But it is not "unjust" in any intelligible sense that one being should be a monkey and another a man, any more than that part of me should be a hand and another head. The question would only arise if we supposed that the man and the monkey had existed before they were created, and had then possessed claims to equal treatment.

The most logical theologians, indeed, admit that as between creature and creator there can be properly no question of justice. The pot and the potter cannot complain of each other. If the writer of Job had been able to show that the virtuous were rewarded and the vicious punished, he would only have transferred the problem to another issue. The judge might be justified, but the creator would be condemned.

Passage 9

All about us are men and women who have become unhappy in regard to their attitude toward the social order itself; toward the dreary round of uninteresting work, the pleasures narrowed down to those of appetite, the declining consciousness of brain power, and the lack of mental food which characterizes the lot of the large proportion of their fellow-citizens. These men and women have caught a moral challenge raised by the exigencies of contemporaneous life; some are bewildered, others who are denied the relief which sturdy action brings are even seeking an escape, but all are increasingly anxious concerning their actual relations to the basic organization of society.

The test which they would apply to their conduct is a social test. They fail to be content with the fulfilment of their family and personal obligations, and find themselves striving to respond to a new demand involving a social obligation; they have become conscious of another requirement, and the contribution they would make is toward a code of social ethics. The conception of life which they hold has not yet expressed itself in social changes or legal enactment, but rather in a mental attitude of maladjustment, and in a sense of divergence between their consciences and their conduct. They desire both a clearer definition of the code of morality adapted to present day demands and a part in its fulfilment, both a creed and a practice of social morality. In the perplexity of this intricate situation at least one thing is becoming clear: if the latter day moral ideal is in reality that of a social morality, it is inevitable that those who desire it must be brought in contact with the moral experiences of the many in order to procure an adequate social motive.

These men and women have realized this and have disclosed the fact in their eagerness for a wider acquaintance with and participation in the life about them. They believe that experience gives the easy and trustworthy impulse toward right action in the broad as well as in the narrow relations. We may indeed imagine many of them saying: "Cast our experiences in a larger mould if our lives are to be animated by the larger social aims. We have met the obligations of our family life, not because we had made resolutions to that end, but spontaneously, because of a common fund of memories and affections, from which the obligation naturally develops, and we see no other way in which to prepare ourselves for the larger social duties." Such a demand is reasonable, for by our daily experience we have discovered that we cannot mechanically hold up a moral standard, then jump at it in rare moments of exhilaration when we have the strength for it, but that even as the ideal itself must be a rational development of life, so the strength to attain it must be secured from interest in life itself. We slowly learn that life consists of processes as well as results, and that failure may come quite as easily from ignoring the adequacy of one's method as from selfish or ignoble aims. We are thus brought to a conception of Democracy not merely as a sentiment which desires the well-being of all men, nor yet as a creed which believes in the essential dignity and equality of all men, but as that which affords a rule of living as well as a test of faith.

We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. To follow the path of social morality results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit, for it implies that diversified human experience and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy.

Passage 10

During the fifty years, from about 1820 to 1870, a somewhat different kind of explanation of physical events grew up. The interest that was aroused by the discoveries in all the fields of physical science—in heat, electricity, magnetism and chemistry—by Faraday, Joule, Helmholtz, and others, compelled a change of conceptions; for it was noticed that each special kind of phenomenon was preceded by some other definite and known kind; as, for instance, that chemical action preceded electrical currents, that mechanical or electrical activity resulted from changing magnetism, and so on. As each kind of action was believed to be due to a special force, there were invented such terms as mechanical force, electrical force, magnetic, chemical and vital forces, and these were discovered to be convertible into one another, and the “doctrine of the correlation of the physical forces” became a common expression in philosophies of all sorts. By “convertible into one another,” was meant, that whenever any given force appeared, it was at the expense of some other force; thus, in a battery chemical force was changed into electrical force; in a magnet, electrical force was changed into magnetic force, and so on. The idea here was the transformation of forces, and forces were not so clearly defined that one could have a mechanical idea of just what had happened. That part of the philosophy was no clearer than that of the imponderables, which had largely dropped out of mind. The terminology represented an advance in knowledge, but was lacking in lucidity, for no one knew what a force of any kind was.

The first to discover this and to repudiate the prevailing terminology were the physiologists, who early announced their disbelief in a vital force, and their belief that all physiological activities were of purely physical and chemical origin, and that there was no need to assume any such thing as a vital force. Then came the discovery that chemical force, or affinity, had only an adventitious existence, and that, at absolute zero, there was no such activity. The discovery of, or rather the appreciation of, what is implied by the term absolute zero, and especially of the nature of heat itself, as expressed in the statement that heat is a mode of motion, dismissed another of the so-called forces as being a metaphysical agency having no real existence, though standing for phenomena needing further attention and explanation; and by explanation is meant the presentation of the mechanical antecedents for a phenomenon, in so complete a way that no supplementary or unknown factors are necessary. The train moves because the engine pulls it; the engine pulls because the steam pushes it. There is no more necessity for assuming a steam force between the steam and the engine, than for assuming an engine force between the engine and the train. All the processes are mechanical, and have to do only with ordinary matter and its conditions, from the coal-pile to the moving freight, though there are many transformations of the forms of motion and of energy between the two extremes.

During the past thirty years there has come into common use another term, unknown in any technical sense before that time, namely, energy. What was once called the conservation of force is now called the conservation of energy, and we now often hear of forms of energy. Thus, heat is said to be a form of energy, and the forms of energy are convertible into one another, as the so-called forces were formerly supposed to be transformable into one another. We are asked to consider gravitative energy, heat energy, mechanical energy, chemical energy, and electrical energy. When we inquire what is meant by energy, we are informed that it means ability to do work, and that work is measurable as a pressure into a distance, and is specified as foot-pounds. A mass of matter moves because energy has been spent upon it, and has acquired energy equal to the work done on it, and this is believed to hold true, no matter what the kind of energy was that moved it.

We are prone to draw a distinction between what we call a man's personal life and the larger and more active part of his existence, and to fancy that the clue to his character lies in some minor idiosyncrasies, or in habits and tastes that were perhaps accidentally formed. But every earnest worker reveals in his methods and achievements not alone his intellectual capacities, but all the deep and essential qualities of his nature. With Agassiz this was conspicuously the case. The enthusiasm, the singleness of purpose, and the indefatigable energy that constituted the fond, so to speak, of his character were as open to view as the features of his countenance. Hence the single and strong impression he produced on all with whom he came in contact, the sympathy he so quickly kindled, and the co-operation he so readily enlisted. It was easily perceived that he was no self-seeker, that no thought of personal interest mingled with his devotion to science, and that he was not more intent on absorbing knowledge than desirous of diffusing it. No one has ever more fully and happily blended the qualities of student and teacher, and it was in this double capacity that he became so public and prominent a figure and exerted so wide an influence in the country of his adoption.

Some men overcome obstacles and attain their ends by sheer persistency of will, others by tact and persuasiveness, while there is a third class, before whom the barred doors open as they are successively approached, through what are called either fortunate accidents or Providential interventions, but are seen, on closer inspection, to have been the direct and natural effects of the force unconsciously exerted by an harmonious combination of qualities. Agassiz's career was full of such instances. The insistent desire of his parents, while stinting themselves to secure his education, that he should adopt a bread-winning profession, yielded, not to any urgent appeals or dogged display of resolution, but to the proof given by his labors that he was choosing more wisely for himself. Cuvier, without any request or expectation, resigned to the neophyte who, after following in his footsteps, was outstripping him in certain lines, drawings and notes prepared for his own use. Humboldt, at a critical moment, saved him from the necessity for abandoning his projects by an unsolicited loan, supplemented by many further acts of assistance of a different kind. In England every possible facility and aid was afforded to him as well by private individuals as by public institutions. In America, men like Mr. Nathaniel Thayer and Mr. John Anderson needed only in some chance way to become acquainted with his plans to be ready to provide the means for carrying them out. It was the same on all occasions. The United States government, the Coast Survey, the legislature of Massachusetts, private individuals throughout the country, showed a rare willingness, and even eagerness, to forward his views. The man and the object were identified in people's minds, and, as in all such cases, a feeling was roused and an impulse generated which could have sprung from no other source.

The attractiveness and charm which everybody seems to have found in him had perhaps the same origin. It does not appear that his nature was peculiarly sympathetic, that it was through any unusual flow and warmth of feeling toward others that he so quickly became the object of their attachment or regard. Of course, we do not intend to intimate that he was deficient in strength of affection or in the least degree cold or unresponsive. But his "magnetism," to use the current word, lay in the ardor and singleness of his devotion to science, not as an abstraction, but as a potent agency in civilization, in the union of elevation with enthusiasm, in an openness that seemed to reveal everything, yet nothing that should have been hidden.

Cary, Elizabeth Cabot. "Louis Agassiz-his life and correspondaence" 1885.
It has been said of the Bolsheviks that they are more interesting than Bolshevism. To those who hold to the economic interpretation of history that may seem a heresy. None the less, I believe that the personality not merely of the leaders but also of their party goes far to explain the making and survival of the Russian Revolution. To us in the West they seem a wholly foreign type. With Socialist leaders and organizations we and our fathers have been familiar for three-quarters of a century. There has been no lack of talent and even of genius among them. The movement has produced its great theorist in Marx, its orator in Jaurès, its powerful tacticians like Bebel, and it has influenced literature in Morris, Anatole France and Shaw. It bred, however, no considerable man of action, and it was left for the Russians to do what generations of Western Socialists had spent their lives in discussing. There was in this Russian achievement an almost barbaric simplicity and directness. Here were men who really believed the formulæ of our theorists and the resolutions of our Congresses. What had become for us a sterilized and almost respectable orthodoxy rang to their ears as a trumpet call to action. The older generation has found it difficult to pardon their sincerity. The rest of us want to understand the miracle.

The real audacity of the Bolsheviks lay in this, that they made a proletarian revolution precisely in that country which, of all portions of the civilized world, seemed the least prepared for it by its economic development. For an agrarian revolt, for the subdivision of the soil, even for the overthrow of the old governing class, Russia was certainly ready. But any spontaneous revolution, with its foundations laid in the masses of the peasantry, would have been individualistic and not communistic. The daring of the Bolsheviks lay in their belief that the minute minority of the urban working class could, by its concentration, its greater intelligence and its relative capacity for organization, dominate the inert peasant mass, and give to their outbreak of land-hunger the character and form of a constructive proletarian revolution. The bitter struggle among Russian parties which lasted from March, 1917, down to the defeat of Wrangel in November, 1920, was really an internecine competition among them for the leadership of the peasants. Which of these several groups could enlist their confidence, to the extent of inducing them not merely to fight, but to accept the discipline, military and civilian, necessary for victory? At the start the Bolsheviks had everything against them. They are nearly all townsmen. They talked in terms of a foreign and very German doctrine. Few of them, save Lenin, grasped the problems of rural life at all. The landed class should at least have known the peasant better.

Many circumstances explain the success of the Bolsheviks, who proved once again in history the capacity of the town, even when its population is relatively minute, for swift and concentrated action. They also had the luck to deal with opponents who committed the supreme mistake of invoking foreign aid. But none of these advantages would have availed without an immense superiority of character. The Slav temperament, dreamy, emotional, undisciplined, showed itself at its worst in the incorrigible self-indulgence of the more aristocratic "Whites," while the "intellectuals" of the moderate Socialist and Liberal groups have been ruined for action by their exclusively literary and aesthetic education.

The Bolsheviks may be a less cultivated group, but, in their underground life of conspiracy, they had learned sobriety, discipline, obedience, and mutual confidence. Their rigid dogmatic Marxist faith gives to them the power of action which belongs only to those who believe without criticism or question. They stand before the rest of Russia as one man. They never doubt or despair, and even when they compromise, they do it with an air of truculence. Their survival amid invasion, famine, blockade, and economic collapse has been from first to last a triumph of the unflinching will and the fanatical faith. They have spurred a lazy and demoralized people to notable feats of arms and to still more astonishing feats of endurance. To hypnotize a nation in this fashion is, perhaps, the most remarkable feat of the human will in modern times.

Trotsky, Leon. "Dictatorship vs. Democracy" 1922.
Passage 13

The theosophic idea is that everything is an expression of the Self—or whatever other name one may choose to give to that immanent unknown reality which forever hides behind all phenomenal life—but because, immersed as we are in materiality, our chief avenue of knowledge is sense perception, a more exact expression of the theosophic idea would be: Everything is the expression of the Self in terms of sense. Art, accordingly, is the expression of the Self in terms of sense. Now though the Self is one, sense is not one, but manifold: and therefore there are arts, each addressed to some particular faculty or group of faculties, and each expressing some particular quality or group of qualities of the Self. The white light of Truth is thus broken up into a rainbow-tinted spectrum of Beauty, in which the various arts are colors, each distinct, yet merging one into another—poetry into music; painting into decoration; decoration becoming sculpture; sculpture—architecture, and so on.

In such a spectrum of the arts each one occupies a definite place, and all together form a series of which music and architecture are the two extremes. That such is their relative position may be demonstrated in various ways. The theosophic explanation involving the familiar idea of the "pairs of opposites" would be something as follows. According to the Hindu-Aryan theory, Brahma, that the world might be born, fell asunder into man and wife—became in other words name and form[A] The two universal aspects of name and form are what philosophers call the two "modes of consciousness," one of time, and the other of space. These are the two gates through which ideas enter phenomenal life; the two boxes, as it were, that contain all the toys with which we play. Everything, were we only keen enough to perceive it, bears the mark of one or the other of them, and may be classified accordingly.

In such a classification music is seen to be allied to time, and architecture to space, because music is successive in its mode of manifestation, and in time alone everything would occur successively, one thing following another; while architecture, on the other hand, impresses itself upon the beholder all at once, and in space alone all things would exist simultaneously. Music, which is in time alone, without any relation to space; and architecture, which is in space alone, without any relation to time, are thus seen to stand at opposite ends of the art spectrum, and to be, in a sense, the only "pure" arts, because in all the others the elements of both time and space enter in varying proportion, either actually or by implication. Poetry and the drama are allied to music inasmuch as the ideas and images of which they are made up are presented successively, yet these images are for the most part forms of space. Sculpture on the other hand is clearly allied to architecture, and so to space, but the element of action, suspended though it be, affiliates it with the opposite or time pole. Painting occupies a middle position, since in it space instead of being actual has become ideal—three dimensions being expressed through the mediumship of two—and time enters into it more largely than into sculpture by reason of the greater ease with which complicated action can be indicated: a picture being nearly always time arrested in midcourse as it were—a moment transfixed.

In order to form a just conception of the relation between music and architecture it is necessary that the two should be conceived of not as standing at opposite ends of a series represented by a straight line, but rather in juxtaposition, as in the ancient Egyptian symbol of a serpent holding its tail in its mouth, the head in this case corresponding to music, and the tail to architecture; in other words, though in one sense they are the most-widely separated of the arts, in another they are the most closely related.

Passage 14

Let everyone try to remember, as we ourselves remember, that not very long ago a poor Hungarian, who not only had no means of any kind but was almost a beggar, traveled on foot to Tibet through unknown and dangerous countries, led only by the love of learning and the eager wish to pour light on the historical origin of his nation. The result was that inexhaustible mines of literary treasures were discovered. Philology, which till then had wandered in the Egyptian darkness of etymological labyrinths, and was about to ask the sanction of the scientific world to one of the wildest of theories, suddenly stumbled on the clue of Ariadne. Philology discovered, at last, that the Sanskrit language is, if not the forefather, at least—to use the language of Max Muller—"the elder brother" of all classical languages.

Thanks to the extraordinary zeal of Alexander Csoma de Koros, Tibet yielded a language the literature of which was totally unknown. He partly translated it and partly analyzed and explained it. His translations have shown the scientific world that (1) the originals of the Zend-Avesta, the sacred scriptures of the sun-worshippers, of Tripitaka, that of the Buddhists, and of Aytareya-Brahmanam, that of the Brahmans, were written in one and the same Sanskrit language; (2) that all these three languages—Zend, Nepalese, and the modern Brahman Sanskrit—are more or less dialects of the first; (3) that old Sanskrit is the origin of all the less ancient Indo-European languages, as well as of the modern European tongues and dialects; (4) that the three chief religions of heathendom—Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Brahmanism—are mere heresies of the monotheistic teachings of the Vedas, which does not prevent them from being real ancient religions and not modern falsifications.

The moral of all this is evident. A poor traveler, without either money or protection, succeeded in gaining admittance to the Lamaseries of Tibet and to the sacred literature of the isolated tribe which inhabits it, probably because he treated the Mongolians and the Tibetans as his brothers and not as an inferior race—a feat which has never been accomplished by generations of scientists. One cannot help feeling ashamed of humanity and science when one thinks that he whose labors first gave to science such precious results, he who was the first sower of such an abundant harvest, remained, almost until the day of his death, a poor and obscure worker. On his way from Tibet he walked to Calcutta without a penny in his pocket. At last Csoma de Koros became known, and his name began to be pronounced with honor and praise whilst he was dying in one of the poorest parts of Calcutta. Being already very ill, he wanted to get back to Tibet, and started on foot again through Sikkhim. He succumbed to his illness on the road and was buried in Darhjeeling.

It is needless to say we are fully aware that what we have undertaken is simply impossible within the limits of ordinary newspaper articles. All we hope to accomplish is to lay the foundation stone of an edifice, whose further progress must be entrusted to future generations. In order to combat successfully the theories worked out by two generations of Orientalists, half a century of diligent labor would be required. And, in order to replace these theories with new ones, we must get new facts, facts founded not on the chronology and false evidence of scheming Brahmins, whose interest is to feed the ignorance of European Sanskritists (as, unfortunately, was the experience of Lieutenant Wilford and Louis Jacolliot), but on indubitable proofs that are to be found in inscriptions as yet undeciphered. The clue to these inscriptions Europeans do not possess, because, as I have already stated, it is guarded in MSS. which are as old as the inscriptions and which are almost out of reach.

Even in case our hopes are realized and we obtain this clue, a new difficulty will arise before us. We shall have to begin a systematic refutation, page by page, of many a volume of hypotheses published by the Royal Asiatic Society. A work like this might be accomplished by dozens of tireless, never-resting Sanskritists—a class which, even in India, is almost as rare as white elephants.

Passage 15

Through organized opposition the workingmen can somewhat improve this condition; by the help of trade unions they can regulate the hours of work and hinder the reduction of wages to a level too low for mere living. The trade unions are a necessity for the workingmen, a bulwark against which the most unbearable demands of the class of possessors rebound; but a complete freeing of labor—be it of an intellectual or of a physical nature—can be brought about only through the abolition of wage work and the right of private ownership of land and the sources of maintenance and nourishment of mankind. There are heart-rending cries over the blasphemous opinion that property is not as holy a thing as its possessors would like to make it. They declare that possessions must not be less protected than human life, for they are necessary foundations of society. The case is represented as though everybody were highly interested in the maintenance of the right of private property, whereas conditions are such that non-possession is the normal condition of most people.

Because few possess everything, therefore the many possess nothing. So far as possession can be considered as an oppressive measure in the hands of a few, it is a monopoly. Set in a paradox it would read: The abolition of property will free the people from homelessness and non-possession. In fact, this will happen when the earth with its treasures shall cease to be an object of trade for usurers; when it shall vouchsafe to all a home and a livelihood. Then not only the bent bodies will straighten; the intellect free itself as might the bound Prometheus rid himself of his fetters and leave the rock to which he is chained, but we shall look back on the institutions of force, the state, the hangman, et al, as ghosts of an anxious fantasy.

In free unions the trades will organize themselves and will produce the means of livelihood. Things will not be produced for profit's sake, but for the sake of need. The profit-grabber has grown superfluous just as his patron, the state, which at present serves by means of its taxes and revenues, his anti-humanitarian purposes and hinders the reasonable consumption of goods. From the governing mania the foundation will be withdrawn; for those strata in society will be lacking which therefore had grown rich and fat by monopolizing the earth and its production. They alone needed legislatures to make laws against the disinherited. They needed courts of justice to condemn; they needed the police to carry out practically the terrible social injustice, the cause of which lay in their existence and manner of living. And now the political corruptionists are lacking who served the above-mentioned classes as helpers, and therefore had to be supported as smaller drones.

What a pleasant surprise! We see now that the production and distribution of means of livelihood are a much simpler matter without government than with government. And people now realize that the governments never promoted their welfare, but rather made it impossible, since with the help of force they only allowed the right of possession to the minority.

Life is really worth living now. It ceases to be an endless, mad drudgery, a repugnant struggle for a mere existence.

Truth and beauty are enthroned upon the necessity of procuring the means of existence in a cooperative organized manner. The social motives which to-day make man ambitious, hypocritical, stealthy, are ineffective. One need not sell his individuality for a mess of pottage, as Esau sold his primogeniture.

Baginski, Max. "Without Government" 1906
Passage 16

Two aspects of animal life impressed me most during the journeys which I made in my youth in Eastern Siberia and Northern Manchuria. One of them was the extreme severity of the struggle for existence which most species of animals have to carry on against an inclement Nature; the enormous destruction of life which periodically results from natural agencies; and the consequent paucity of life over the vast territory which fell under my observation. And the other was, that even in those few spots where animal life teemed in abundance, I failed to find—although I was eagerly looking for it—that bitter struggle for the means of existence, among animals belonging to the same species, which was considered by most Darwinists (though not always by Darwin himself) as the dominant characteristic of struggle for life, and the main factor of evolution.

The terrible snow-storms which sweep over the northern portion of Eurasia in the later part of the winter, and the glazed frost that often follows them; the frosts and the snow-storms which return every year in the second half of May, when the trees are already in full blossom and insect life swarms everywhere; the early frosts and, occasionally, the heavy snowfalls in July and August, which suddenly destroy myriads of insects, as well as the second broods of the birds in the prairies; the torrential rains, due to the monsoons, which fall in more temperate regions in August and September—resulting in inundations on a scale which is only known in America and in Eastern Asia, and swamping, on the plateaus, areas as wide as European States; and finally, the heavy snowfalls, early in October, which eventually render a territory as large as France and Germany, absolutely impracticable for ruminants, and destroy them by the thousand—these were the conditions under which I saw animal life struggling in Northern Asia. They made me realize at an early date the overwhelming importance in Nature of what Darwin described as "the natural checks to over-multiplication," in comparison to the struggle between individuals of the same species for the means of subsistence, which may go on here and there, to some limited extent, but never attains the importance of the former. Paucity of life, under-population—not over-population—being the distinctive feature of that immense part of the globe which we name Northern Asia, I conceived since then serious doubts—which subsequent study has only confirmed—as to the reality of that fearful competition for food and life within each species, which was an article of faith with most Darwinists, and, consequently, as to the dominant part which this sort of competition was supposed to play in the evolution of new species.

On the other hand, wherever I saw animal life in abundance, as, for instance, on the lakes where scores of species and millions of individuals came together to rear their progeny; in the colonies of rodents; in the migrations of birds which took place at that time on a truly American scale along the Usuri; and especially in a migration of fallow-deer which I witnessed on the Amur, and during which scores of thousands of these intelligent animals came together from an immense territory, flying before the coming deep snow, in order to cross the Amur where it is narrowest—in all these scenes of animal life which passed before my eyes, I saw Mutual Aid and Mutual Support carried on to an extent which made me suspect in it a feature of the greatest importance for the maintenance of life, the preservation of each species, and its further evolution.

And finally, I saw among the semi-wild cattle and horses in Transbaikalia, among the wild ruminants everywhere, the squirrels, and so on, that when animals have to struggle against scarcity of food, in consequence of one of the above-mentioned causes, the whole of that portion of the species which is affected by the calamity, comes out of the ordeal so much impoverished in vigour and health, that no progressive evolution of the species can be based upon such periods of keen competition.

Kropotkin, P. "Mutual Aid, A Factor Of Evolution". 1902
Passage 17

It is true that the world has often seen individual women called by the manifest will of Providence to positions of the highest authority, to the thrones of rulers and sovereigns. And many of these women have discharged those duties with great intellectual ability and great success. It is rather the fashion now among literary men to depreciate Queen Elizabeth and her government. But it is clear that, whatever may have been her errors—and no doubt they were grave—she still appears in the roll of history as one of the best sovereigns not only of her own house, but of all the dynasties of England. Certainly she was in every way a better and a more successful ruler than her own father or her own brother-in-law, and better also than the Stuarts who filled her throne at a later day.

Catherine of Russia, though most unworthy as a woman, had a force of intellectual ability quite beyond dispute, and which made itself felt in every department of her government. Isabella I of Spain gave proof of legislative and executive ability of the very highest order; she was not only one of the purest and noblest, but also, considering the age to which she belonged, and the obstacles in her way, one of the most skillful sovereigns the world has ever seen. Her nature was full of clear intelligence, with the highest moral and physical courage. She was in every way a better ruler than her own husband, to whom she proved nevertheless an admirable wife, acting independently only where clear principle was at stake. The two great errors of her reign, the introduction of the Inquisition and the banishment of the Jews, must be charged to the confessor rather than to the Queen, and these were errors in which her husband was as closely involved as herself. On the other hand, some of the best reforms of her reign originated in her own mind, and were practically carried out under her own close personal supervision.

The lesson to be learned from them is plain. We gather naturally from these facts, what may be learned also from other sources, that, while the positions of the two sexes are as such distinct, the one a degree superior, the other a degree inferior, the difference between them is limited—it is not impassable in individual cases. The two make up but one species, one body politic and religious. There are many senses besides marriage in which the two are one. It is the right hand and the left, both belonging to one body, moved by common feeling, guided by common reason. The left hand may at times be required to do the work of the right, the right to act as the left. Even in this world there are occasions when the last are first, the first last, without disturbing the general order of things. These exceptional cases temper the general rule, but they can not abrogate that rule as regards the entire sex. Man learns from them not to exaggerate his superiority—a lesson very often needed. And woman learns from them to connect self-respect and dignity with true humility, and never, under any circumstances, to sink into the mere tool and toy of man—a lesson equally important.

Such until the present day has been the general teaching and practice of Christendom, where, under a mild form, and to a limited point, the subordination of woman has been a fact clearly established. But this teaching we are now called upon to forget, this practice we are required to abandon. We have arrived at the days foretold by the Prophet, when "knowledge shall be increased, and many shall run to and fro." The intellectual progress of the race during the last half century has indeed been great. But admiration is not the only feeling of the thoughtful mind when observing this striking advance in intellectual acquirement. We see that man has not yet fully mastered the knowledge he has acquired. He runs to and fro. He rushes from one extreme to the other. How many chapters of modern history, both political and religious, are full of the records of this mental vacillation of our race, of this illogical and absurd tendency to pass from one extreme to the point farthest from it!

Cooper, Susan Fenimore. "Womens sufferage*. 1870
Passage 18

It is in vain that the Constitution of the United States expressly guarantees to "the citizens of each State, all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States:"—It is in vain that the Supreme Court of the United States has solemnly decided that this clause confers on every citizen of one State the right to "pass through, or reside in any other State for the purposes of trade, agriculture, professional pursuits, or otherwise." It is in vain that "the members of the several State legislatures" are required to "be bound by oath or affirmation to support" the constitution conferring this very guarantee.

Constitutions, and judicial decisions, and religious obligations are alike outraged by our State enactments against people of color. There is scarcely a slave State in which a citizen of New York, with a dark skin, may visit a dying child without subjecting himself to legal penalties. But in the slave States we look for cruelty; we expect the rights of humanity and the laws of the land to be sacrificed on the altar of slavery. In the free States we had reason to hope for a greater deference to decency and morality. Yet even in these States we behold the effects of a miasma wafted from the South.

The Connecticut Black Act, prohibiting, under heavy penalties, the instruction of any colored person from another State, is well known. It is one of the encouraging signs of the times, that public opinion has recently compelled the repeal of this detestable law. But among all the free States, OHIO stands pre-eminent for the wickedness of her statutes against this class of our population. These statutes are not merely infamous outrages on every principle of justice and humanity, but are gross and palpable violations of the State constitution, and manifest an absence of moral sentiment in the Ohio legislature as deplorable as it is alarming. We speak the language, not of passion, but of sober conviction; and for the truth of this language we appeal, first, to the Statutes themselves, and then to the consciences of our readers. We shall have occasion to notice these laws under the several divisions of our subject to which they belong; at present we ask attention to the one intended to prevent the colored citizens of other States from removing into Ohio.

By the constitution of New York, the colored inhabitants are expressly recognized as "citizens." Let us suppose then a New York freeholder and voter of this class, confiding in the guarantee given by the Federal constitution removes into Ohio. No matter how much property he takes with him; no matter what attestations he produces to the purity of his character, he is required by the Act of 1807, to find, within twenty days, two freehold sureties in the sum of five hundred dollars for his good behavior; and likewise for his maintenance, should he at any future period from any cause whatever be unable to maintain himself, and in default of procuring such sureties he is to be removed by the overseers of the poor.

The legislature well knew that it would generally be utterly impossible for a stranger, and especially a black stranger, to find such sureties. It was the design of the Act, by imposing impracticable conditions, to prevent colored emigrants from remaining within the State; and in order more certainly to effect this object, it imposes a pecuniary penalty on every inhabitant who shall venture to "harbor," that is, receive under his roof, or who shall even "employ" an emigrant who has not given the required sureties; and it moreover renders such inhabitant so harboring or employing him, legally liable for his future maintenance!!

Civilization, I apprehend, is nearly synonymous with order. However much we may differ touching such matters as the distribution of property, the domestic relations, the law of inheritance and the like, most of us, I should suppose, would agree that without order civilization, as we understand it, cannot exist. Now, although the optimist contends that, since man cannot foresee the future, worry about the future is futile, and that everything, in the best possible of worlds, is inevitably for the best, I think it clear that within recent years an uneasy suspicion has come into being that the principle of authority has been dangerously impaired, and that the social system, if it is to cohere, must be reorganized. Therefore, I submit, that an hour may not be quite wasted which is passed in considering some of the recent phenomena which have appeared about us, in order to ascertain if they can be grouped together in any comprehensible relation.

About a century ago, after, the American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic wars, the present industrial era opened, and brought with it a new governing class, as every considerable change in human environment must bring with it a governing class to give it expression. Perhaps, for lack of a recognized name, I may describe this class as the industrial capitalistic class, composed in the main of administrators and bankers. As nothing in the universe is stationary, ruling classes have their rise, culmination, and decline, and I conjecture that this class attained to its acme of popularity and power, at least in America, toward the close of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. I draw this inference from the fact that in the next quarter resistance to capitalistic methods began to take shape in such legislation as the Interstate Commerce Law and the Sherman Act, and almost at the opening of the present century a progressively rigorous opposition found for its mouthpiece the President of the Union himself.

History may not be a very practical study, but it teaches some useful lessons, one of which is that nothing is accidental, and that if men move in a given direction, they do so in obedience to an impulsion as automatic as is the impulsion of gravitation. Therefore, if Mr. Roosevelt became, what his adversaries are pleased to call, an agitator, his agitation had a cause which is as deserving of study as is the path of a cyclone. This problem has long interested me, and I harbor no doubt not only that the equilibrium of society is very rapidly shifting, but that Mr. Roosevelt has, half-automatically, been stimulated by the instability about him to seek for a new centre of social gravity. In plain English, I infer that he has concluded that industrialism has induced conditions which can no longer be controlled by the old capitalistic methods, and that the country must be brought to a level of administrative efficiency competent to deal with the strains and stresses of the twentieth century, just as, a hundred and twenty-five years ago, the country was brought to an administrative level competent for that age, by the adoption of the Constitution.

Acting on these premises, as I conjecture, whether consciously worked out or not, Mr. Roosevelt's next step was to begin the readjustment; but, I infer, that on attempting any correlated measures of reform, Mr. Roosevelt found progress impossible, because of the obstruction of the courts.

Passage 20

Those who live on fixed incomes, whether from salary or investment, may find it impossible to make any direct attempt to make money; for them the problem is to be confronted and mastered on its other side, the side of spending and saving, that the income may be apportioned as wisely as possible for the purposes of living. But during the last few years a new factor has entered into the money problems of the individual, often adding to his trials, often adding to his self-made excuses, and especially burdensome to the man on fixed income. We refer to the high cost of living. Here it is, however, that the wage earner can do something in self-protection, for the level of prices may be in some measure affected by his policy in handling his earnings.

A period of high wages is accompanied by and is in some sense an incident of a high level of prices. Now we recognize high wages, considered in itself, as beneficial to the community, for it gives opportunity, at least, for comforts in life and a provision for the future that otherwise would be lacking. But if prices have advanced as much as wages, the apparent improvement to the laborer is merely in nominal wages, while that which alone can benefit him is higher real wages. Now let us see what the workman could do to advance real wages as contrasted with nominal wages.

What will be the effect on prices of the use of surplus earnings during a period of high wages?

If the surplus earnings are expended, they will be used either in meeting the higher prices of customary commodities, or in meeting these advanced prices and also in purchasing additional commodities. The first case will occur only if, and when, the advance in price equals the advance in wages, for only in that event will the new wages just cover the new cost of customary commodities. Then this expenditure of the entire income in customary commodities tends to keep up the price level and any benefit from higher wages disappears.

In the second case, so far as the worker spends his surplus earnings in meeting advanced prices for customary commodities, he tends to maintain prices at the higher level, and so far as he buys additional commodities, he increases the demand for them and tends further to advance the price level.

If, on the other hand, the worker will save from his surplus earnings, he will increase the community's capital, and this will tend, directly or indirectly, to cause the production of further commodities, so increasing the supply of commodities and therefore tending to reduce prices.

In any case, the worker should save as much as possible, as this tends to reduce the price level and so to better his condition. Or, putting it more simply, in time of high wages the worker ought to produce as much as possible and consume as little as possible, both influences tending to increase the stock of commodities for his ultimate gain and for that of the community.

In fact, a high level of prices may be due measurably to some wasting of the world's capital—as in war, for instance—and then the only antidote is to restore the capital, a movement that would doubtless occur anyway in time but which could be greatly accelerated through a general adoption of habits of thrift and saving throughout a community.

This then, though small, is something definite that we can contribute to the material advancement of mankind and, like the duty in this connection to our nation, to our families and ourselves, it consists in creating capital; that is, earning as much as we can and, in any event, even if our earnings are fixed, managing the income thriftily, and carrying forward as large a net result as possible.

Lipman, Frederick, “Creating Capital” 1918.
Passage 21

We English are largely responsible for creating the frame of mind which is even now luring Young Turks, Chinamen, and other Easterns into the political wilderness by the display of false signals. We have, indeed, our Blands in China, our Milners in Egypt, our Miss Durhams in the Balkan Peninsula, and our Miss Bells in Mesopotamia, who wander far afield, gleaning valuable facts and laying before their countrymen and countrywomen conclusions based on acquired knowledge and wide experience. But their efforts are only partially successful. They are often shivered on the solid rock of preconceived prejudices, and genuine but ill-informed sentimentalism. A large section of the English public are, in fact, singularly wanting in political imagination. Although they would not, in so many words, admit the truth of the statement, they none the less act and speak as if sound national development in whatsoever quarter of the world must of necessity proceed along their own conventional, insular, and time-honored lines, and along those lines alone.

There is a whole class of newspaper readers, and also of newspaper writers, who resemble that eminent but now deceased Member of Parliament, who told me that during the four hours' railway journey from Port Said to Cairo he had come to the definite conclusion that Egypt could not be prosperous because he had observed that there were no stacks of corn standing in the fields; neither was this conclusion in any way shaken when it was explained to him that the Egyptians were not in the habit of erecting corn stacks after the English model.

All these classes readily lend an ear to quack, though often very well-intentioned politicians, who go about the world preaching that countries can be regenerated by shibboleths, and that the characters of nations can be changed by Acts of Parliament. This frame of mind appeals with irresistible force to the untrained Eastern habit of thought. T'ang—a leading Chinese Republican—Mr. Bland says, "like all educated Chinese, believes in the magic virtue of words and forms of government in making a nation wise and strong by Acts of Parliament." And what poor, self-deluded T'ang is saying and thinking in Canton is said and thought daily by countless Ahmeds, Ibrahims, and Rizas in the bazars of Constantinople, Cairo, and Teheran.

What has Mr. Bland to tell us of all the welter of loan-mongering, rococo constitution-tinkering, Confucianism, and genuine if at times misdirected philanthropy, which is now seething in the Chinese melting-pot?

In the first place, he has to say that the main obstacle to all real progress in China is one that cannot be removed by any change in the form of government, whether the ruling spirit be a full-fledged Republican of the Sun Yat-Sen type, aided by a number of "imitation foreigners," as they are termed by their countrymen, or a savage, albeit statesmanlike "Old Buddha," who, at the close of a life stained by all manner of blood-guiltiness, at last turned her weary face towards Western reform as the only hope of saving her country and her dynasty. The main disease is not political, and is incapable of being cured by the most approved constitutional formulae. It is economic. Polygamy, aided by excessive philo-progenitiveness, the result of ancestor-worship, has produced a highly congested population. Vast masses of people are living in normal times on the verge of starvation.

Earl of Cromer, “Political and Literary Essays” 1908-1913.
Passage 22

The distinction between the sensibility and the understanding is to Kant fundamental both in itself and in relation to the conclusions which he reaches. An outline, therefore, of this distinction must precede any statement or examination of the details of his position. Unfortunately, in spite of its fundamental character, Kant never thinks of questioning or criticizing the distinction in the form in which he draws it, and the presence of certain confusions often renders it difficult to be sure of his meaning.

The distinction may be stated in his own words thus: "There are two stems of human knowledge, which perhaps spring from a common but to us unknown root, namely sensibility and understanding." "Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first receives representations (receptivity for impressions); the second is the power of knowing an object by means of these representations (spontaneity of conceptions). Through the first an object is given to us; through the second the object is thought in relation to the representation (which is a mere determination of the mind). Perception and conceptions constitute, therefore, the elements of all our knowledge, so that neither conceptions without a perception in some way corresponding to them, nor perception without conceptions can yield any knowledge....

Neither of these qualities has a preference over the other. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, perceptions without conceptions are blind. Hence it is as necessary for the mind to make its conceptions sensuous (i. e. to add to them the object in perception) as to make its perceptions intelligible (i. e. to bring them under conceptions). Neither of these powers or faculties can exchange its function. The understanding cannot perceive, and the senses cannot think. Only by their union can knowledge arise."

The distinction so stated appears straightforward and, on the whole, sound. And it is fairly referred to by Kant as the distinction between the faculties of perceiving and conceiving or thinking, provided that the terms perceiving and conceiving or thinking be taken to indicate a distinction within perception in the ordinary sense of the word. His meaning can be stated thus: 'All knowledge requires the realization of two conditions; an individual must be presented to us in perception, and we as thinking beings must bring this individual under or recognize it as an instance of some universal. Thus, in order to judge 'This is a house' or 'That is red' we need the presence of the house or of the red color in perception, and we must 'recognize' the house or the color (i. e., apprehend the individual as a member of a certain kind). Suppose either condition is unrealized. Then if we suppose a failure to conceive, i. e. to apprehend the individual as a member of some kind, we see that our perception—if it could be allowed to be anything at all—would be blind, i. e. indeterminate, or a mere 'blur'. What we perceived would be for us as good as nothing. In fact, we could not even say that we were perceiving.

Again, if we suppose that we had merely the conception of a house, and neither perceived nor had perceived an individual to which it applied, we see that the conception, being without application, would be neither knowledge nor an element in knowledge. Moreover, the content of a conception is derived from perception; it is only through its relation to perceived individuals that we become aware of a universal. To know the meaning of 'redness' we must have experienced individual red things; to know the meaning of 'house' we must at least have had experience of individual men and of their physical needs. Hence 'conceptions' without 'perceptions' are void or empty. The existence of conceptions presupposes experience of corresponding individuals, even though it also implies the activity of thinking in relation to these individuals.'

Prichard, H.A. "Kant’s Theory of Knowledge"1909
Comparative Theology, pursuing its impartial course as a positive science, will avoid the error into which most of the Christian apologists of the last century fell, in speaking of ethnic or heathen religions. In order to show the need of Christianity, they thought it necessary to disparage all other religions. Accordingly they have insisted that, while the Jewish and Christian religions were revealed, all other religions were invented; that, while these were from God, those were the work of man; that, while in the true religions there was nothing false, in the false religions there was nothing true. If any trace of truth was to be found in Polytheism, it was so mixed with error as to be practically only evil. As the doctrines of heathen religions were corrupt, so their worship was only a debasing superstition. Their influence was to make men worse, not better; their tendency was to produce sensuality, cruelty, and universal degradation. They did not proceed, in any sense, from God; they were not even the work of good men, but rather of deliberate imposition and priestcraft.

A supernatural religion had become necessary in order to counteract the fatal consequences of these debased and debasing superstitions. This is the view of the great natural religions of the world which was taken by such writers as Leland, Whitby, and Warburton in the last century. Even liberal thinkers, like James Foster and John Locke, declare that, at the coming of Christ, mankind had fallen into utter darkness, and that vice and superstition filled the world. Infidel no less than Christian writers took the same disparaging view of natural religions. They considered them, in their source, the work of fraud; in their essence, corrupt superstitions; in their doctrines, wholly false; in their moral tendency, absolutely injurious; and in their result, degenerating more and more into greater evil.

A few writers, like Cudworth and the Platonists, endeavored to put in a good word for the Greek philosophers, but the religions of the world were abandoned to unmitigated reprobation. The account which so candid a writer as Mosheim gives of them is worth noticing, on account of its sweeping character. "All the nations of the world," he says, "except the Jews, were plunged in the grossest superstition. Some nations, indeed, went beyond others in impiety and absurdity, but all stood charged with irrationality and gross stupidity in matters of religion." "The greater part of the gods of all nations were ancient heroes, famous for their achievements and their worthy deeds, such as kings, generals, and founders of cities." "To these some added the more splendid and useful objects in the natural world, as the sun, moon, and stars; and some were not ashamed to pay divine honors to mountains, rivers, trees, etc." "The worship of these deities consisted in ceremonies, sacrifices, and prayers. The ceremonies were, for the most part, absurd and ridiculous, and throughout debasing, obscene, and cruel. The prayers were truly insipid and void of piety, both in their form and matter." "The priests who presided over this worship basely abused their authority to impose on the people." "The whole pagan system had not the least efficacy to produce and cherish virtuous emotions in the soul; because the gods and goddesses were patterns of vice, the priests bad men, and the doctrines false."

This view of heathen religions is probably much exaggerated. They must contain more truth than error, and must have been, on the whole, useful to mankind. We do not believe that they originated in human fraud, that their essence is superstition, that there is more falsehood than truth in their doctrines, that their moral tendency is mainly injurious, or that they continually degenerate into greater evil. No doubt it may be justly predicated of all these systems that they contain much which is false and injurious to human virtue.
The term "high finance" derives its origin from the French "haute finance," which in France as elsewhere in Europe designates the most eminently respectable, the most unqualifiedly trustworthy amongst financial houses.

Why has that term, in becoming acclimated in this country, gradually come to suggest a rather different meaning?

Why does there exist in the United States, alone amongst the great nations, a widespread attitude of suspicion, indeed in many quarters, of virtual hostility, toward the financial community and especially toward the financial activities which focus in New York, the country's financial capital?

There are a number of causes and for some of them finance cannot be absolved from responsibility. But the primary underlying and continuing cause is lack of clear appreciation of what finance means and stands for and is needed for. And from this there has sprung a veritable host of misconceptions, prejudices, superstitions and catch-phrases.

Never was it of more importance than in the present emergency that the people should have a clear and correct understanding of the meaning and significance of finance, indeed of "high finance," and that they should approach the subject calmly and dispassionately and with untroubled vision, for when the European war is over and the period of reconstruction sets in, one of the most vital questions of the day will be that of finance and financing.

The handling and adjustment of that question, although it primarily concerns Europe, cannot fail to affect America favorably or unfavorably, according to the wisdom or lack of wisdom of our own attitude and actions.

A great many things are being and have been charged in the popular view against finance, with which finance, properly understood, has nothing to do.

The possession of wealth does not make a man a financier—just as little as the possession of a chest of tools makes a man a carpenter.

Finance does not mean speculation—although speculation when it does not degenerate into mere gambling has a proper and legitimate place in the scheme of things economic. Finance most emphatically does not mean fleecing the public, nor fattening parasitically off the industry and commerce of the country.

Finance cannot properly be held responsible for the exploits, good, bad or indifferent, of the man who, having made money at manufacturing, or mining, or in other commercial pursuits, blows into town, either physically or by telephone or telegraph, and goes on a financial spree, more or less prolonged.

Finance means constructive work. It means mobilizing and organizing the wealth of the country so that the scattered monetary resources of the individuals may be united and guided into a mighty current of fruitful co-operation—a hundredfold, nay thousandfold as potent as they would or could be in individual hands.

Finance means promoting and facilitating the country's trade at home and abroad, creating new wealth, making new jobs for workmen.

It means continuous study of the conditions prevailing throughout the world. It means daring and imagination combined with care and foresight and integrity, and hard, wearing work—much of it not compensated, because of every ten propositions submitted to the scrutiny or evolved by the brain of the financier who is duly careful of his reputation and conscious of his responsibility to the public, it is safe to say that not more than three materialize.

For the financial offspring of which he acknowledges parentage, or merely godfathership, he is held responsible by the public for better or for worse, and will continue to be held responsible notwithstanding certain ill-advised provisions of the recently enacted Clayton Anti-Trust Act which are bound to make it more difficult for him to discharge that responsibility.

Kahn, Otto H. “High Finance” 1916
Passage 25

When William the Conqueror subdued England, he gave them law at the point of the sword; and until we consent, that the seat of government, in America, be legally and authoritatively occupied, we shall be in danger of having it filled by some fortunate ruffian, who may treat us in the same manner, and then, where will be our freedom? where our property? As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all government, to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith, Let a man throw aside that narrowness of soul, that selfishness of principle, which the niggards of all professions are so unwilling to part with, and he will be at delivered of his fears on that head. Suspicion is the companion of mean souls, and the bane of all good society. For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be diversity of religious opinions among us: It affords a larger field for our Christian kindness. Were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would want matter for probation; and on this liberal principle, I look on the various denominations among us, to be like children of the same family, differing only, in what is called, their Christian names.

In page forty, I threw out a few thoughts on the propriety of a Continental Charter, (for I only presume to offer hints, not plans) and in this place, I take the liberty of rementioning the subject, by observing, that a charter is to be understood as a bond of solemn obligation, which the whole enters into, to support the right of every separate part, whether of religion, personal freedom, or property. A firm bargain and a right reckoning make long friends.

In a former page I likewise mentioned the necessity of a large and equal representation; and there is no political matter which more deserves our attention. A small number of electors, or a small number of representatives, are equally dangerous. But if the number of the representatives be not only small, but unequal, the danger is increased. As an instance of this, I mention the following; when the Associators petition was before the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania; twenty-eight members only were present, all the Bucks county members, being eight, voted against it, and had seven of the Chester members done the same, this whole province had been governed by two counties only, and this danger it is always exposed to.

The unwarrantable stretch likewise, which that house made in their last sitting, to gain an undue authority over the delegates of that province, ought to warn the people at large, how they trust power out of their own hands. A set of instructions for the Delegates were put together, which in point of sense and business would have dishonoured a schoolboy, and after being approved by a FEW, a VERY FEW without doors, were carried into the House, and there passed IN BEHALF OF THE WHOLE COLONY; whereas, did the whole colony know, with what ill-will that House hath entered on some necessary public measures, they would not hesitate a moment to think them unworthy of such a trust.

Paine, Thomas. “Common Sense” 1776
I notice that some papers, especially papers that call themselves patriotic, have fallen into quite a panic over the fact that we have been twice beaten in the world of sport, that a Frenchman has beaten us at golf, and that Belgians have beaten us at rowing. I suppose that the incidents are important to any people who ever believed in the self-satisfied English legend on this subject. I suppose that there are men who vaguely believe that we could never be beaten by a Frenchman, despite the fact that we have often been beaten by Frenchmen, and once by a Frenchwoman.

In the old pictures in *Punch* you will find a recurring piece of satire. The English caricaturists always assumed that a Frenchman could not ride to hounds or enjoy English hunting. It did not seem to occur to them that all the people who founded English hunting were Frenchmen. All the Kings and nobles who originally rode to hounds spoke French. Large numbers of those Englishmen who still ride to hounds have French names. I suppose that the thing is important to anyone who is ignorant of such evident matters as these. I suppose that if a man has ever believed that we English have some sacred and separate right to be athletic, such reverses do appear quite enormous and shocking. They feel as if, while the proper sun was rising in the east, some other and unexpected sun had begun to rise in the north-north-west by north.

For the benefit, the moral and intellectual benefit of such people, it may be worthwhile to point out that the Anglo-Saxon has in these cases been defeated precisely by those competitors whom he has always regarded as being out of the running; by Latins, and by Latins of the most easy and unstrenuous type; not only by Frenchman, but by Belgians. All this, I say, is worth telling to any intelligent person who believes in the haughty theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority. But, then, no intelligent person does believe in the haughty theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority. No quite genuine Englishman ever did believe in it. And the genuine Englishman these defeats will in no respect dismay.

The genuine English patriot will know that the strength of England has never depended upon any of these things; that the glory of England has never had anything to do with them, except in the opinion of a large section of the rich and a loose section of the poor which copies the idleness of the rich. These people will, of course, think too much of our failure, just as they thought too much of our success. The typical Jingoes who have admired their countrymen too much for being conquerors will, doubtless, despise their countrymen too much for being conquered. But the Englishman with any feeling for England will know that athletic failures do not prove that England is weak, any more than athletic successes proved that England was strong. The truth is that athletics, like all other things, especially modern, are insanely individualistic.

The Englishmen who win sporting prizes are exceptional among Englishmen, for the simple reason that they are exceptional even among men. English athletes represent England just about as much as Mr. Barnum's freaks represent America. There are so few of such people in the whole world that it is almost a toss-up whether they are found in this or that country.

Chesterton, G.K. “All Things Considered” 1915
Now the question is whether political secrecy is of any of the kinds that can be called legitimate. We have roughly divided legitimate secrets into three classes. First comes the secret that is only kept in order to be revealed, as in the detective stories; secondly, the secret which is kept because everybody knows it, as in sex; and third, the secret which is kept because it is too delicate and vague to be explained at all, as in the choice of a country walk. Do any of these broad human divisions cover such a case as that of secrecy of the political and party finances?

It would be absurd, and even delightfully absurd, to pretend that any of them did. It would be a wild and charming fancy to suggest that our politicians keep political secrets only that they may make political revelations. A modern peer only pretends that he has earned his peerage in order that he may more dramatically declare, with a scream of scorn and joy, that he really bought it. The Baronet pretends that he deserved his title only in order to make more exquisite and startling the grand historical fact that he did not deserve it. Surely this sounds improbable. Surely all our statesmen cannot be saving themselves up for the excitement of a death-bed repentance. The writer of detective tales makes a man a duke solely in order to blast him with a charge of burglary. But surely the Prime Minister does not make a man a duke solely in order to blast him with a charge of bribery. No; the detective-tale theory of the secrecy of political funds must (with a sigh) be given up.

Neither can we say that the thing is explained by that second case of human secrecy which is so secret that it is hard to discuss it in public. A decency is preserved about certain primary human matters precisely because everyone knows all about them. But the decency touching contributions, purchases, and peerages is not kept up because most ordinary men know what is happening; it is kept up precisely because most ordinary men do not know what is happening. The ordinary curtain of decorum covers normal proceedings. But no one will say that being bribed is a normal proceeding.

And if we apply the third test to this problem of political secrecy, the case is even clearer and even more funny. Surely no one will say that the purchase of peerages and such things are kept secret because they are so light and impulsive and unimportant that they must be matters of individual fancy. A child sees a flower and for the first time feels inclined to pick it. But surely no one will say that a brewer sees a coronet and for the first time suddenly thinks that he would like to be a peer. The child's impulse need not be explained to the police, for the simple reason that it could not be explained to anybody. But does anyone believe that the laborious political ambitions of modern commercial men ever have this airy and incommunicable character?

A man lying on the beach may throw stones into the sea without any particular reason. But does anyone believe that the brewer throws bags of gold into the party funds without any particular reason? This theory of the secrecy of political money must also be regretfully abandoned; and with it the two other possible excuses as well. This secrecy is one which cannot be justified as a sensational joke. Strangely enough, indeed, it violates all three conditions and classes at once. It is not hidden in order to be revealed: it is hidden in order to be hidden. It is not kept secret because it is a common secret of mankind, but because mankind must not get hold of it. And it is not kept secret because it is too unimportant to be told, but because it is much too important to bear telling. In short, the thing we have is the real and perhaps rare political phenomenon of an occult government. We have an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine.

Chesterton, G.K. “All Things Considered” 1915
During the Romanesque Period (950-1250) architecture was pursued according to laws which had grown out of the achievements and experiences of earlier ages, and had reached such a perfection as entitled it to the rank of a noble art. But this was not true of painting, which was then but little more than the painting of the Egyptians had been, that is, a sort of picture-writing, which was principally used to illustrate the doctrines of religion, and by this means to teach them to peoples who had no books, and could not have read them had they existed.

During all this time the art of painting was largely under the control of the priests. Some artists were priests themselves, and those who were not were under the direction of some church dignitary. Popes, bishops, abbots, and so on, were the principal patrons of art, and they suggested to the artists the subjects to be painted, and then the pictures were used for the decoration of churches and other buildings used by the religious orders. The monks were largely occupied in miniature-painting; artists frequented the monasteries, and, indeed, when they were engaged upon religious subjects, they were frequently under the same discipline as that of the monks themselves.

Next to the influence of the church came that of the court; but in a way it was much the same, for the clergy had great influence at court, and, although painting was used to serve the luxury of sovereigns and nobles, it was also true that these high personages often employed artists to decorate chapels and to paint altar-pieces for churches at their expense, for during the Romanesque period there was some painting on panels. At first these panel-pictures were placed on the front of the altar where draperies had formerly been used; later they were raised above the altar, and also put in various parts of the church. The painting of the Romanesque period was merely a decline, and there can be little more said of it than is told by that one word.

Glass-painting dates from this time. The very earliest specimens of which we know are from the eleventh century. Before that time there had been transparent mosaics made by putting together bits of colored glass, and arranging them in simple, set and ornamental patterns. Such mosaics date from the earliest days of Christianity, and were in use as soon as glass was used for windows. From ancient writings we know that some windows were made with pictures upon them as long ago as A.D. 989; but nothing now remains from that remote date.

There is a doubt as to whether glass-painting originated in France or Germany. Some French authors ascribe its invention to Germany, while some German writers accord the same honor to France. Remains of glass-painting of the eleventh century have been found in both these countries; but it is probable that five windows in the Cathedral of Augsburg date from 1065, and are a little older than any others of which we know.

The oldest glass-painting in France is probably a single fragment in the Cathedral of Le Mans. This cathedral was completed in 1093, but was badly burned in 1136, so that but a single piece of its windows remains; this has been inserted in a new window in the choir, and is thus preserved. With the beginning of the twelfth century, glass-painting became more frequent in Europe, and near the end of this century it was introduced into England, together with the Gothic style of architecture. Very soon a highly decorative effect was given to glass-painting, and the designs upon many windows were very much like those used in the miniatures of the same time. The stained glass in the Cathedral of St. Denis, near Paris, is very important. It dates from about 1140-1151, and was executed under the care of the famous Abbot Suger. He employed both French and German workmen, and decorated the entire length of the walls with painted windows. St. Denis was the first French cathedral in the full Gothic style of architecture. The present windows in St. Denis can scarcely be said to be the original ones, as the cathedral has suffered much from revolutions; but some of them have been restored as nearly as possible.

Clement, Clara Erskine. “History of Art” 1887
Passage 29

I must speak at some length of a painter who, together with the luminous and sparkling landscapist Félix Ziem, was the most direct initiator of Impressionist technique. Monticelli is one of those singular men of genius who are not connected with any school, and whose work is an inexhaustible source of applications. He lived at Marseilles, where he was born, made a short appearance at the Salons, and then returned to his native town, where he died poor, ignored, paralysed and mad. In order to live he sold his small pictures at the cafés, where they fetched ten or twenty francs at the most. To-day they sell for considerable prices, although the government has not yet acquired any work by Monticelli for the public galleries. The mysterious power alone of these paintings secures him a fame which is, alas! posthumous. Many Monticellis have been sold by dealers as Diaz's; now they are more eagerly looked for than Diaz, and collectors have made fortunes with these small canvases bought formerly, to use a colloquial expression which is here only too literally true, "for a piece of bread."

Monticelli painted landscapes, romantic scenes, "fêtes galantes" in the spirit of Watteau, and still-life pictures: one could not imagine a more inspired sense of colour than shown by these works which seem to be painted with crushed jewels, with powerful harmony, and beyond all with an unheard-of delicacy in the perception of fine shades. There are tones which nobody had ever invented yet, a richness, a profusion, a subtlety which almost vie with the resources of music. The fairyland atmosphere of these works surrounds a very firm design of charming style, but, to use the words of the artist himself, "in these canvases the objects are the decoration, the touches are the scales, and the light is the tenor."

Monticelli has created for himself an entirely personal technique which can only be compared with that of Turner; he painted with a brush so full, fat and rich, that some of the details are often truly modelled in relief, in a substance as precious as enamels, jewels, ceramics—a substance which is a delight in itself. Every picture by Monticelli provokes astonishment; constructed upon one colour as upon a musical theme, it rises to intensities which one would have thought impossible. His pictures are magnificent bouquets, bursts of joy and colour, where nothing is ever crude, and where everything is ruled by a supreme sense of harmony.

Claude Lorrain, Watteau, Turner and Monticelli constitute really the descent of a landscapist like Claude Monet. In all matters concerning technique, they form the direct chain of Impressionism. As regards design, subject, realism, the study of modern life, the conception of beauty and the portrait, the Impressionist movement is based upon the old French masters, principally upon Chardin, Watteau, Latour, Largillière, Fragonard, Debeaucourt, Saint-Aubin, Moreau, and Eisen. It has resolutely held aloof from mythology, academic allegory, historical painting, and from the neo-Greek elements of Classicism as well as from the German and Spanish elements of Romanticism. This reactionary movement is therefore entirely French, and surely if it deserves reproach, the one least deserved is that levelled upon it by the official painters: disobedience to the national spirit.

Impressionism is an art which does not give much scope to intellectuality, an art whose followers admit scarcely anything but immediate vision, rejecting philosophy and symbols and occupying themselves only with the consideration of light, picturesqueness, keen and clever observation, and antipathy to abstraction, as the innate qualities of French art. We shall see later on, when considering separately its principal masters, that each of them has based his art upon some masters of pure French blood.

Mauclair, Camille. “The French Impressionists” 1903
Passage 30

Progress! Did you ever reflect that that word is almost a new one? No word comes more often or more naturally to the lips of modern man, as if the thing it stands for were almost synonymous with life itself, and yet men through many thousand years never talked or thought of progress. They thought in the other direction. Their stories of heroisms and glory were tales of the past. The ancestor wore the heavier armor and carried the larger spear. "There were giants in those days." Now all that has altered. We think of the future, not the past, as the more glorious time in comparison with which the present is nothing. Progress, development,—those are modern words. The modern idea is to leave the past and press onward to something new.

But what is progress going to do with the past, and with the present? How is it going to treat them? With ignominy, or respect? Should it break with them altogether, or rise out of them, with its roots still deep in the older time? What attitude shall progressives take toward the existing order, toward those institutions of conservatism, the Constitution, the laws, and the courts?

Are those thoughtful men who fear that we are now about to disturb the ancient foundations of our institutions justified in their fear? If they are, we ought to go very slowly about the processes of change. If it is indeed true that we have grown tired of the institutions which we have so carefully and sedulously built up, then we ought to go very slowly and very carefully about the very dangerous task of altering them. We ought, therefore, to ask ourselves, first of all, whether thought in this country is tending to do anything by which we shall retrace our steps, or by which we shall change the whole direction of our development?

I believe, for one, that you cannot tear up ancient rootages and safely plant the tree of liberty in soil which is not native to it. I believe that the ancient traditions of a people are its ballast; you cannot make a tabula rasa upon which to write a political program. You cannot take a new sheet of paper and determine what your life shall be to-morrow. You must knit the new into the old. You cannot put a new patch on an old garment without ruining it; it must be not a patch, but something woven into the old fabric, of practically the same pattern, of the same texture and intention. If I did not believe that to be progressive was to preserve the essentials of our institutions, I for one could not be a progressive.

I had been casting around in my mind for something by which to draw several parts of my political thought together when it was my good fortune to entertain a very interesting Scotsman who had been devoting himself to the philosophical thought of the seventeenth century. His talk was so engaging that it was delightful to hear him speak of anything, and presently there came out of the unexpected region of his thought the thing I had been waiting for. He called my attention to the fact that in every generation all sorts of speculation and thinking tend to fall under the formula of the dominant thought of the age. For example, after the Newtonian Theory of the universe had been developed, almost all thinking tended to express itself in the analogies of the Newtonian Theory, and since the Darwinian Theory has reigned amongst us, everybody is likely to express whatever he wishes to expound in terms of development and accommodation to environment.

Now, it came to me, as this interesting man talked, that the Constitution of the United States had been made under the dominion of the Newtonian Theory. You have only to read the papers of The Federalist to see that fact written on every page. They speak of the "checks and balances" of the Constitution, and use to express their idea the simile of the organization of the universe, and particularly of the solar system,—how by the attraction of gravitation the various parts are held in their orbits; and then they proceed to represent Congress, the Judiciary, and the President as a sort of imitation of the solar system.

Passage 31

The reasoned justification of liberty of thought is due to J. S. Mill, who set it forth in his work On Liberty, published in 1859. This book treats of liberty in general, and attempts to fix the frontier of the region in which individual freedom should be considered absolute and unassailable. The second chapter considers liberty of thought and discussion, and if many may think that Mill unduly minimized the functions of society, underrating its claims as against the individual, few will deny the justice of the chief arguments or question the general soundness of his conclusions.

Pointing out that no fixed standard was recognized for testing the propriety of the interference on the part of the community with its individual members, he finds the test in self-protection, that is, the prevention of harm to others. He bases the proposition not on abstract rights, but on “utility, in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being.” He then uses the following argument to show that to silence opinion and discussion is always contrary to those permanent interests. Those who would suppress an opinion (it is assumed that they are honest) deny its truth, but they are not infallible. They may be wrong, or right, or partly wrong and partly right.

(1) If they are wrong and the opinion they would crush is true, they have robbed, or done their utmost to rob, mankind of a truth. They will say: But we were justified, for we exercised our judgment to the best of our ability, and are we to be told that because our judgment is fallible we are not to use it? We forbade the propagation of an opinion which we were sure was false and pernicious; this implies no greater claim to infallibility than any act done by public authority. If we are to act at all, we must assume our own opinion to be true. To this Mill acutely replies: “There is the greatest difference between assuming an opinion to be true, because with every opportunity for contesting it it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action, and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.”

(2) If the received opinion which it is sought to protect against the intrusion of error is true, the suppression of discussion is still contrary to general utility. A received opinion may happen to be true (it is very seldom entirely true); but a rational certainty that it is so can only be secured by the fact that it has been fully canvassed but has not been shaken.

Commoner and more important is (3) the case where the conflicting doctrines share the truth between them. Here Mill has little difficulty in proving the utility of supplementing one-sided popular truths by other truths which popular opinion omits to consider. And he observes that if either of the opinions which share the truth has a claim not merely to be tolerated but to be encouraged, it is the one which happens to be held by the minority, since this is the one “which for the time being represents the neglected interests.” He takes the doctrines of Rousseau, which might conceivably have been suppressed as pernicious. To the self-complacent eighteenth century those doctrines came as “a salutary shock, dislocating the compact mass of one-sided opinion.” The current opinions were indeed nearer to the truth than Rousseau’s, they contained much less of error; “nevertheless there lay in Rousseau’s doctrine, and has floated down the stream of opinion along with it, a considerable amount of exactly those truths which the popular opinion wanted; and these are the deposit which we left behind when the flood subsided.”

Bury, J.B. “A History of Freedom of Thought” 1913
Of course the laws of a man's being are infinitely above the laws of a beast's. The laws of a man's being are spiritual, and the animal in man is meant to be the servant of his soul. Man's true guiding instincts are in his soul,—he can obey them or not, as he chooses; but the beast's instincts are in his body, and he has no choice but to obey. Man can, so to speak, get up and look down on himself. He can be his own father and his own mother. From his true instinct he can say to himself, "you must do this" or "You must not do that." He can see and understand his tendency to disobedience, and he can force himself to obey. Man can see the good and wholesome animal instincts in himself that lead to lasting health and strength, and he can make them all the good servants of his soul. He can see the tendency to overindulgence, and how it leads to disease and to evil, and he can refuse to permit that wrong tendency to rule him.

Every man has his own power of distinguishing between right and wrong, and his own power of choosing which way he shall follow. He is left free to choose God's way or to choose his own. Through past and present perversions, of natural habit he has lost the delicate power of distinguishing the normal from the abnormal, and needs to be educated back to it. The benefit of this education is an intelligent consciousness of the laws of life, which not only adds to his own strength of mind and body, but increases immeasurably his power of use to others. Many customs of to-day fix and perpetuate abnormal habits to such an extent that, combined with our own selfish inheritances and personal perversions, they dim the light of our minds so that many of us are working all the time in a fog, more or less dense, of ignorance and bondage. When a man chooses the right and refuses the wrong, in so far as he sees it, he becomes wise from within and from without, his power for distinguishing gradually improves, the fog lifts, and he finds within himself a sure and delicate instinct which was formerly atrophied for want of use.

The first thing to understand without the shadow of a doubt, is that, man is not in freedom when he is following his own selfish instincts. He is only in the appearance of freedom, and the appearance of freedom, without the reality, leads invariably to the worst bondage. A man who loves drink feels that he is free if he can drink as much as he wants, but that leads to degradation and delirium tremens. A man who has an inherited tendency toward the disobedience of any law feels that he is free if he has the opportunity to disobey it whenever he wants to. But whatever the law may be, the results have only to be carried to their logical conclusion to make clear the bondage to which the disobedience leads. All this disobedience to law leads to an inevitable, inflexible, unsurmountable limit in the end, whereas steady effort toward obedience to law is unlimited in its development of strength and power for use to others. Man must understand his selfish tendencies in order to subdue and control them, until they become subject to his own unselfish tendencies, which are the spiritual laws within him. Thus he gradually becomes free,—soul and body,—with no desire to disobey, and with steadily increasing joy in his work and life. So much for the bondage of doing wrong, and the freedom of doing right, which it seems necessary to touch upon, in order to show clearly the bondage of doing right in the wrong way, and the freedom of doing right in the right way.

Call, Annie Payson “The Freedom of Life” 1905
The intellectual and social movement which was to dispel the darkness of the Middle Ages and prepare the way for those who would ultimately deliver reason from her prison, began in Italy in the thirteenth century. The misty veil woven of credulity and infantile naivety which had hung over men’s souls and protected them from understanding either themselves or their relation to the world began to lift. The individual began to feel his separate individuality, to be conscious of his own value as a person apart from his race or country (as in the later ages of Greece and Rome); and the world around him began to emerge from the mists of mediaeval dreams. The change was due to the political and social conditions of the little Italian States, of which some were republics and others governed by tyrants.

To the human world, thus unveiling itself, the individual who sought to make it serve his purposes required a guide; and the guide was found in the ancient literature of Greece and Rome. Hence the whole transformation, which presently extended from Italy to Northern Europe, is known as the Renaissance, or rebirth of classical antiquity. But the awakened interest in classical literature while it coloured the character and stimulated the growth of the movement, supplying new ideals and suggesting new points of view, was only the form in which the change of spirit began to express itself in the fourteenth century. The change might conceivably have taken some other shape. Its true name is Humanism.

At the time men hardly felt that they were passing into a new age of civilization, nor did the culture of the Renaissance immediately produce any open or general intellectual rebellion against orthodox beliefs. The world was gradually assuming an aspect decidedly unfriendly to the teaching of mediaeval orthodoxy; but there was no explosion of hostility; it was not till the seventeenth century that war between religion and authority was systematically waged. The humanists were not hostile to theological authority or to the claims of religious dogma; but they had discovered a purely human curiosity about this world and it absorbed their interest. They idolized pagan literature which abounded in poisonous germs; the secular side of education became all-important; religion and theology were kept in a separate compartment. Some speculative minds, which were sensitive to the contradiction, might seek to reconcile the old religion with new ideas; but the general tendency of thinkers in the Renaissance period was to keep the two worlds distinct, and to practise outward conformity to the creed without any real intellectual submission.

I may illustrate this double-facedness of the Renaissance by Montaigne (second half of sixteenth century). His Essays make for rationalism, but contain frequent professions of orthodox Catholicism, in which he was perfectly sincere. There is no attempt to reconcile the two points of view; in fact, he takes the sceptical position that there is no bridge between reason and religion. The human intellect is incapable in the domain of theology, and religion must be placed aloft, out of reach and beyond the interference of reason; to be humbly accepted. But while he humbly accepted it, on sceptical grounds which would have induced him to accept Mohammedanism if he had been born in Cairo, his soul was not in its dominion. It was the philosophers and wise men of antiquity, Cicero, and Seneca, and Plutarch, who moulded and possessed his mind. It is to them, and not to the consolations of Christianity, that he turns when he discusses the problem of death. The religious wars in France which he witnessed and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day (1572) were calculated to confirm him in his scepticism. His attitude to persecution is expressed in the remark that “it is setting a high value on one’s opinions to roast men on account of them.”

Bury, J.B. “A History of Freedom of Thought” 1913
Passage 34

In architecture and sculpture the ancient Greeks accepted what had been done by the Egyptians and Assyrians as a foundation, and went on to perfect the work of the older nations through the aid of poetic and artistic imaginations. But in painting the Greeks followed nothing that had preceded them. They were the first to make pictures which were a life-like reproduction of what they saw about them: they were the first to separate painting from sculpture, and to give it such importance as would permit it to have its own place, quite free from the influence of any other art, and in its own way as grand and as beautiful as its sister arts.

There are writers who trace the origin and progress of Greek painting from the very earliest times; but I shall begin with Apollodorus, who is spoken of as the first Greek painter worthy of fame, because he was the first one who knew how to make his pictures appear to be real, and to follow the rules of perspective so as to have a background from which his figures stood out, and to shade his colors and soften his outlines. He was very famous, and was called skiagraphos, which means shadow painter.

Apollodorus was an Athenian, and lived at about the close of the fifth century B.C. Although he was a remarkable artist then, we must not fancy that his pictures would have satisfied our idea of the beautiful—in fact, Pliny, the historian, who saw his pictures six hundred years later, at Pergamos, says that Apollodorus was but the gatekeeper who threw open the gates of painting to the famous artists who lived after him.

Zeuxis had a rival in the painter Parrhasius, and their names are often associated. On one occasion they made trial of their artistic skill. Zeuxis painted a bunch of grapes so naturally that the birds came to peck at them. Then Parrhasius painted a hanging curtain, and when his picture was exposed to the public Zeuxis asked him to draw aside his curtain, fully believing it to be of cloth and concealing a picture behind it. Thus it was judged that Parrhasius was the best artist, for he had deceived Zeuxis, while the latter had only deceived the birds.

From these stories it appears that these artists tried to imitate objects with great exactness. Parrhasius, too, was a vain man, and went about in a purple robe with a gold wreath about his head and gold clasps on his sandals; he painted his own portrait, and called it the god Hermes, or Mercury; he wrote praises of himself in which he called himself by many high-sounding names, for all of which he was much ridiculed by others.

However, both these artists were surpassed by Timanthes, according to the ancient writers, who relate that he engaged in a trial of skill with Parrhasius, and came off the victor in it. The fame of his picture of the “Sacrifice of Iphigenia” was very great, and its one excellence seems to have been in the varied expression of its faces. The descriptions of this great work lead to the belief that this Pompeian wall-painting, from which we give a cut, closely resembles that of Timanthes, which no longer exists.

Clement, Clara Erskine. “History of Art” 1887
Passage 35

It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth of their time to be employed in its service, but idleness taxes many of us much more: sloth, by bringing on disease, absolutely shortens life. 'Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright,' as Poor Richard says. 'But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of,' as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep! forgetting that the sleeping fox catches no poultry, and that there will be sleeping enough in the grave,' as Poor Richard says. 'If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be,' as Poor Richard says, 'the greatest prodigality;' since as he elsewhere tell us, 'Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough always proves little enough.' Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose, so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. 'Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy, and he that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly, that poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business, let not that drive thee; and early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,' as Poor Richard says.

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves. 'Industry need not wish, and he that lives upon hope will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands,' or if I have they are smartly taxed. 'He that hath a trade, hath an estate; and he that hath a calling, hath an office of profit and honor,' as Poor Richard says; but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling well followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious we shall never starve; for 'at the workingman's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter.' Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter, for 'industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them.' What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left a legacy; 'Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry. Then plow deep, while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.' Work while it is called to-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered to-morrow. 'One to-day is worth two to-morrows,' as Poor Richard says; and farther, 'Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day.' If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master? Be ashamed to catch yourself idle, when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, and your king. Handle your tools without mittens; remember, that 'the cat in gloves catches no mice,' as Poor Richard says. It is true there is much to be done, and, perhaps, you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects; for, 'Constant dropping wears away stones; and by diligence, and patience the mouse ate in two the cable; and little strokes fell great oaks.'

"Methinks I hear some of you say, 'Must a man afford himself no leisure?' I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says: 'Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure; and, since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.' Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; for 'A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. Many, without labor, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock;' whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. 'Fly pleasures, and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift; and now I have a sheep and a cow, every body bids me good morrow.'

Franklin, Benjamin. “Poor Richards Address” 1884
Passage 36

When Chillingworth’s great work was published, in 1637, the last of the Tudors, after having outlived her popularity, had passed to her rest, as had also her most unworthy successor, whose insolence had outraged, but whose weakness had strengthened, the awakening spirit of liberty, and who, as Macaulay well expresses it, “was, in truth, one of those kings whom God seems to send for the express purpose of hastening revolutions.”

To him had succeeded his most worthy son: a king whose perfidy and duplicity were only equalled by his self-complacency and power of self-deception, who never looked facts in the face, but placidly expected them to conform to his own petty desires, and whose dignified death failed to atone for a life devoted to ignoble personal ends, by crooked ways and treacherous means; a king peculiarly incapable of taking a broad statesman-like view of any question, who manifested no thought for the interests of the people of whom he regarded himself as ruler by right divine, whose futile domestic policy was inspired solely for the advancement of his own personal power, whose feeble and shift foreign policy was determined only by considerations for his own family interests, who intrigued with France against Spain, with Spain against France, with both against Holland, and with Holland against both, and with France, Spain, Holland, and Rome against his own subjects, with English Presbyterians against English Independents, with English Independents against English Presbyterians, and with Irish Catholics and Scotch Presbyterians against both English Presbyterians and Independents, and who yet succeeded in deceiving nobody but himself, and in satisfying nobody, not even himself; a king whose love was far more dangerous than his hate, a worthy patron of a Buckingham, a Goring, or of a Laud, but unworthy the genius of a Shaftesbury or the loyal services of a Verney, a Montrose, or a Worcester; a king, in short, treacherous to his friends, faithless to his word, who went to his wedding and came to his throne with a lie on his lips, whom, again to use the words of Macaulay, “no law could bind, and whose whole government was one system of wrong,” of whom even the conservative and partial Hallam is forced to admit that “it would be difficult to name any violation of law he had not committed.”

Even the famous Petition of Right, to which some nine years previously, in 1628, he had given a solemn, though reluctant, consent, had been ruthlessly violated. Taxes had been levied by the Royal authority; patents of monopoly had been granted; the course of justice had been tampered with, and judges arbitrarily deposed; troops had been billeted upon the people; old feudal usages had been revived for the express purpose of harassing and defrauding the citizens; and, as if to exhaust every means to sap the loyalty and wear out the patience of the people, Puritans of every shade of opinion had not only been silenced but relentlessly persecuted, while High Church bishops preached passive obedience, declaring the persons and the property of subjects to be at the absolute disposal of the sovereign, and in the name of religion inaugurating a systematic attack on the rights and liberties of the nation.

The people whose representatives a quarter of a century previously, in 1604, had met the insolent claims of James the First with the dignified rejoinder, that “your Majesty should be misinformed if any man should deliver that the kings of England have any absolute power in themselves either to alter religion, or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than in temporal causes by consent of Parliament,” were, however, not easily to be intimidated. Despite a Royal order to adjourn, the House of Commons of 1629, holding the Speaker by force in the Chair, supported the immortal Eliot in his last assertion of English liberty, and by successive resolutions declared that whosoever shall bring in innovations in religion, or whosoever shall counsel or advise the taking and levying of the subsidies of tonnage and poundage, not being granted by Parliament, “a capital enemy to this kingdom and commonwealth,” and any person voluntarily yielding or paying the said subsidies, not being granted by Parliament, “a betrayer of the liberty of England, and an enemy to the same.” Having thus flung their defiance in the face of the King, the House then voted its own adjournment.

Berens, Lewis H. “The Digger Movement in the Days of Commonwealth” 1906
As to details history does not exactly repeat itself and, therefore, I do not believe that the other planets of the universe, of which no doubt there are many billions, are inhabited by human beings of the same type as those of the earth, nor that its men, women and children are to have their bodies reconstructed and resurrected, after they have been disintegrated by death. Such beings on other planets and such reconstructions on this planet would in every case involve a detailed repetition of infinitely numerous processes of evolution which had extended through an eternal past.

Yet in every part of the universe and throughout all eternity, like causes ever have produced and ever shall produce like effect. If, therefore, the course of the Judean masters towards their slaves led to a successful revolt of ten out of twelve tribes, there is every reason for believing that the parallel course which the American masters are pursuing against their slaves will sooner or later issue in a revolution—a revolution which shall do away with both masters and slaves, leaving us with a classless America and a government concerned with the making of provisions for enabling all the people who are able and willing to work to supply themselves in abundance with the necessities of life and with the most desirable among the luxuries, not even the dregs.

Under this government those who can but will not work will be allowed to starve themselves into a better mind and out of their laziness. The young and the old, the sick and crippled will have their rightful maintenance from the state and out of the best of everything.

The deliverance of the world from commercial imperialism and the making of it safe for industrial democracy would prevent most of its unnecessary suffering and this great salvation is above all else dependent upon a knowledge of the truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"—free from all the avoidable ills of life, among them the diabolical trinity of evils, war, poverty and slavery.
Socialism was introduced into the United States about the year 1850 by immigrants who landed on our shores from Europe. The Marxians, who came from Germany, were principally responsible for the foundation of the Workingmen's Party in 1876, which in 1877 was called the Socialistic Labor Party, and, a few years later, the Socialist Labor Party, which was reorganized at Chicago in 1889, after having lost two sections by secession. One of these, called the Cincinnati Socialist Labor Party, in 1897 united with the Social Democracy of America, a combination of railroad men, followers of Eugene V. Debs, and of the populist followers of Victor L. Berger. The other seceders from the Socialistic Labor Party, called the "kangaroos," united with the Social Democracy of Debs and Berger in 1900, the new combination then calling itself the Socialist Party of America. The minority of the old Socialist Labor Party, which refused to be amalgamated with the Social Democracy of America, is still known as the Socialist Labor Party; hence, since the year 1900, there have been two distinct revolutionary parties, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party.

The former, under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs, Victor L. Berger and Morris Hillquit, with 109,586 dues-paying members in January, 1919, is by far the more powerful and influential, having steadily increased its vote to about 900,000 in the Presidential election of 1912, though in the year 1916 the vote dropped to less than 600,000. The Socialist Labor Party, under the guidance of Daniel De Leon until his death, in May, 1914, seems to be making little if any progress. Though both parties claim to be genuinely Socialistic and Marxian, each has decried the other as being a "fake" or "bogus" party. The Socialist Labor Party's main complaint is that its rival the Socialist Party is sacrificing the principles of Karl Marx in its endeavor to gain votes, while, on the other hand, the latter party retorts by stigmatizing its opponent as being a party of "scabs," the sole purpose of whose existence is to antagonize the Socialist Party. In recent years unsuccessful attempts have been made to unite the two.

The Socialist Party, besides publishing two important dailies in English, "The Call," of New York City, and the "Milwaukee Leader," issues at least two in German, two in Bohemian, one in Polish and one in Yiddish. "Forward," the Jewish paper published in New York City in Yiddish, had a daily circulation of over 150,000, according to a report in "The Call" April 6, 1919. Foremost for many years among the Socialist weeklies in English was the "Appeal to Reason," which was once extremely bitter and unrelenting in its attacks on the United States Government. Published at Girard, Kansas, its circulation reached nearly 1,000,000 copies a week during the fall of 1912, but since 1917 it has fallen into great disfavor among most Socialists because of its pro-war and moderate tendencies. In addition to the Socialist papers already referred to, there are in our country hundreds of others in English, German, Bohemian, Polish, Jewish, Slovac, Slavonic, Danish, Italian, Finnish, French, Hungarian, Lettish, Norwegian, Croatian, Russian, and Swedish. In a report to Congress in 1919, the Attorney-General of the United States stated that there were 416 radical newspapers in America.

A strong impression that serious party strife and bossism prevail in the Socialist organization is gained by those who read the Marxian papers and magazines. William English Walling, for example, in the "International Socialist Review," Chicago, April, 1913, showed his sympathy with the so-called "reds," who then comprised the radical I. W. W. wing of the party, and at the same time attacked the "yellows," the advocates of political action.

Mereto, Joseph J. “The Red Conspiracy” 1920
Disputes with men, pertinaciously obstinate in their principles, are, of all others, the most irksome; except, perhaps, those with persons, entirely disingenuous, who really do not believe the opinions they defend, but engage in the controversy, from affectation, from a spirit of opposition, or from a desire of showing wit and ingenuity, superior to the rest of mankind. The same blind adherence to their own arguments is to be expected in both; the same contempt of their antagonists; and the same passionate vehemence, in enforcing sophistry and falsehood. And as reasoning is not the source, whence either disputant derives his tenets; it is in vain to expect, that any logic, which speaks not to the affections, will ever engage him to embrace sounder principles.

Those who have denied the reality of moral distinctions, may be ranked among the disingenuous disputants; nor is it conceivable, that any human creature could ever seriously believe, that all characters and actions were alike entitled to the affection and regard of everyone. The difference, which nature has placed between one man and another, is so wide, and this difference is still so much farther widened, by education, example, and habit, that, where the opposite extremes come at once under our apprehension, there is no scepticism so scrupulous, and scarce any assurance so determined, as absolutely to deny all distinction between them. Let a man's insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with the images of Right and Wrong; and let his prejudices be ever so obstinate, he must observe, that others are susceptible of like impressions. The only way, therefore, of converting an antagonist of this kind, is to leave him to himself. For, finding that nobody keeps up the controversy with him, it is probable he will, at last, of himself, from mere weariness, come over to the side of common sense and reason.

There has been a controversy started of late, much better worth examination, concerning the general foundation of Morals; whether they be derived from Reason, or from Sentiment; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgement of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species.

The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment. On the other hand, our modern enquirers, though they also talk much of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, yet have commonly endeavoured to account for these distinctions by metaphysical reasonings, and by deductions from the most abstract principles of the understanding. Such confusion reigned in these subjects, that an opposition of the greatest consequence could prevail between one system and another, and even in the parts of almost each individual system; and yet nobody, till very lately, was ever sensible of it. The elegant Lord Shaftesbury, who first gave occasion to remark this distinction, and who, in general, adhered to the principles of the ancients, is not, himself, entirely free from the same confusion.

It must be acknowledged, that both sides of the question are susceptible of specious arguments. Moral distinctions, it may be said, are discernible by pure reason: else, whence the many disputes that reign in common life, as well as in philosophy, with regard to this subject: the long chain of proofs often produced on both sides; the examples cited, the authorities appealed to, the analogies employed, the fallacies detected, the inferences drawn, and the several conclusions adjusted to their proper principles.

Hume, David  “An Enquiry Concerning The Principles of Morals” 1777
Passage 40

In 1776, when he was appointed ambassador of the revolted colonies to the French king, the ocean swarmed with British cruisers, General Washington had lost New York, and the prospects of the Revolution were gloomy in the extreme. Dr. Franklin was an old man of seventy, and might justly have asked to be excused from a service so perilous and fatiguing. But he did not. He went. And just before he sailed he got together all the money he could raise—about three thousand pounds—and invested it in the loan recently announced by Congress. This he did at a moment when few men had a hearty faith in the success of the Revolution. This he did when he was going to a foreign country that might not receive him, from which he might be expelled, and he have no country to return to. There never was a more gallant and generous act done by an old man.

In France he was as much the main stay of the cause of his country as General Washington was at home.

Returning home after the war, he was elected president of Pennsylvania for three successive years, at a salary of two thousand pounds a year. But by this time he had become convinced that offices of honor, such as the governorship of a State, ought not to have any salary attached to them. He thought they should be filled by persons of independent income, willing to serve their fellow-citizens from benevolence, or for the honor of it. So thinking, he at first determined not to receive any salary; but this being objected to, he devoted the whole of the salary for three years—six thousand pounds—to the furtherance of public objects. Part of it he gave to a college, and part was set aside for the improvement of the Schuylkill River.

Never was an eminent man more thoughtful of people who were the companions of his poverty. Dr. Franklin, from amidst the splendors of the French court, and when he was the most famous and admired person in Europe, forgot not his poor old sister, Jane, who was in fact dependent on his bounty. He gave her a house in Boston, and sent her every September the money to lay in her Winter's fuel and provisions. He wrote her the kindest, wittiest, pleasantest letters. "Believe me, dear brother," she writes, "your writing to me gives me so much pleasure that the great, the very great, presents you have sent me give me but a secondary joy."

How exceedingly absurd to call such a man "hard" and miserly, because he recommended people not to waste their money! Let me tell you, reader, that if a man means to be liberal and generous, he must be economical. No people are so mean as the extravagant, because, spending all they have upon themselves, they have nothing left for others. Benjamin Franklin was the most consistently generous man of whom I have any knowledge.

Parton, James “Defense of a Great Man” 1887
The first epoch of the Roman republic is that extending from the overthrow of the kings, about 509 B.C., to the passage of the Licinian Laws in 367 B.C. The history of this century and a half at Rome is primarily the history of internal strife and class antagonisms. During these early days the progress made by the republic toward the expansion of its territories or the extension of its foreign influence was inappreciable.

Rome, during these days, was contending on a position of near equality with the neighboring cities of Latium and Etruria. Twice during this period the independence, perhaps the very existence, of the city was seriously threatened.

The war against the Etruscans, which followed immediately upon the expulsion of the last of the Tarquin kings, resulted so unfavorably to Rome that not only was her territory considerably reduced in size but even the subjugation of Rome itself might probably have been accomplished but for the forbearance of her victorious opponents.

Later, in 390 B.C., the capture and sack of Rome by the Gauls nearly proved the death-blow of the Roman republic. The internal dissensions of this period were mainly responsible for the lack of military success. Although it is true that the history of early Rome, unlike the histories of the various early Grecian states, records few instances where hatred or bitterness arising from political defeat induced a citizen to turn traitor to his country, and although the approach of a foreign foe was generally sufficient to bring about a truce in Roman political hostilities and the union of all factions in the city against the common national enemy, still it must be remembered that the amount of energy possessed by a community is limited. When the all-absorbing questions agitating a people are those relative to internal political contests, the energies of the ablest men of each generation are spent mainly in political contests instead of being exerted for the common welfare of the community.

The influence which the internal dissensions at Rome must have exerted on her military success is shown by a comparison of the military history of the Roman republic prior to 367B.C. with the wonderful career of conquest which the Roman republic entered into immediately after the passage of the Licinian Act. This act, although producing a partial and temporary cessation of class contests at Rome, nevertheless sufficiently healed the internal wounds of the state to enable it to rapidly advance from a city-republic to a world power.

"The results of this great change were singularly happy and glorious. Two centuries of prosperity, harmony, and victory followed the reconciliation of the orders. Men who remembered Rome engaged in waging petty wars almost within sight of the Capitol lived to see her the mistress of Italy. While the disabilities of the plebeians continued, she was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon."

The republic created at Rome in the course of the sixth century before Christ was distinctively an undemocratic republic. The benefits to the plebeians resulting from the overthrow of the kingdom were of slight, if any importance. The political power of the state remained almost entirely in the hands of the patricians, and the right to hold office was restricted to the members of this caste. At this time the members of the patrician order were perhaps not very much inferior in numbers to the plebeian order; but the discrepancy between the numbers of the two orders so rapidly increased that by the beginning of the fourth century before Christ the government of Rome had become practically that of an oligarchy.

Lewis, James Hamilton  “The Two Great Republics – Rome and The United States” 1913
Passage 42

Let us suppose that nature has bestowed on the human race such profuse ABUNDANCE of all EXTERNAL conveniencies, that, without any uncertainty in the event, without any care or industry on our part, every individual finds himself fully provided with whatever his most voracious appetites can want, or luxurious imagination wish or desire. His natural beauty, we shall suppose, surpasses all acquired ornaments: the perpetual clemency of the seasons renders useless all clothes or covering: the raw herbage affords him the most delicious fare; the clear fountain, the richest beverage. No laborious occupation required: no tillage: no navigation. Music, poetry, and contemplation form his sole business: conversation, mirth, and friendship his sole amusement. It seems evident that, in such a happy state, every other social virtue would flourish, and receive tenfold increase; but the cautious, jealous virtue of justice would never once have been dreamed of. For what purpose make a partition of goods, where every one has already more than enough? Why give rise to property, where there cannot possibly be any injury? Why call this object MINE, when upon the seizing of it by another, I need but stretch out my hand to possess myself to what is equally valuable? Justice, in that case, being totally useless, would be an idle ceremonial, and could never possibly have place in the catalogue of virtues.

We see, even in the present necessitous condition of mankind, that, wherever any benefit is bestowed by nature in an unlimited abundance, we leave it always in common among the whole human race, and make no subdivisions of right and property. Water and air, though the most necessary of all objects, are not challenged as the property of individuals; nor can any man commit injustice by the most lavish use and enjoyment of these blessings. In fertile extensive countries, with few inhabitants, land is regarded on the same footing. And no topic is so much insisted on by those, who defend the liberty of the seas, as the unexhausted use of them in navigation. Were the advantages, procured by navigation, as inexhaustible, these reasoners had never had any adversaries to refute; nor had any claims ever been advanced of a separate, exclusive dominion over the ocean.

It may happen, in some countries, at some periods, that there be established a property in water, none in land; if the latter be in greater abundance than can be used by the inhabitants, and the former be found, with difficulty, and in very small quantities.

Again; suppose, that, though the necessities of human race continue the same as at present, yet the mind is so enlarged, and so replete with friendship and generosity, that every man has the utmost tenderness for every man, and feels no more concern for his own interest than for that of his fellows; it seems evident, that the use of justice would, in this case, be suspended by such an extensive benevolence, nor would the divisions and barriers of property and obligation have ever been thought of. Why should I bind another, by a deed or promise, to do me any good office, when I know that he is already prompted, by the strongest inclination, to seek my happiness, and would, of himself, perform the desired service; except the hurt, he thereby receives, be greater than the benefit accruing to me? in which case, he knows, that, from my innate humanity and friendship, I should be the first to oppose myself to his imprudent generosity. Why raise landmarks between my neighbour's field and mine, when my heart has made no division between our interests; but shares all his joys and sorrows with the same force and vivacity as if originally my own? Every man, upon this supposition, being a second self to another, would trust all his interests to the discretion of every man; without jealousy, without partition, without distinction. And the whole human race would form only one family; where all would lie in common, and be used freely, without regard to property; but cautiously too, with as entire regard to the necessities of each individual, as if our own interests were most intimately concerned.

Hume, David “An Enquiry Concerning The Principles of Morals” 1777
It has been proudly said of Sir Walter as an author that he never forgot the sanctities of domestic love and social duty in all that he wrote; and considering how much he did write, and how vast has been the influence of his work on mankind, we can scarcely overestimate the importance of the fact. Yet it might have been all wrecked by one little parental imprudence in this matter of books. And what excuse is there, after all, for running the terrible risk? Authors who are not fit to be read by the sons and daughters are rarely read without injury by the fathers and mothers; and it would be better by far, Savonarola-like, to make a bonfire of all the literature of folly, wickedness, and infidelity, than run the risk of injuring a child simply for the sake of having a few volumes more on one's shelves.

In the balance of heaven there is no parity between a complete library and a lost soul. But this story has another lesson. It indicates once more the injury which may be done by character by undue limitations. Under the ill-considered restrictions of his tutor, which ran counter to the good sense of his mother, whose wisdom was justified by the event, Walter Scott might easily have fallen into tricks of concealment and forfeited his candor--that candor which [pg 34]developed into the noble probity which marked his conduct to the last. Without candor there can not be truth, and, as he himself has said, there can be no other virtue without truth. Fortunately for him, by the wise sanction his mother had given to his perusal of imaginative writings, she had robbed them of a mystery unhealthy in itself; and he came through these stolen readings substantially unharmed, because he knew that his fault was only the lighter one of sitting up when he was supposed to be lying down.

Luckily this tutor's stern rule did not last long; and when a severe illness attacked the youth (then advanced to be a student at Edinburgh College) and brought him under his mother's charge once more, the bed on which he lay was piled with a constant succession of works of imagination, and he was allowed to find consolation in poetry and romance, those fountains which flow forever for the ardent and the young. It was in relation to Mrs. Scott's control of her son's reading that he wrote with gratitude, late in life, "My mother had good natural taste and great feeling." And after her death, in a letter to a friend, he paid her this tribute: "She had a mind peculiarly well stored. If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She was a strict economist, which, she said, enabled her to be liberal. Out of her little income of about fifteen hundred dollars a year, she bestowed at least a third in charities; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance." Her charity, as well as her love for genealogy, and her aptitude for story-telling, was transmitted to her son. It found expression in him, not only in material gifts to the poor, but in a conscientious care and consideration for the feelings of others. This trait is beautifully exhibited by many of the facts recorded by Lockhart in his [pg 35]famous memoir, and also by a little incident, not included there, which I have heard Sir Henry Taylor tell, and which, besides illustrating the subject, deserves for its own sake a place in print.

The great and now venerable author of "Philip Van Artevelde" dined at Abbotsford only a year or two before the close of its owner's life. Sir Walter had then lost his old vivacity, though not his simple dignity; but for one moment during the course of the evening he rose into animation, and it happened thus: There was a talk among the party of an excursion which was to be made on the following day, and during the discussion of the plans Miss Scott mentioned that two elderly maiden ladies, living in the neighborhood, were to be of the number, and hinted that their company would be a bore. The chivalrous kindliness of her father's heart was instantly aroused. "I can not call that good-breeding," he said, in an earnest and dignified tone--a rebuke which echoed the old-fashioned teaching on the duties of true politeness he had heard from his mother half a century before.

Fuller, O.E. “Domestic Love and Social Duty” 1884
Passage 44

One of the first things that it came into my little head to ask was, “How were the animals made; and why were any of them made wild and cruel, while some are tame and quiet?” I was told that the Bible gave an answer to that question; and so it does. If we look in the first chapter of Genesis, where there is an account of the creation of the world, we find that on the fifth day God created the fishes to move in the water, and the fowls to fly in the air; and on the sixth day, “God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” From this we learn, that there was no violence or cruelty in any of them, as they first came from the hand of the holy and merciful God. And I would have you take particular notice of what directly follows: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Now, the great God is invisible—a Spirit—and not a body, as I think you all know; and when it is said that God made man in his own image, it must mean that man was made to be holy, and just, and good, and merciful; and he was made to be a careful and loving ruler over the poor dumb creatures, as the Lord God is a careful and loving ruler over all that he has created.

Then, in the next chapter, we have a beautiful picture before us: I do not mean a print, or drawing, but a description in words, that, if we think a little, will make us fancy we see a lovely sight, such as we cannot now see anywhere. We are told that out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and then that He “brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”

Was it not a wonderful and a beautiful sight? There, in a very delicious garden, full of all manner of rich fruit and bright flowers, with soft warm air, and calm sunshine, was the first and only man in all the world! He was righteous and good, without any malice, or cruelty, or covetousness, or pride in his heart, looking with delight upon the creatures that came about him as their rightful ruler, to receive their names.

Can you not fancy how he must have admired the noble and beautiful creatures as they meekly and lovingly came to him? The mighty lion, shaking the curls of his mane, and fixing his eyes (not then fierce and fiery, but bright and joyous) on the man, who, by God’s gift, was mightier than he; the great elephant, putting out his trunk to caress his new master, and passing on to rest under the shadow of some stately tree; the horse, with his arching neck and prancing movements; the fond dog; the gentle sheep; the peacock, with its plumes of blue, and green, and gold; the majestic snow-white swan; the little linnet; the robin-redbreast; and that most beautiful, tiny creature, the humming-bird; the gay butterfly; the bee. It is impossible to go over the names of even what we know by sight, of the good creatures of God, who on that sixth day of the creation came about our first father, to receive just what name he was pleased to give them. But I often think about it, because it keeps me in mind that the Lord God never overlooks any thing which he has seen good to make.

American Sunday School Union. “Kindness to Animals” 1845
Passage 45

Truths of the physical order may possess much external significance, but internal significance they have none. The latter is the privilege of intellectual and moral truths, which are concerned with the objectivation of the will in its highest stages, whereas physical truths are concerned with it in its lowest.

For example, if we could establish the truth of what up till now is only a conjecture, namely, that it is the action of the sun which produces thermoelectricity at the equator; that this produces terrestrial magnetism; and that this magnetism, again, is the cause of the aurora borealis, these would be truths externally of great, but internally of little, significance. On the other hand, examples of internal significance are furnished by all great and true philosophical systems; by the catastrophe of every good tragedy; nay, even by the observation of human conduct in the extreme manifestations of its morality and immorality, of its good and its evil character. For all these are expressions of that reality which takes outward shape as the world, and which, in the highest stages of its objectivation, proclaims its innermost nature.

To say that the world has only a physical and not a moral significance is the greatest and most pernicious of all errors, the fundamental blunder, the real perversity of mind and temper; and, at bottom, it is doubtless the tendency which faith personifies as Anti-Christ. Nevertheless, in spite of all religions—and they are systems which one and all maintain the opposite, and seek to establish it in their mythical way—this fundamental error never becomes quite extinct, but raises its head from time to time afresh, until universal indignation compels it to hide itself once more.

Yet, however certain we may feel of the moral significance of life and the world, to explain and illustrate it, and to resolve the contradiction between this significance and the world as it is, form a task of great difficulty; so great, indeed, as to make it possible that it has remained for me to exhibit the true and only genuine and sound basis of morality everywhere and at all times effective, together with the results to which it leads. The actual facts of morality are too much on my side for me to fear that my theory can ever be replaced or upset by any other.

However, so long as even my ethical system continues to be ignored by the professorial world, it is Kant's moral principle that prevails in the universities. Among its various forms the one which is most in favour at present is "the dignity of man." I have already exposed the absurdity of this doctrine in my treatise on the Foundation of Morality. Therefore I will only say here that if the question were asked on what the alleged dignity of man rests, it would not be long before the answer was made that it rests upon his morality. In other words, his morality rests upon his dignity, and his dignity rests upon his morality.

But apart from this circular argument it seems to me that the idea of dignity can be applied only in an ironical sense to a being whose will is so sinful, whose intellect is so limited, whose body is so weak and perishable as man's. How shall a man be proud, when his conception is a crime, his birth a penalty, his life a labour, and death a necessity!—

Keynesianism, with its emphasis on aggregate demand management to promote economic prosperity, has proven to be an abject failure since 2008 in the United States and elsewhere. President George W. Bush’s tax cuts in 2008 and the subsequent bailout of investment banks before President Barack Obama took office were in the Keynesian mold of promoting spending to sustain economic activity. President Obama’s various forms of stimulus expenditures were similarly motivated, and they have not produced the promised results. Ignoring the evidence, adherents of Lord Keynes’s view of how an economy works have changed their language from touting the virtues of economic stimulus to posing a false choice between austerity budgets and economic growth.

Such change of language apparently was influential in the last presidential election in France, when Nicolas Sarkozy lost to socialist Francois Hollande, who touted the virtue of growth promotion over austerity, or fiscal discipline. The same false choice was touted in the June Greek elections but without a decisive victory for the socialist growth promoters. The contrast between government budgetary discipline and economic growth promotion through increased government spending is sure to become pronounced in the U.S. election campaign. That is why the meaninglessness of the alleged alternatives needs to be exposed: Austerity budgets are the logical means of restoring economic growth; austerity and growth promotion are not alternatives. The failure of governments to promote robust economic recovery since the “Great Recession” will persist if a majority of the voting public is lured into thinking that voting against austerity is a vote for economic growth.

The key to understanding the falsehood of contrasting austerity budgets with promotion of economic growth is simple enough. First, whatever a government spends, it must first take from taxpayers and buyers of its bonds. Thus unless a government borrows from nonresidents or the country’s central bank, there is merely a one-to-one substitution in spending between the private sector and the government sector. Contrary to Keynesian mythology, therefore, increased government spending, whether financed by higher taxes or borrowing from domestic residents, does not change total spending, or so-called aggregate demand. By the same token, decreased government spending does not reduce total spending. Whatever the government does not take from the public to spend is retained to be spent by the taxpayers or the potential government bond purchasers.

Second, individuals are far better at managing their own funds or investments (out of savings) than government bureaucrats entrusted with spending tax dollars or funds collected from the sale of government bonds. Thus even though increased government spending does not change total spending when funded with tax dollars or domestically borrowed funds, it increases the share of total income or gross domestic product (GDP) entrusted to government bureaucrats and decreases the efficiency of the economy’s functioning and its growth. Austerity—that is, cutting government spending—particularly when revenue collection has decreased, is thus the rational path to reducing the inefficiency drag that most government spending has on an economy.

Laid-off government workers may not find alternative employment quickly in a recession; their lot may improve, however, with the economy’s recovery. The same applies to laid-off workers in the private sector. Recovery will occur when private-sector economic activity picks up—with producers anticipating demand for goods and services and hiring workers to meet that anticipated demand.

But this is where Keynes’s adherents place the proverbial cart before the horse. By reasoning that employers must first anticipate demand before they hire workers, they think one must also accept that government’s appropriating funds to pay its workers (rather than laying them off) would promote private business activity—the Keynesian multiplier effect. But, as already pointed out, when government appropriates funds it merely displaces private-sector spending. The failure of the $787 billion stimulus from 2009, 2010’s Cash for Clunkers program, mortgage subsidies, the extension of unemployment benefits, and other doling out of funds by the Obama administration to stimulate aggregate demand and increase national income by a factor of 1.5 (according to the logic of Christina Romer and her colleagues on the Council of Economic Advisers)—all of these attest to the fundamental error of Keynesian thinking.

Ahiakpor, James C. “The False Choice between “Austerity” and Economic Growth”
The State education system is centrally planned and run by committees, so choice and competition are lost from the system. Stagnation is therefore inevitable. Where market forces prevail, productivity improvement is normal. Computers and cell phones are vastly better than they were twenty years ago. Cars and planes less dramatically so, but they are safer, more fuel-efficient, and have new features. In the energy sector, hydraulic fracturing (fracking) has vastly increased the supply of fossil fuels, so that the United States may become a net energy exporter within the next couple of decades. Less innovative sectors can still use technologies invented in other industries to raise productivity (e.g., by lowering their energy costs or improving their logistics) if competitive market forces are at work. But productive innovation is difficult and competition is the best school in which to learn it. State education plays hooky from that school, so it fails to learn.

Poor public schools are a major bottleneck holding back the entire U.S. economy. The recent increase in inequality has been driven not by capital but by labor income, as Saez and Piketty stress. This reflects sharply rising demand for certain kinds of skilled, educated workers, combined with little supply response. The public schools and universities are unable and/or unwilling to train the kinds of people the market wants. Eric Brynjolfsson argues in his book *Race Against the Machine* that workers are unable to keep up with new technology.

The fact that wages of high school graduates have fallen is a painful remark about how much the market values what the public schools produce. In spite of these high labor premiums, college completion rates among men have actually fallen. College is overregulated and oversubsidized, and there is too much power in the hands of accreditation agencies answerable to the Department of Education. But there is still far more competition and choice there than at the K–12 level. Thanks to competition, the U.S. university system is generally regarded as the best in the world and as an important source of U.S. economic competitiveness. Of course, the top universities—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, etc.—are private. And the consensus in academia is that universities would be equipped to produce many more bright college graduates if the public schools provided more students with basic skills.

Milton Friedman wanted to make K–12 education more like the university system through vouchers. Under a voucher system, financing K–12 education would still be the government’s job, but running K–12 education would be opened up to competition and largely privatized. Each student’s family would get a certain dollar value’s worth of vouchers, which could only be spent on education. “Government” schools would get their money by collecting the vouchers of students who chose to attend them and converting those to cash through the government. Direct financing of public schools through the government budget would be curtailed or eliminated. Meanwhile, vouchers could also be used to pay for private school tuition.

Today, the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice seeks to “advance Milton and Rose Friedman’s vision of school choice for all children.” Voucher programs have been adopted in several countries, including free-market Chile and social-democratic Sweden. In the United States, there has been progress in overcoming legal challenges to school vouchers (especially *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*), and voucher programs have been adopted in cities like Cleveland and Milwaukee and states like Indiana. Where tried, vouchers have improved educational outcomes, just as economic theory says they should.

Smith, Nathan. “Competition and Free Thought”
Years before the New Deal, big, politically influential businesses wanted to diminish conflict, increase predictability, and reduce the appeal of radical unions. So they supported federal labor legislation, and some contributed to the development of the approach embodied in the NLRA. Although most of the corporate elite was unhappy with the NLRA as written, key business figures cooperated with the secretary of labor to implement it, hoping the law would help to handle grievances and prevent instability in the workplace.

Big businesses that supported the emergence of modern labor law liked the fact that it had the potential to keep unions tame and manageable, ensuring that they would operate within a predefined legal framework in order to enjoy legal privileges. (This is not to say that everything worked out exactly as the corporate elite would have liked.) It should be no surprise, then, that viewed as a package, existing labor law limits workers’ options. For instance, since bargaining is required only when a union enjoys majority support, a union that represents a significant fraction of employees—but not a majority—will tend to be treated as irrelevant. Right-to-work laws typically assume, as does the federal labor-law framework, that if workers are represented at all, they’ll all be represented by one union—a single, certified bargaining agent. One practical effect of this arrangement is to undermine “minority unionism”—labor action by any number of workers acting on their own behalf, functioning as a bargaining unit without official certification. The practical effect is to reduce flexibility for workers and to ensure that they have to choose between an established union or no representation at all. Other aspects of the existing legal framework are troubling, too. Legal rules that let courts order workers back to work treat workers as slaves, as the State’s property.

A secondary boycott—a work action in which one group of workers refuses to work with or for an employer involved in a dispute with another group of workers—can be a powerful, nonviolent tool for achieving workplace goals. But current law bans secondary boycotts and “sympathy strikes,” as well as strikes across plants or industries, again treating workers as slaves.

Existing laws provide for “cooling-off” periods before strikes can proceed. They require arbitration of some labor disputes, denying workers access to the courts, and precluding continued, tough negotiation. They encourage collective bargaining to focus just on some fairly specific issues related to the terms of employment rather than broader workplace concerns like plant closings and governance. They rule out contracts that require hiring-hall arrangements in which unions funnel new workers to employers. They even allow a U.S. president to decree an end to a strike. The existing labor-law regime is designed to tame workers in the interests of “industrial peace,” not to promote their interests.

So, by all means, repeal the NLRA and all the state right-to-work laws. The government needs to get out of the labor-law business. It needs to respect freedom of contract.

But don’t stop there. Eliminate the full range of privileges and restrictions that boost employers’ influence over people’s terms of employment. For instance: Get rid of the rules that reduce the available alternatives to paid employment by raising the costs of working for yourself—rules like occupational licensing requirements and zoning codes that keep people from running businesses from their homes. And eliminate rules that make self-employment riskier by raising the cost of living—like building and zoning codes, and rent control and land-use controls that limit the availability of housing—and that therefore channel people into the predictable, even if less appealing, world of work for wages. People who have other options can afford to bargain for good terms. It’s also important, therefore, to remove the various restraints that limit the number of startup businesses: The more employers there are, the more competition there will be for labor, and the better the terms will be for those who choose to work for others.

Chartier, Gary, “What’s Wrong With Right To Work”
In “Why Natural Childbirth?” Judith A. Lothian, a professor at Seton Hall and a prominent advocate of birth without anesthetics, believes “natural childbirth is not about suffering. It is about having the freedom to find comfort in many different ways . . . for example, moving freely, listening to music, taking a shower or bath, and having [the mother’s] feet and hands massaged.”

That is, to be sure, a kind of freedom. But natural childbirth also means avoiding certain methods of relieving pain, and using other less potent ones, such as “taking a shower or bath.” Lothian and her colleagues claim the title of “natural” for their methods because they believe theirs are in tune with women’s “deep, intuitive instinct about birth.” And maybe they are.

For the advocates of natural birth, a heated shower in a plastic tub fits with their idea of “natural” simply because it’s something we now take for granted in the industrialized West. Surrounded by the wealth and innovation of 200 years of relatively open markets, we’ve had hot baths at home for long enough that perhaps they now seem like a natural part of life. By contrast, the epidural, even though it’s been used since 1940, is only administered in hospitals. Because it requires skilled technicians who use highfalutin medical terminology, natural birth advocates have concluded such painkillers are just not what nature intended.

To be morally good, they think, one must be natural. To be natural, one must attempt to be pre-technological. On those grounds, during one of the most dangerous and emotionally volatile moments of a woman’s life, she should also endure horrendous pain. To endure such pain is a sacred rite of motherhood. To dull the pain is to make childbirth profane.

The truth is, humans are by nature technological animals. Even 200,000 years ago—when our species first appeared (by the earliest estimates)—the more primitive species from which we evolved already had clothing, fire, temporary shelters, and stone tools. Our own species evolved only after our predecessors had developed a cluster of technologies. With it they were able to survive, develop, and expand.

Today we can survive without fur because our ancestors invented clothing and campfires. We can make do with our small, dull teeth because our ancestors invented cooking and utensils. Innovation is human.

Now, I would never suggest forcing the latest technology on anyone. Each new technique has costs that can only be weighed by the people who pay them. That epidural, for instance, sometimes leaves the mother’s legs too weak to stand on until the next day, so for her there is a trade-off between reducing pain and retaining mobility. No one can decide for a woman which is most important to her experience of birth.

Until the invention of safe Caesarean sections in the late 1800s, many women and children were doomed to death because a human infant’s head is often too big to pass safely through the mother’s birth canal.

For those children who survived delivery, fully one third died in their first year throughout the precapitalist European Middle Ages. Even by 1900, with the sweeping progress of industrialism and markets, more than 10 percent of all children died in their first year in every country in the world except Sweden (that is, according to this source.)

Since 1900, infant mortality everywhere has fallen dramatically. In advanced capitalist economies, it’s now usually below 1 percent.

Today, even most “third-world” countries have infant mortality below Sweden’s 10 percent achievement in 1900. This is largely due to the spread of dirt-cheap technologies uses first by the rich but now used by almost everyone—like sterilized water and generic antibiotics.

Reid, Mike. “A Natural Childbirth”
Passage 50

Everything that human beings may want—an hour’s use of a uranium-miner’s time, a month’s use of a house, a year’s use of a potato patch, the use of an automobile until it falls apart—goes on the market in exchange for everything else. In accordance with what they find market rates of exchange to be, human beings will revamp their own private schedules of priorities, whereby they rank the things they want in the order in which they want them.

Freedom works—or rather flourishes, and sprouts—whenever it is given half a chance. On a free market, ratios of exchange between marketable things—in other words, prices—find their own level, like water under the universal law of gravitation. What provides the sunshine in which market institutions flourish, and what supplies the universal law that levels prices, is nothing less than the imaginative enterprise of the businessman. He noses out, before others do, situations in which his fellow men are deprived of some convenience, some want, for which they would not be too sorry to exchange other things, and in which he could take some of these other things in exchange for the missing commodity if it could be supplied. In other words, he discovers a new way to satisfy a public demand by bringing existing resources together without wasting them. In fact he makes these resources more valuable than they were before; and the additional value is his profit. But in the very course of making his profit, our businessman is adding to the supply of his new product; and thus driving its price down and down on the free market, by way of inducing people to take more and more of it. He is also adding to the demand for things that go into the product, and thus pulling their prices up and up, by way of inducing people to give more and more of them.

Impelled by the market freedom of the human beings concerned, including that of the businessman to seek profit, prices find their own level, and costs and revenues converge. Indeed they execute a pincher movement on our enterprising businessman’s profits, and sooner or later will squeeze them to zero. If he is wise, and has a chance to do it, he will use his profits to buy more capital equipment; for all he will get when the bloom of novelty is off his product, will be interest for his capital and wages for his time, at no more than prevailing rates on the market.

The moral of all this is that if we simply trust to human freedom as it exhibits itself in the market economy, we shall find that all will be as well as we can expect human affairs to be. As we have just seen, the market smooths away profits in a manner that ought to delight any critic of profits. We have also noticed that the quest for profit itself, driving prices to find their own level, actually drives up costs while driving down product prices; and since essentially all costs are either costs of waiting or costs of working, it follows that on the free market, wage levels tend to increase. It used to be thought that wage levels necessarily stayed at the minimum for subsistence; but as production and prosperity grew, the thinkers had to keep redefining subsistence. Much play was made with a casual remark of that first philosopher of the free market, Professor Adam Smith, to the effect that businessmen’s conversation at any party always got around to the question of keeping wage levels down. Perhaps it does, but Adam Smith didn’t say that the question ever got answered. The only answer could be to gang up and hold wage levels down. But on a free market, you can’t count on any gang to hold together. The most enterprising member of the gang may desert the others; or else some other enterprising businessman will pop up out of nowhere, and in his own quest for profit will offer more than the gang does. On the free market, you can count on competition to break up any combine before any government commission has a chance to get it investigated. If you investigate it closely enough, you are sure to find some obstacle to market freedom. You are very likely to find that the obstacle was put there by the law itself.

Buck, Hart “The Essence of Capitalism”
The principle of the Declaration of Independence—“all men are created free and equal, and are endowed with certain inalienable rights”—is the principle from which the Revolutionary Fathers derived their claim to independence. Upon this they founded the institutions of this country, and the whole structure was to be the living incarnation of this idea. This principle contains the programme of our political existence. It is the most progressive, and at the same time the most conservative one; the most progressive, for it takes even the lowest members of the human family out of their degradation, and inspires them with the elevating consciousness of equal human dignity; the most conservative, for it makes a common cause of individual rights. From the equality of rights springs identity of our highest interests; you cannot subvert your neighbor’s rights without striking a dangerous blow at your own. And when the rights of one cannot be in-fringed without finding a ready de-fence in all others who defend their own rights in defending his, then, and only then, are the rights of all safe against the usurpations of governmental authority.

This general identity of interests is the only thing that can guarantee the stability of democratic institutions. Equality of rights, embodied in general self-government, is the great moral element of true democracy; it is the only reliable safety valve in the machinery of modern society. There is the solid foundation of our system of government; there is our mission; there is our greatness; there is our safety; there, and nowhere else! This is true Americanism, and to this I pay the tribute of my devotion.

It is a matter of historical experience, that nothing that is wrong in principle can be right in practice. People are apt to delude themselves on that point; but the ultimate result will always prove the truth of the maxim. Perhaps the most formidable danger for the safety of our institutions arises from the general propensity of political parties and public men to act on a policy of mere expediency, and to sacrifice principle to local and temporary success. And here, sir, let me address a solemn appeal to the consciences of those with whom I am proud to struggle side by side against human thraldom.

You hate kingcraft, and you would sacrifice your fortunes and your lives in order to prevent its establishment on the soil of this Republic. But let me tell you that the rule of political parties which sacrifice principle to expediency, is no less dangerous, no less disastrous, no less aggressive, of no less despotic a nature, than the rule of monarchs. Do not indulge in the delusion, that in order to make a government fair and liberal, the only thing necessary is to make it elective. When a political party in power, however liberal their principles may be, have once adopted the policy of knocking down their opponents instead of voting them down, there’s an end of justice and equal rights. The history of the world shows no example of a more arbitrary despotism, than that exercised by the party which ruled the National Assembly of France in the bloodiest days of the great French Revolution. I will not dis-cuss here what might have been done, and what not, in those times of a fearful crisis; but I will say that they tried to establish liberty by means of despotism, and that in her gigantic struggle against the united monarchs of Europe, revolutionary France won the victory, but lost her liberty.

There is a thing which stands above the command of the most ingenious of politicians: It is the logic of things and events. It cannot be turned and twisted by artificial arrangements and delusive settlements; it will go its own way with the steady step of fate. It will force you, with uncompromising severity, to choose between two social organizations, one of which is founded upon privilege, and the other upon the doctrine of equal rights.

Shurz, Carl “Equal Rights”
The American colonists, as members of the British Empire, were subjects of Great Britain. George III demanded loyalty of them. Should they have respected these demands? Without question, if one accepts the principle of undeviating loyalty, of constant and perpetual assent, then tyranny and evil can have no stopping place. In any event, the colonists did turn disloyal to the Mother Country. They were so serious about it that they used guns to express their disloyal convictions. Not only was the U.S.A. born in acts of disloyalty to an oppressor, but disloyalty to future oppressors was adopted as a fundamental principle, for in the Declaration of Independence itself is this admonition:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Were these actions of the colonists right or wrong? The answer comes clear when the proper questions are posed. Does one owe loyalty to a spouse turned unfaithful? Does one owe loyalty to a government turned socialist or communist? The answer is final when one sees that loyalty is not a condition that can be imposed but, instead, is an attitude that can only be earned. As Frederic Bastiat phrased it: “The safest way to make laws respected is to make them respectable.”

Loyalty, like love, is a personal response on the part of others to one’s own pleasing, agreeable, acceptable behaviours. It is a response and nothing else. Quite true, it is a hoped-for response. But simply because it is desirable does not signify that it can be insured by fiat or edict. As the reading on a thermometer is but a recording of heat, so is the degree of loyalty but a recording of feelings in the human heart toward the behaviour and actions of others. To attempt the fixing of either one, without regard to the conditions from which they spring, is to act absurdly. The most that can be said is this: If one wishes loyalty in another, let him inspire it by actions the other considers both efficacious and just. This applies to government as well as to persons.

The confusion in the loyalty question appears to arise from a semantic difficulty. There is a quality a person has a right to expect of another, a quality which if conspicuously absent in the citizenry makes any proper government impossible. That quality is integrity; its opposite is two-facedness—such as, claiming loyalty to one’s spouse while practicing infidelity in his or her absence; affecting friendship in the presence of an other while acting unfriendly when the other’s back is turned; espousing free enterprise when in the company of free enterprisers and going along with the socialists when a little government pap appears expedient; accepting the privileges of citizenship in one’s country while secretly serving as the agent of a foe. The Judases, the two-racers, the double-dealers are cases in point.

When we reduce the evil so loosely termed “disloyalty” to the real evil “two-facedness,” it becomes quite apparent how little in the way of effacing it can be accomplished by either legislation or public oaths. Penalties can be imposed for perjury and the government can discharge any person who is not properly doing whatever he was hired to do. That about states the limits of what legislation can accomplish. But this will not greatly deter the person who desires to deceive. In his case, oaths tell nothing.

Read, Leonard E. “Loyalty Oaths”
Passage 53

Charity is a noble and deep human feeling. Why is it dismissed and devalued? Why is it deemed humiliating, while state aid is viewed as a display of compassion?

Helping our fellow man and political distribution are very different actions. Let us take as an example the noble conduct of the Good Samaritan, a beautiful portrait of humanitarianism. A basic assumption—in truth, an essential element—of the parable is liberty. The Good Samaritan’s virtue stems from the fact that he acts voluntarily; if a centurion forced him to help the poor Jew, beaten and abandoned in the road, the parable would have made no sense.

Virtue, in effect, demands liberty. In this example, we see the demoralizing effect of state expansion. Many nongovernmental organizations, particularly in Europe, do not ask citizens to freely and voluntarily hand over a fraction of their income. Instead, they ask the state to extract sums from taxpayers’ pockets. Amazingly, the sacrifice of liberty and responsibility on the altar of political power is praised, while providing free and voluntary aid to one’s fellow man is dismissed as humiliating charity. The fact is that where markets are permitted to work, fewer people need economic assistance of any kind. The centuries since Adam Smith wrote The Wealth of Nations have provided ample evidence to support his message: Free trade and security in one’s rights are the pillars on which individuals can improve their condition. Despite this, many people criticize the market economy and allege that it encourages marginalization. It is common to read statistics showing great poverty and accusations that market-oriented countries like the United States are infernos of inequality.

The problem with such statistics is that they are based on surveys that fail to track the same people through time. Thus they cannot provide the most important piece of information: Are the poor condemned to poverty or are they able to rise out of it? The statistics, in short, rarely measure social mobility. But when they do, they show that the poor have large possibilities of escaping the lowest percentile of income distribution. It is in fact more probable that a very poor person in America will climb to the highest income rung than that he will remain in poverty. One could argue that the data indicate mobility but not improvement, given that there is always a poorest 20 percent. Incomes in an advancing society like the United States, however, are not constant but rather are increasing—despite pervasive government interference—and this, not welfare, offers everyone the opportunity and the incentive to progress.

Socialists and interventionists of all parties have reluctantly ended up accepting the market, but they claim government intervention is necessary to tackle inequality. However, inequality is only objectionable if there is a lack of competition and freedom. The modern state’s onerous and inefficient distributive structures, ostensibly built to wipe out inequality, have had perverse effects and a demoralizing impact on society, pushing different groups to fight over public favors. It is an out-of-control process in which, as the German liberal Ludwig Erhard said, everyone puts his hand in the pocket of everyone else.

The clamor from interventionists against inequality morphs into a clamor for a larger and larger state. This path leads to the loss of liberty and a distortion of both democracy and justice. It distorts democracy because, by attempting to solve inequality, it removes limits to power and expands the field of state action. It distorts justice because the only way to solve inequality politically is for the state to have the power to treat individuals unequally. Thus the struggle to eliminate inequality ends up destroying the most important form of equality for an open society: equality before the law.

Braun, Carlos Rodriguez  “From Good Samaritan To Robin Hood”
Passage 54

Explaining and, worse, legitimizing the state occupied sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers in England and Europe. Even as the beast they dissected exiled or imprisoned them and ravaged their countries with civil war, they worried about the intricacies of absolute monarchy. How exactly did God ordain it, and do men owe obligations beyond abject submission to their king? Is a monarchy not only absolute but unified, or does the sovereign share his power with “lesser magistrates”? If the latter, does the king’s authority move with him from palace to Parliament, so that his partners in crime bask in the reflected glow? Is there room for contractual relations between a sovereign and his subjects? And is that contract voided when the sovereign becomes tyrannical? After all, if law proceeds from the sovereign and is to be obeyed rather than questioned, how can we mere mortals call some dictates just and others, well, dictatorial?

Not only did these policy-wonk questions intrigue pundits, they inspired such events in British history as the Long Parliament, the Puritan Revolution, the Commonwealth, and so on. In The Politics of Liberty, Professor Lee Ward, who teaches political science at Campion College, University of Regina (Canada), correlates his philosophical history to the political one and coincidentally proves how very much ideas really matter. He traces the development of thought, repellant though it is, on the extent and morality of the state’s authority from Sir Robert Filmer, Hugo Grotius, and Thomas Hobbes through Samuel Pufendorf and such Whig philosophers as James Tyrrell, Algernon Sidney, John Locke, and Cato (that is, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, authors of Cato’s Letters). His book concludes with the transformation of these ideas by James Otis, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and other Americans.

And thank heaven they were transformed. Filmer argues unabashedly that the monarch is sovereign. Indeed, his king sits so far above the law that the royal nostrils may bleed. Filmer credits the biblical account of Adam’s creation for this. Supposedly, when God gave Adam dominion over the earth (Gen 1: 28–29), Adam became a literal and utter dictator.

Never mind that the context of these verses is dominion over the natural world, not the political one. God is not establishing Adam as a sort of primeval Stalin; rather, Adam is humanity’s representative, with God offering nature to mankind so that we may harness it for our advantage.

Ward next shows how Hobbes and Grotius fine tuned Filmer’s points. For example, they debate endlessly whether subjects have any right to rebel, even under the worst of conditions, including the threat of imminent death.

The early Whigs don’t offer much refuge from such lunacy. James Tyrrell wastes time and energy proving that Adam’s authority over his sons was a general one common to all fathers, rather than a specific right granted to Adam alone. He frets over whether human liberty is alienable and decides it is, though no man would be foolish enough to give away his freedom. Perhaps not, but some philosophers are foolish enough to abet those who steal it.

To this point, the quibbling resembles that between modern Republicans and Democrats, with all the nonsensical nuances of the argument over Social Security, for instance. And just as the parties don’t step back from the trees long enough to recommend clear-cutting the forest, neither do these philosophers. Bit by bit, they feed off and slightly temper the others’ enthusiasm for government. Along the way, almost accidentally, they take baby steps toward stifling the state.

With Algernon Sidney, however, comes a giant leap for mankind. He slashes and burns Filmer with a point-by-point refutation from the Bible. Locke, Cato, and the Americans take an even bigger leap into territory more familiar to us and far more palatable.

The Constitution attempted to limit the power of central government through intricate checks and balances. A key principle was separation of powers: those who make laws, enforce laws, and interpret laws should be substantially independent and capable of limiting each other’s power. The two houses of Congress provide a check on each other. The President can veto legislation, but he can be overruled by a two-thirds majority in both houses. The judiciary can strike down laws considered unconstitutional. Proposed amendments become part of the Constitution when approved by two-thirds of Congress and by legislatures in three-quarters of the states.

Yet the Constitution did establish unprecedented government power in America. The Constitution authorized federal taxes which never existed before. It gave the federal government power to overrule elected state and local officials who were closer to the people. Control over larger territory increased the temptation for U.S. presidents to become entangled in foreign wars, which had the consequence of further expanding federal power. There’s some irony here, since many people supported the Constitution because of dissatisfaction with high inflation, high taxes, and other economic consequences of the Revolutionary War.

Madison accepted Alexander Hamilton’s invitation to help promote ratification in New York State. Between October 1787 and March 1788, Madison wrote 29 essays which, together with 56 more essays by Hamilton and lawyer John Jay, appeared in New York newspapers. The essays became known as The Federalist Papers. All were signed “Publius” after the Roman lawmaker Publius Valerius Publicola who helped defend the Roman republic. In July 1788, the essays were published as a two-volume book. Madison seems to have recognized that by setting up a central government, the Constitution conflicted with ideals of liberty. Not until August 1788 did he finally tell Jefferson about his collaboration: “Col. Carrington tells me he has sent you the first volume of the federalist, and adds the 2nd. by this conveyance. I believe I never have yet mentioned to you that publication.”

Because the Constitution proposed to expand government power, there was substantial opposition, spearheaded by the so-called “Antifederalists.” They included New York governor George Clinton, Revolutionary War organizer Samuel Adams, and Virginians George Mason and Patrick Henry. Respected pro-Constitution historians Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager, and William E. Leuchtenburg admitted “There is little doubt that the Antifederalists would have won a Gallup poll.” The Antifederalists presented a wide range of often conflicting points against the Constitution. Most important: the lack of a Bill of Rights. Madison considered bills of rights to be mere “parchment barriers” which an oppressive majority could easily ignore. He was convinced that liberty would be best protected in a large republic with many competing interests, where it would be difficult for a single one to oppress the others.

Jefferson made clear he opposed the Constitution without a bill of rights. For example, on December 20, 1787, he told Madison he objected to “the omission of a bill of rights providing clearly and without the aid of sophisms for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, protection against standing armies, restriction against monopolies, the eternal and unremitting force of the habeas corpus laws, and trials by jury. . . .” Jefferson added: a Bill of Rights is “what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference.” Madison resisted. “I have never thought the omission a material defect,” he wrote Jefferson, “nor been anxious to supply it even by subsequent amendment. . . .”

Madison, however, came to realize the Constitution wouldn’t gain acceptance without a bill of rights. The Constitution was ratified in Delaware (December 7, 1787), Pennsylvania (December 12th), New Jersey (December 18th), Georgia (January 2, 1788), Connecticut (January 9th), Massachusetts (February 7th), Maryland (April 28th), South Carolina (May 23rd), New Hampshire (June 21st), Virginia (June 25th), and New York (July 26th), but the Antifederalists still had some aces. They threatened to campaign for a second constitutional convention, which Madison didn’t want.
Governments, Lippmann said, are made up of people who meet to make speeches and write resolutions, of people who study papers, listen to complaints, and shuffle paperwork. They know whatever they have happened to learn, are aware of what they have happened to observe, and are interested in whatever has happened to catch their imagination. A power-holder may sometimes have high ideals, but he is in the end no more than a human being, “a little man in trousers, slightly jagged,” as William Vaughan Moody put it.

Such a person cannot possibly know enough to devise wide-ranging schemes for society as a whole. No matter what the source of their authority human rulers are human beings, and as such have only a severely limited understanding of the world in which they find themselves. The social planner sits down to a breakfast that is the final link in a chain stretching far beyond his comprehension. Society goes on as it does because of processes that are habitual and unconscious, and it is only because people can take so much for granted that they have the time to attend to anything. Anyone who attempts to plan everything is immediately trapped in a web of details. “The real, rather than the apparent, policy of any state will be determined by the limited competence of finite beings dealing with unlimited and infinite circumstances,” Lippmann wrote.

In his efforts to manage this complexity every ruler must imitate Colbert in calling on the expertise of those whose industry he hopes to regulate. In attempting to plan the production of cloth in eighteenth-century France the government got its advice from existing manufacturers and passed decrees that would protect them from competition. This led to laws against the production of printed calicoes, which then were all the rage.

Earlier in his life Lippmann had endorsed a policy of gradual collectivism. He had never admitted to being a socialist, but he had argued that the government should gradually assume control of the economy, if not through outright ownership, then at least by means of detailed regulations. There should be a survey of all the available resources, and then national authorities should put together a plan for developing them. By the time he wrote The Good Society he had come to realize that such a plan would be flawed from the outset. The planners’ limited information must necessarily put them under the influence of such organized interests. “In practice,” he wrote, “gradual collectivism is not an ordered scheme of social reconstruction. It is the polity of pressure groups.”

Though they demand different things, these pressure groups agree in asserting that their interest is identical to the national interest. Those who believe the national interest is best served by means of cheap steel for the automobile industry, however, and those who believe it is best served by fixed and protected prices for the sake of the steel manufacturers, cannot both be right. Every new regulation, Lippmann said, is a decision in favor of some interest and against others.

Those who believe they have been harmed will react by seeking to protect their interests as well as they can. New laws lead to new violations, and these in turn to more new laws. In early eighteenth-century France lawsuits over methods for the production of cloth were endless. Observing that smuggling and bootlegging had become standard business practices Colbert decided to put the power of the State behind his decrees. An estimated 16,000 people were killed in his war on printed calicoes. A much larger number were punished somewhat less severely, though still with great cruelty. On one occasion 77 were hanged, 58 were broken on the wheel, 631 were sentenced to the galleys, one was set free, and none were pardoned. One assumes the Obama administration’s attempts to regulate health care will be less violent.

Much blood has been shed in conflicts over oil, but Independent Institute scholar Ivan Eland shows in *No War for Oil* that we would have saved many lost lives and squandered resources if we had simply allowed the market to work. There is no more need to fight over oil than over iron ore or coffee plantations. The British and French played oil politics. After World War I they carved up the old Ottoman Empire with oil domination in mind. The artificial nation of Iraq was stitched together so the British could control oil production in the region. That political connivance, Eland writes, “has haunted the world up until the present.”

American involvement in World War II also had much to do with oil, specifically the Roosevelt administration’s decision to embargo oil shipments to Japan. Eland observes that Roosevelt had wanted to goad Japan into military aggression with the embargo, calculating that the militaristic Japanese would try to seize the energy (and other resources) they needed. That strategy of course “worked.” FDR got the war he wanted. Ironically, American policy over the last two decades has been very similar to imperial Japan’s, Eland argues.

During the Cold War American oil interventionism was almost incessant. Eland takes readers through one blunder after another. One that had especially severe repercussions was the meddling in Iran. In collaboration with the British, the CIA engineered the overthrow of the elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 because he had nationalized the western-controlled oil fields in his country. To be sure, nationalization was bad for the oil companies, but it would have had no impact on the international oil market and American consumers. Nevertheless, the Eisenhower administration, to protect “our” interests, got rid of Mossadegh and restored to power the autocratic Shah, who was happy to let the oil companies stay in return for aid from the U.S. government. In 1979 the United States would feel the wrath of Iranians who had suffered under the Shah’s regime, as an Islamic revolution overthrew him and stormed the American embassy. All the hostilities and enmity ever since would have been avoided if we hadn’t played the oil politics game.

The first (1991) and second (2003–11) wars with Iraq were entirely unjustified, Eland argues. Many Americans fell for the argument that if Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had control of Kuwaiti and Saudi oil fields, he would be in a position to inflict terrible damage on our economy through an oil embargo—and therefore had to be first stopped and then removed. In the book’s most important economic insight, Eland shows what an utterly mistaken concern that was. He refutes the notion that American policy must intervene (militarily or otherwise) whenever some foreign government hints that it might use oil as an economic weapon. That idea overlooks the crucial fact that producing countries are desperate for revenues. They will sell their oil into the world market, and even if they say they want none to go to Americans, that won’t make the least bit of difference. We will still be able to buy as much as we want from other producers.

In short, Eland shows, it is much cheaper to buy oil on the market than to fight for it.

Just as it’s foolish to fight for oil, it is similarly foolish to strive for “energy independence.” Eland attacks the idea that foreign oil is something we must avoid buying and that therefore we need to subsidize all sorts of inefficient alternatives like biofuels, solar power, and wind power.

The big message of *No War for Oil* is impossible to miss. The ideal energy policy is to leave things alone—no intervention internationally, no subsidies domestically.

Leef, George C. “No War For Oil; US Dependency and The Middle East”
Seldom have historians asked themselves why Americans would want to stay out of foreign wars. In 1940 Americans knew that the last time the subject came up was during the 1916 election, when President Woodrow Wilson vowed to keep America out of World War I. He won the election and the following year persuaded Congress to enter what he claimed was “the war to end all wars” so he could “make the world safe for democracy.” Instead the peace treaty triggered the bitter nationalist reaction that generated political support for Adolf Hitler’s totalitarian movement. Clearly those who wanted America to enter foreign wars were utterly unable to anticipate the horrifying consequences. Thus in 1940-41 many Americans wanted nothing to do with the wars in Europe and Asia.

Pearl Harbor: The Seeds and Fruits of Infamy is a suspenseful detective story of that behind-the-scenes political scheming. The initial draft of the book was written by Percy L. Greaves, Jr., who served as chief of staff to the Republicans on the Joint Congressional Committee, which investigated Pearl Harbor in 1945-46. Greaves combed through countless documents and interviewed all the major (and many minor) figures involved. He continued to investigate for many years afterward, finding key pieces of evidence overlooked by everyone else. After he died in 1984, his wife, longtime FEE staffer Bettina Bien Greaves, spent more than two decades turning the manuscript into a monumental scholarly achievement.

Pearl Harbor is among the most provocative mysteries in American history. In Greaves’s account FDR appears as the grand puppeteer manipulating events—even when this meant sacrificing American lives. While the Japanese bombing is almost universally described as an outrageous surprise attack, the book presents considerable evidence that it wasn’t much of a surprise to FDR. Although he probably didn’t know for sure where or when the Japanese would attack, he had many reasons to expect they would, and Pearl Harbor was a good bet to be the target.

As the book documents, in January 1940 the U.S. government began blocking exports to Japan, including strategic minerals, iron, steel scrap, and petroleum products like gasoline. Since the Japanese weren’t willing to abandon their ambitions for conquest in Asia, it should not have been surprising that they would attempt to retaliate against the United States. In fact, when questioned by his wife, Eleanor, about his economic policies toward Japan, Roosevelt admitted that they were driving the two countries toward conflict.

Moreover, in 1940 American cryptographers cracked the top Japanese diplomatic code—known as “Purple”—used to transmit messages. That enabled U.S. officials to learn a great deal about what the Japanese government was planning. Much of the intrigue and suspense in the book involves the interception and decoding of Japanese diplomatic messages. The research done by Percy Greaves demolishes the idea, long cultivated by FDR’s followers, that the attack on Pearl Harbor took the President and his military advisers completely by surprise.

What had FDR and his advisers known—and when? After reading the book it seems beyond question that the administration knew late on December 6 that a Japanese attack was imminent, with Pearl Harbor a likely target, and yet no one took immediate action to warn the endangered base. The two Hawaiian commanders, Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short, were scapegoated to hide the administration’s incompetence and duplicity. After rigging a hasty “investigation” that declared Kimmel and Short derelict in their duty, the military engaged in a cover-up. Evidence was tampered with. Officers were pressured to have convenient “memory lapses” under questioning from counsel for Kimmel and Short. Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall (famed for the postwar Marshall Plan) comes off looking especially bad in the book’s recounting of events.

The book has two important lessons for today. One is that using duplicity to enter foreign wars is likely to backfire with terrible consequences for the ordinary people of a nation. The other is that politicians will stop at almost nothing to make themselves appear great and heroic. I recommend this book highly.

Powell, Jim. “Pearl Harbor: The Seeds and Fruits of Infamy”
Steve Cooksey had been sick for some time. He slowly gained weight over the years, and by 2008 had developed episodic asthma, a chronic cough, and respiratory infections, and was on multiple medications. In February 2009, after being rushed to the hospital, Steve was diagnosed with Type-II diabetes. His doctors informed him he would need insulin and drugs for the rest of his life. The day after being discharged, Steve sat home alone, crying over what he had become. He vowed to change his life. Steve did research on health and diabetes, much of it online. He learned that diabetes is a condition of elevated blood sugar, so he started eating foods that kept his blood sugar low, and he exercised regularly. Specifically, Steve adopted the diet of our Paleolithic ancestors, eschewing sugars, processed foods, and agricultural starches in favor of fresh veggies, fish, meats, eggs, and nuts. He lost 78 pounds, freed himself of drugs and doctors, and feels healthier than ever. In January 2010 Steve started a blog, Diabetes Warrior, to share his story and insights. He soon developed a large readership.

Steve would frequently receive feedback from friends and readers about the positive effect his Paleolithic diet had on people with obesity and diabetes. By December 2011, after nearly two years of blogging on the benefits of eating like a caveman, Steve was receiving so many interesting questions from his readers that he started a free Dear Abby-style column on his website. Yet just one month after his free advice column began, government officials told Steve he was engaging in criminal behavior. The North Carolina Board of Dietetics/Nutrition told Steve that to give someone advice about what food to buy at the grocery store required a dietitian license from the government. Obtaining such a license takes years and costs thousands of dollars.

Further, the state board told Steve it is a crime in North Carolina to offer dietary advice for free in private phone conversations with his readers and friends. Steve had also begun a paid life-coaching service, which the board deemed illegal as well. The board sent Steve a 19-page print-up of his blog, highlighting in red pen numerous examples where his speech violated the law. The review declared that Steve’s free and private advice to friends, his free advice column, and his paid life-coaching service were all illegal speech amounting to the criminal practice of dietetics. The board’s actions had a chilling effect on Steve’s speech; he was forced to stop giving much of his dietary advice, and even had to remove several pages from his website.

Violating licensing law can lead to fines, court gag orders, and even jail. According to the government’s logic, countless websites, Internet forums, Facebook, and so much more where people share information and offer each other advice on topics such as diet, parenting, and pregnancy are illegal. Steve intends to fight this censorship not only to vindicate our free speech rights, but also because he is deeply concerned with the obesity and diabetes epidemics.

More Americans than ever now need a license to pursue the occupation of their choice—nearly one in three workers, up from just one in 20 in the 1950s, according to noted licensure expert and University of Minnesota economist Morris Kleiner. A new report by the Institute for Justice, License to Work, finds that in North Carolina and across the country, these occupational licensing laws are not only widespread, but often overly burdensome and arbitrary.

The Supreme Court has said surprisingly little about the ability of occupational licensing laws to trump free speech. Steve’s case presents an ideal opportunity for the high court to finally address this unresolved issue. The statute and regulations Steve is challenging with his lawsuit give the government the authority to use occupational licensing to scrub the Internet of certain types of advice. But as my colleague, First Amendment expert Paul Sherman, says: “Advice is protected speech. Just because the government can license certain types of expert professional advice doesn’t mean the government can license every type of advice.”

Thankfully, the First Amendment prevents the government from making us criminals for simply sharing ordinary advice, including our thoughts on what food people should buy at the grocery store. Yet unless the Supreme Court ultimately intervenes, protectionist occupational licensing laws could soon censor the speech of millions of Americans who use the Internet to exchange their ideas.

Ewing, Bob “When Free Speech Collides With Occupational Licensing”
All in all, the U.S. regulatory state, explains Roderick Long, was not a twentieth-century innovation, but rather was “deeply involved from the start, particularly in the banking and currency industries and in the assignment of property titles to land. (Even such land as was not stolen from the natives was seldom appropriated in accordance with any sort of Lockean homesteading principle; instead, vast tracts of unimproved land were simply declared property by barbed wire or legislative fiat.)” In substantial ways the economy of the late nineteenth century was freer than today, although some groups were heavily controlled, not least of all the southern blacks persecuted by Jim Crow laws, to say nothing of whites restricted by segregation from freely associating with these blacks.

Even nationally the twilight of the nineteenth century was a mixed bag. Veto-happy Grover Cleveland was probably the most laissez-faire president in half a century and ever since. Yet Cleveland’s terms had nontrivial blemishes: He used U.S. Marshals to quell the Pullman strike and enforce the Sherman Antitrust Act, supported the Dawes Act’s aggrandizement of presidential authority over Indian affairs, strengthened the Chinese Exclusion Act, begrudgingly acquiesced to an income tax to offset reduced tariff revenue, created the Interstate Commerce Commission, and despite a largely anti-imperialist record, threatened and used military force to assert dominance in Latin America against European influence and in favor of U.S. banking interests.

The market’s defenders often mimic its opponents in moving the benchmarks to describe historical periods as “laissez-faire.” This dangerous game does not stop with the nineteenth century. American life before the New Deal was certainly freer in important respects, but we must be cautious in defending the 1920s. Putting aside the bloated bureaucracies lingering from World War I, the Fordney McCumber Tariff of 1922, the Immigration Control Act of 1924, and the calamity of alcohol prohibition, it was 1920s credit expansion that Austrian economists credibly blame for the boom and 1929 crash. We lose credibility in carelessly praising the pre–New Deal Era while blaming the Depression on policies enacted in that time.

Less ambitious free marketers idealize the 1950s—the decade of top marginal tax rates exceeding 90 percent (and, for the poorest Americans, 20 percent); the FCC’s puritanical regulation of the airwaves and maintenance of the telephone monopoly; the booming military-industrial complex; and the growing regimentation of industry, farming, and higher education. The transformative Great Society was in many ways an expansion on Eisenhower-era precedents more than a qualitative break from the past. Even more desperate acts of nostalgia glorify the Reagan years. Although some government impositions were curtailed on the margins, Ronald Reagan oversaw growth of the New Deal–Great Society regime, as deficit spending exploded, Social Security and protectionism expanded, and foreign aid and bureaucracies ballooned. None of this sober reflection backward should prompt us to see our history as an inexorable march toward liberty. There have been major advances in modern times—abolition of the draft, strengthened free-speech rights, and greater legal tolerance for minorities—but even in areas like racial oppression and personal freedom, many matters have worsened. Over two million Americans are behind bars. The drug war has devastated African-American communities. Last year the national government deported more immigrants than ever before. The war on terror has shredded basic rights. Washington’s run-of-the-mill economic interventions—in the name of health, equality, environmentalism, and fighting poverty—have escalated. The national debt and entitlement state have seen an unprecedented boom.

Neither today’s dismal state of affairs nor past oppression should make us nihilistic. History can teach us a lot about liberty. Certain areas of American life were freer in the nineteenth century than today and others were not, and the social blessings arising from relative conditions of liberty are worth identifying and understanding. Economics shows that free markets serve the masses by elevating workers’ productivity and smashing the old order of privilege and oppression. Both experience and economic science demonstrate the superiority of liberty to statism. The golden era of freedom and free markets is not now and it’s not behind us. It is still ahead of us. This is reason to rejoice. We can happily envision a much better future.

Gregory, Anthony “The Golden Age of Freedom is Still Ahead”
Roosevelt’s thinking was a profound change from the views of the Founders. To them, government existed to protect property, not redistribute it. Americans had a right to pursue life, liberty, and property, not an entitlement to it. Thus the Founders never considered raising revenue through an income tax, least of all a graduated one. They wanted consumption taxes—levies on imports or on luxury goods. Why? Because, as Alexander Hamilton said in Federalist 21, “The amount to be contributed by each citizen will in a degree be at his own option, and can be regulated by an attention to his resources.”

Hamilton added, “If duties are too high, they lessen the consumption; the collection is eluded; and the product in the treasury is not so great. . . . This forms a complete barrier against any material oppression of the citizens by taxes of this class, and is itself a natural limitation of the power of imposing them.”

American law also reinforced the use of consumption taxes. “All duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States,” the Constitution reads. What could be more uniform than Congress’s first excise tax of seven cents a gallon on all whiskey produced in the United States? Progressives, however, disliked consumption taxes as the major source for revenue. They were too small, too cumbersome to collect, and sometimes too regressive—wealth never properly redistributed itself through consumption taxes. Taxes on whiskey, tobacco, and imported olives from Spain shifted very little, if any, wealth from rich to poor. In 1913 the House Ways and Means Committee observed that federal revenue rested “solely on consumption. The amount each citizen contributes is governed, not by his ability to pay taxes, but by his consumption of the articles needed.” Swollen fortunes, as Roosevelt might say, went untaxed and became more swollen while some immigrants lived in poverty.

The Sixteenth Amendment was ratified in 1913, giving Congress the “power to lay and collect taxes on incomes from whatever source derived.” It did not rule out “ability to pay” as the basis for the levy. The amendment became law just as Woodrow Wilson was coming into the presidency. As a Progressive, Wilson wanted to start small, establish a precedent, and then increase rates over time. Under the new tax law, exemptions were so high that few Americans earned enough to pay any tax. Rates started at 1 percent and rose slowly to a high of 7 percent on all income over $500,000.

Progressives easily sold this tax plan to the voters. Fewer than one American family in 100 paid anything, but politicians could promise audiences that they might receive benefits from the revenue. And who would dare to suggest that billionaire John D. Rockefeller did not have the ability to pay 7 percent of his huge income to the government?

Yet that raises an interesting question. At what tax rate did Rockefeller, or other wealthy men, cease to have the ability to pay? If they could pay 7 percent, could they pay 15? Apparently so, because in 1916 Wilson and Congress raised the top rate to 15 percent. Unlike with a consumption tax, under the income tax politicians judge ability to pay and they choose the rates they think rich people can afford. If politicians choose rates too high they may lose the support of the rich, but they may gain support of those larger groups receiving subsidies from the tax revenue. If wealth really needs to be redistributed, should we trust people to do it with their own money or politicians with other people’s money?

Folsom, Burton “The Progressive Income Tax and The Joy of Spending Other Peoples Money”
Passage 62

Power and machinery, money and goods, are useful only as they set us free to live. They are but means to an end. For instance, I do not consider the machines which bear my name simply as machines. If that was all there was to it I would do something else. I take them as concrete evidence of the working out of a theory of business, which I hope is something more than a theory of business—a theory that looks toward making this world a better place in which to live. The fact that the commercial success of the Ford Motor Company has been most unusual is important only because it serves to demonstrate, in a way which no one can fail to understand, that the theory to date is right. Considered solely in this light I can criticize the prevailing system of industry and the organization of money and society from the standpoint of one who has not been beaten by them. As things are now organized, I could, were I thinking only selfishly, ask for no change. If I merely want money the present system is all right; it gives money in plenty to me. But I am thinking of service. The present system does not permit of the best service because it encourages every kind of waste—it keeps many men from getting the full return from service. And it is going nowhere. It is all a matter of better planning and adjustment.

I have no quarrel with the general attitude of scoffing at new ideas. It is better to be skeptical of all new ideas and to insist upon being shown rather than to rush around in a continuous brainstorm after every new idea. Skepticism, if by that we mean cautiousness, is the balance wheel of civilization. Most of the present acute troubles of the world arise out of taking on new ideas without first carefully investigating to discover if they are good ideas. An idea is not necessarily good because it is old, or necessarily bad because it is new, but if an old idea works, then the weight of the evidence is all in its favor. Ideas are of themselves extraordinarily valuable, but an idea is just an idea. Almost any one can think up an idea. The thing that counts is developing it into a practical product.

I am now most interested in fully demonstrating that the ideas we have put into practice are capable of the largest application—that they have nothing peculiarly to do with motor cars or tractors but form something in the nature of a universal code. I am quite certain that it is the natural code and I want to demonstrate it so thoroughly that it will be accepted, not as a new idea, but as a natural code.

The natural thing to do is to work—to recognize that prosperity and happiness can be obtained only through honest effort. Human ills flow largely from attempting to escape from this natural course. I have no suggestion which goes beyond accepting in its fullest this principle of nature. I take it for granted that we must work. All that we have done comes as the result of a certain insistence that since we must work it is better to work intelligently and forehandedly; that the better we do our work the better off we shall be. All of which I conceive to be merely elemental common sense.

Ford, Henry “My Life and Work”
Passage 63

The history of modern civilized America opens with one of those really revolutionary wars of liberation of which there have been so few compared with the enormous number of wars of conquest that were caused, like the present imperialistic war, by squabbles among kings, landholders and capitalists over the division of ill-gotten lands and profits. It was a war of the American people against the English who despoiled America of its resources and held in colonial subjection, just as their "civilized" descendants are draining the life-blood of hundreds of millions of human beings in India, Egypt and all corners and ends of the world to keep them in subjection.

Since that war 150 years have passed. Bourgeois civilization has born its most luxuriant fruit. By developing the productive forces of organized human labor, by utilizing machines and all the wonders of technique America has taken the first place among free and civilized nations. But at the same time America, like a few other nations, has become characteristic for the depth of the abyss that divide a handful of brutal millionaires who are stagnating in a mire of luxury, and millions of laboring starving men and women who are always staring want in the face.

Four years of imperialistic slaughter have left their trace. Irrefutably and clearly events have shown to the people that both imperialistic groups, the English as well as the German, have been playing false. The four years of war have shown in their effects the great law of capitalism in all wars; that he who is richest and mightiest profits the most, takes the greatest share of the spoils while he who is weakest is exploited, martyred, oppressed and outraged to the utmost.

In the number of its colonial possessions, English imperialism has always been more powerful than any of the other countries. England has lost not a span of its "acquired" land. On the other hand it has acquired control of all German colonies in Africa, has occupied Mesopotamia and Palestine.

German imperialism was stronger because of the wonderful organization and ruthless discipline of "its" armies, but as far as colonies are concerned, is much weaker than its opponent. It has now lost all of its colonies, but has robbed half of Europe and throttled most of the small countries and weaker peoples. What a high conception of "liberation" on either side! How well they have defended their fatherlands, these "gentlemen" of both groups, the Anglo-French and the German capitalists together with their lackeys, the Social-Patriots.

American plutocrats are wealthier than those of any other country partly because they are geographically more favorably situated. They have made the greatest profits. They have made all, even the weakest countries, their debtors. They have amassed gigantic fortunes during the war. And every dollar is stained with the blood that was shed by millions of murdered and crippled men, shed in the high, honorable and holy war of freedom.

Had the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie accepted the Soviet invitation to participate in peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, instead of leaving Russia to the mercy of brutal Germany a just peace without annexations and indemnities, a peace based upon complete equality could have been forced upon Germany, and millions of lives might have been saved. Because they hoped to reestablish the Eastern Front by once more drawing us into the whirlpool of warfare, they refused to attend peace negotiations and gave Germany a free hand to cram its shameful terms down the throat of the Russian people. It lay in the power of the Allied countries to make the Brest-Litovsk negotiations the forerunner of a general peace. It ill becomes them to throw the blame for the Russo-German peace upon our shoulders!

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich "A Letter To The American Workingman"
The thirteen colonies which simultaneously threw off the yoke of England towards the end of the last century professed, the same religion, the same language, the same customs, and almost the same laws; they were struggling against a common enemy; and these reasons were sufficiently strong to unite them one to another, and to consolidate them into one nation. But as each of them had enjoyed a separate existence and a government within its own control, the peculiar interests and customs which resulted from this system were opposed to a compact and intimate union which would have absorbed the individual importance of each in the general importance of all. Hence arose two opposite tendencies, the one prompting the Anglo-Americans to unite, the other to divide their strength. As long as the war with the mother-country lasted the principle of union was kept alive by necessity; and although the laws which constituted it were defective, the common tie subsisted in spite of their imperfections. But no sooner was peace concluded than the faults of the legislation became manifest, and the State seemed to be suddenly dissolved. Each colony became an independent republic, and assumed an absolute sovereignty. The federal government, condemned to impotence by its constitution, and no longer sustained by the presence of a common danger, witnessed the outrages offered to its flag by the great nations of Europe, whilst it was scarcely able to maintain its ground against the Indian tribes, and to pay the interest of the debt which had been contracted during the war of independence. It was already on the verge of destruction, when it officially proclaimed its inability to conduct the government, and appealed to the constituent authority of the nation. If America ever approached (for however brief a time) that lofty pinnacle of glory to which the fancy of its inhabitants is wont to point, it was at the solemn moment at which the power of the nation abdicated, as it were, the empire of the land.

All ages have furnished the spectacle of a people struggling with energy to win its independence; and the efforts of the Americans in throwing off the English yoke have been considerably exaggerated. Separated from their enemies by three thousand miles of ocean, and backed by a powerful ally, the success of the United States may be more justly attributed to their geographical position than to the valor of their armies or the patriotism of their citizens. It would be ridiculous to compare the American was to the wars of the French Revolution, or the efforts of the Americans to those of the French when they were attacked by the whole of Europe, without credit and without allies, yet capable of opposing a twentieth part of their population to the world, and of bearing the torch of revolution beyond their frontiers whilst they stifled its devouring flame within the bosom of their country. But it is a novelty in the history of society to see a great people turn a calm and scrutinizing eye upon itself, when apprised by the legislature that the wheels of government are stopped; to see it carefully examine the extent of the evil, and patiently wait for two whole years until a remedy was discovered, which it voluntarily adopted without having wrung a tear or a drop of blood from mankind.

At the time when the inadequacy of the first constitution was discovered America possessed the double advantage of that calm which had succeeded the effervescence of the revolution, and of those great men who had led the revolution to a successful issue. The assembly which accepted the task of composing the second constitution was small; but George Washington was its President, and it contained the choicest talents and the noblest hearts which had ever appeared in the New World. This national commission, after long and mature deliberation, offered to the acceptance of the people the body of general laws which still rules the Union. All the States adopted it successively. The new Federal Government commenced its functions in 1789, after an interregnum of two years. The Revolution of America terminated when that of France began.

De Toqueville, Alexis “Democracy in America”
Passage 65

Paul Volcker is a man of considerable stature, and not just because he’s six feet, seven inches tall. He gained a reputation for courage and plain talk as chairman of the Federal Reserve System under Presidents Carter and Reagan because he broke the back of the 1970s inflation. He did so by (mostly) sticking to a tight monetary policy even though that meant sky-high interest rates and sharp back-to-back recessions before the economy could enter its vigorous recovery. Now 84, he has enjoyed a comeback in recent years as an adviser to President Obama. His Volcker Rule, prohibiting proprietary trading by banks, was heralded as one way of preventing a repeat of the recent financial crisis, and it became part of the Dodd-Frank Act signed into law in July 2010. Dodd-Frank’s full title, incidentally, is the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Like most current legislation its name reflects hoped-for outcomes, not its actual provisions. There are 16 titles consisting of 1,601 sections for a total of 848 dense pages.

Volcker initially outlined his proposal in a three-page memorandum. It came to life as Section 619 of Dodd-Frank, expanded to 11 dense pages. This section is supposed to prevent banks from buying and selling securities for their own accounts, in contrast to brokering customer trades. It also prohibits banks from holding interests in hedge funds or private equity funds or from sponsoring such funds. These prohibitions are supposed to lessen the need for future bailouts like those that were provided to financial institutions in 2008 and 2009.

But Volcker is not happy. “I don’t like it, but there it is,” he said. “I’d love to see a four-page bill that bans proprietary trading and makes the board and chief executive responsible for compliance.” On the other hand Rep. Frank, former Sen. Dodd, President Obama, and all the other Dodd-Frank sponsors should be happy. They achieved their purposes when the act was signed. They can now boast of having tamed the Wall Street beast so that the little people will never again be stuck with a bill for bailouts. But the full effects of Dodd-Frank won’t be felt until after this year’s election because so much depends on how the bureaucracy makes the rules that give meaning to the act. Exaggerating just a bit, one wag called Dodd-Frank a blank piece of paper for rule-makers to write on.

Four federal regulatory agencies are charged with writing the Volcker rules. Those agencies are supposed to play nice with one another—a 94-word sentence on page 247 orders them to do so. But a squabble has already broken out between the Fed and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Recently Bank of America moved some derivatives from its Merrill Lynch subsidiary to a subsidiary that holds insured deposits. The Fed favored this move as a way of providing relief to the bank’s holding company, while the FDIC, which would have to pay off depositors in the event of a failure, objected.

Last October the four agencies issued a tentative set of rules extending to 298 pages, inviting public responses to about 400 questions. A sample: “Should the Agencies use a gradual, phased in approach to implement the statute rather than having the implementing rules become effective at one time? If so, what prohibitions and restrictions should be implemented first? Please explain.” This is a pretty basic question, suggesting that regulators are in over their heads and are trying to get private parties to rescue them. This would be no surprise given their daunting task plus the fact that the smartest financial people can make a lot more money on Wall Street than they can working for regulatory agencies.

Gibson, Warren C. “The Volker Rule”
Passage 66

*New York Times* columnist David Brooks thinks America is great but in trouble, and he wants to take steps to preserve American preeminence. He’s right, though not in the way he thinks. In his November 11, 2010, column Brooks argued that we need some sort of National Greatness Agenda; the problem is that his conception of what makes us great is incoherent.

Brooks does identify some real problems: for instance, that competition between the two major parties has become “fratricidal” and theatrical, and that it is creating massive budget deficits that, left unchecked, will prove catastrophic. But his diagnosis of the problem and his proposed solutions are fraught with fallacies.

He thinks that a revived patriotism will “lift people out of their partisan cliques,” yet the current partisan tribalism seems not to be lacking in patriotism. As is often the case, much hangs on how one understands the terms.

What makes a country great? One way to answer this involves claiming that there is something special about the ethnic makeup of the people who comprise it. For Mussolini there was something great, something special, about being Italian; his allies in Germany and Japan had similar theories about their respective nationalities. But that approach won’t quite work for America since it comprises people of many ethnicities.

Another way to understand national greatness is in terms of institutions and operating principles. But institutions and principles can change. What would make a country great on this model would be to have great institutions grounded in great principles. The Declaration of Independence is an example of this approach: Begin with a set of principles (moral equality of all persons, the natural right to live and be free, power only justified by consent) and then appeal to it when creating institutions (limited government of enumerated powers, republican structure with a democratic franchise, church-state separation, citizen militia, free trade). On this model America is great inasmuch as its institutions reflect its principles. A nation that claims to be dedicated to the principles outlined in the Declaration fails to be great when it invades foreign lands, abuses its citizens’ liberties, or forbids the free movement of people and goods.

Brooks’s exhortations reveal a lack of clarity about different senses of greatness, which comes out most clearly in his repeated use of false dichotomies. He asks, for example, “Do you really love your tax deduction more than America’s future greatness?” This alternative presupposes that it is only through higher taxes that a nation can become great. This in turn assumes that national greatness is only measured by things done by the government. What might these be? Scholarly, artistic, and technological greatness might well be better fostered by individuals having more money and freedom.

“Are you really unwilling,” he asks, “to sacrifice your Social Security cost-of-living adjustment at a time when soldiers and Marines are sacrificing their lives for their country in Afghanistan?” It’s not clear that solving other countries’ problems is how we measure our own greatness. In any event, this question also reveals a confusion: equating national greatness with government spending. Instead of asking whether Social Security payouts should rise with inflation, we might ask whether we would be better off as a nation of financially independent and responsible people who didn’t look to the political system for retirement income. Instead of wondering how high taxes have to be to fund overseas military campaigns, we might ask whether those campaigns need to be undertaken by the government (as opposed to either being undertaken by privateers or not at all). One way to measure American greatness might be the extent to which we exemplify peace and prosperity. The best way to achieve those ends would be to limit (or even better, eliminate) coercive interference with other people’s lives.

Skoble, Aeon. “America’s Greatness requires War and Taxes?”
Passage 67

Friedrich Hayek in The Road to Serfdom argues that while socialism in theory may be internationalist, in practice it is highly, sometimes violently, nationalist. As the activities of government under socialism grow, he said, it becomes harder to make policy decisions democratically. Beyond a relatively short list of agenda items on which most can agree – national defense, for instance – the elected representatives who tax and spend will find it increasingly difficult to rationally prioritize a growing list of contentious objectives. Either decision-makers will have to agree on a Complete Ethical Code – one that ranks not only all that the government should do but also how much and how to pay for it – or it will have to find some way to make the public tolerate the increasingly controversial intrusions into their personal lives that comprehensive planning demands. The latter approach is usually more practicable, and the easiest way to do it is to unite the public against a common enemy, usually a foreign one or a locally despised minority. Nationalism, jingoism, and racism are the preferred methods.

My argument here is a little different from Hayek’s, but the paradox is similar. Collectivism is supposed to unite people by having them work together toward some common goal. Economic collectivism, such as socialism, tries to do this by making “workers” understand their common interest in opposing capitalist oppression and supporting the radical redistribution of wealth. Racial collectivism unites by highlighting the superiority of one race over other races. Religious and other forms of collectivism work essentially the same way. While such comparisons needn’t breed antagonism, in practice they almost always do.

Now everyone of necessity belongs to “collectives” of some kind. Families, religious organizations, clubs, schools, businesses, and neighborhoods each consist of common, in some sense collective, bonds. Such groups are normal parts of a healthy social order. Today we use the term “social network” to describe them.

All forms of collectivism exclude. The problem, at least from a classical-liberal standpoint, comes when outsiders are permanently excluded from the collective.

That is, while in a free society social networks also exclude to some degree, that’s usually because our knowledge of the trustworthiness (or some other relevant characteristic) of others is imperfect. So while a network can’t include anyone immediately, over time, as our knowledge improves, it will open itself to new members on an equal basis. For example, I believe that societies are free and civil to the degree that they treat children adopted into families the same as biological children, give those new to a religion the same standing as those born into it, regard race and sexual orientation as basically irrelevant, and so on.

In fact, as Ronald S. Burt points out, social networks in a free society emerge precisely because knowledge problems prevent everyone from being connected to everyone else. We know a lot about some people but little or nothing about most others, but that doesn’t stop us from relying on total strangers for our well-being. In a successful market economy, for example, we have to make contact and rely for a living on people the vast majority of whom we will never know. That’s where social networks come in. We need them, and the connections among them, to transmit the information about where all those opportunities for gainful association are.

The important thing is that people are allowed to make and break social ties over and over; to move freely about the social cosmos. That in fact is at the heart of classical-liberal civil society: the freedom of social and economic mobility. Social networks in a truly free society may be limited in size by how much we can know at any one time, but with few exceptions they are never closed permanently to outsiders.

Ikeda, Sandy “Collectivism As Apartism”
Some two decades after the collapse of communism, socialist intellectuals still scramble to rehabilitate Marx and collectivist social theory in general, with Duke University professor Michael Hardt and Italian sociologist Antonio Negri leading the bunch. Academics are attracted to their radical critique of existing capitalist institutions. Non-academics and educated laypersons on the left are attracted to their radical message and hope that the people will successfully engage in a revolution to overturn private ownership and market exchange.

Although the book has attracted some zealous followers, it is a difficult read. One wades through lengthy and tiring discussions of Foucault, debates with Sartre, attempts to refashion Marxist theory, and then, sandwiched in between, hopeful tales about the restoration of “authentic identity” among the Maya and lengthy, optimistic claims about how the people of Cochabamba are progressing from “antimodernity” toward “altermodernity.” One suspects that the authors understand that their ideas won’t hold up well if stated in plain English, so they resort to an obscure but intimidating style. Amidst all of this, and among many other intellectual detours, stands a full-blown chapter on Spinoza’s concept of love. Suffice it to say that Hardt and Negri argue that people must be trained and educated in love in order to fight the evil forces of private property.

The authors assume (but don’t bother to argue) that property and market exchange block and destroy genuine human relationships. Marx had this general insight correct, they believe, but they suggest that his analysis needs to be corrected and updated in its details to fit our postindustrial age. Hardt and Negri claim that Marx’s theory of alienation, for example, must be further developed from an analysis of competitive separation of people and estrangement of the fruits of their labor to an “alienation of one’s thought” itself. Exactly what that means isn’t clear, but I think they’re suggesting that our thoughts aren’t truly our own, but are created by the capitalist system that allegedly controls us.

The authors insist that life—genuine, loving human relationships—is nestled in “the common.” The common consists of those institutions beyond private and public ownership of the means of production and, it appears, the fruits of labor, too. (One of the book’s many confusing aspects is that the meaning of “the common” is vague and shifting.) In Hardt and Negri’s view private property is the essence of capitalism, public property the essence of socialism, and the common is the essence of—you guessed it—communism. With this concept the authors try to break from the totalitarian consequences of “the victorious revolutions” of Russia, China, and Cuba. They claim to be optimistic that the revolution is imminent and, at long last, emancipating.

Nowhere do the authors consider the possibility that their revolution might lead to adverse results. Nor do they ever come to terms with the knowledge-communicating properties of voluntary and open exchanges of property rights. The coordination of plans, which is ultimately coordination of thoughts and expectations, is completely ignored in the book. How this can happen without private property and exchange is a mystery.

The common, the authors proclaim, is the ground of freedom and voluntarism. Activities within the common are the source of true wealth (hence the book’s title). The freedom of the common is the freedom to find and develop love, and it provides the source of the multitude’s supposed creative power. But “capital,” that meaningless collectivist concept that goes back to Marx himself, disrupts the common. Capital, they assert, exploits the multitude, the truly productive.

And the multitude is huddled and gathered mainly in cities, in “the metropolis,” used as another collectivistic concept. Marx focused on the factory, but Hardt and Negri claim that the metropolis is supposedly the current site of “hierarchy and exploitation, violence and suffering, fear and pain,” and therefore will be the site of the impending revolt. The authors have absolutely no sense of cities as spontaneous orders where millions cooperate for mutual gain. Maybe people keep going to cities because they are alienated from their own thoughts.
Cultural historian Francis Spufford’s *Red Plenty* is a novel about the reform of the planned economy in the Soviet Union during the years of the Khrushchev thaw. It is one of the oddest books written about economics—a fictional approach peopled by computer researchers, planning bureaucrats, Communist Party apparatchiks, and factory managers. While fact and fiction in *Red Plenty* can initially be difficult for the reader to distinguish, the fictional parts breathe life into the economic reasoning. The author provides an extensive set of notes explaining the historical facts and also where his poetic license diverges from them.

Spufford’s vivid storytelling—the book is very intriguing historical fiction—explores this counterfactual: Could the Soviet Union’s planned economy have delivered plenty to its citizens as well as a market economy would? The idea of prosperity under communism certainly did not seem as preposterous in the late 1950s as it does today. The Soviets took the lead in the space race, and their official statistics showed an annual 5 percent growth in GDP, apparently higher than the United States’ at the time.

The Soviet economy was, despite those growth statistics, enormously ineffective, consuming far too much capital for little output. Communist Party leader Nikita Khrushchev was prepared to open up the economy to reforms and received new ideas from economist Leonid Kantorovich and computer engineer Sergey Lebedev. They are among the real people the reader encounters. Of course, their dialogues are imaginary, but they’re also believable.

Their idea was to replace centrally determined production quotas with a pricing system based on opportunity costs. Linear programming, a mathematical method that could supposedly determine the optimal allocation of resources, would be used instead of bureaucratic output goals. The new, more powerful computers would perform all the necessary calculations. Kantorovich, incidentally, was the only Soviet to receive the Nobel Prize in economics.

But could it work? Readers of *The Freeman* will recognize here the arguments from the socialist calculation debate in the first half of the twentieth century. Economist Oskar Lange stated that prices are merely rates of exchange of one good for another. Whether they are provided by a central planner or by a market is irrelevant, he maintained, as long as managers of State enterprises were instructed to act as cost-minimizers. “Market socialism” would work. So said Lange’s theory, anyway.

Reality caught up with theory in the Novocherkassk hunger riots in 1962, a key episode dramatized in the book. The introduction of a price mechanism also led to a reduction of food subsidies, and citizens suddenly were made aware of the true extent of their deprivations. The riots led to a coup that ousted Khrushchev; afterward, the conservative Leonid Brezhnev opted for stagnation of the economy and paying the bills by public debt and the export of oil.

Spufford’s story shows why socialism (even “market socialism”) is bound to fail. That great unpredictable—human nature—will foil the best bureaucratic plans. Besides the food riots, central planning led to many other debacles Spufford includes, such as the environmental disaster of the Aral Sea (which dried up owing to the diversion of water for collective farms) and the demise of the Soviet computer industry (wiped out by a decree from the Ministry for Radio Production).

Planned economies are mostly gone, but *Red Plenty* tells us a lot about the ideas behind the political steering and commandeering of resources in the 21st century, ideas that are still very much alive. Politicians may tolerate or even use market mechanisms, but only if those mechanisms achieve certain politically predetermined results. This is particularly visible in the subsidies for “green jobs” in Europe and the Solyndra scandal in the United States.

The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, put it right, saying, “The most puzzling development in politics during the last decade is the apparent determination of Western European leaders to recreate the Soviet Union in Western Europe.” *Red Plenty* inadvertently gives an explanation for this lingering attachment. The free market threatens the power of the politicians by taking away their control over society. They cherish control, not plenty for the masses.

Ingdahl, Waldemar “Red Plenty: Inside the Fifties’ Soviet Dream”
Examples of collective terms are “society,” “community,” “nation,” “class,” and “us.” The important thing to remember is that they are abstractions, figments of the imagination, not living, breathing, thinking, and acting entities. The fallacy involved here is presuming that a collective is, in fact, a living, breathing, thinking, and acting entity. The good economist recognizes that the only living, breathing, thinking, and acting entity is the individual. The source of all human action is the individual. Others may acquiesce in one’s action or even participate, but everything which occurs as a consequence can be traced to particular, identifiable individuals.

Consider this: could there even be an abstraction called “society” if all individuals disappeared? Obviously not. A collective term, in other words, has no existence in reality independent of the specific persons which comprise it.

It is absolutely essential to determine origins and responsibility and even cause and effect that economists avoid the fallacy of collective terms. One who does not will bog down in horrendous generalizations. He will assign credit or blame to non-existent entities. He will ignore the very real actions (individual actions) going on in the dynamic world around him. He may even speak of “the economy” almost as if it were a big man who plays tennis and eats corn flakes for breakfast.

A corollary to this is “in the public interest.” People like Ralph Nader demand that government regulate every aspect of our lives “in the public interest,” yet they are demanding that government engage in activities which will make it more difficult for firms to produce goods, thus making millions of people poorer.

Indeed, when we hear the pundits demanding certain policies are “in the public interest,” what they really are saying is that such policies serve the interests of people in certain politically-connected groups. For example, politicians and editorial writers tell us that the “nation’s economic security” depends upon “energy independence.”

What they mean is that unless all fuel consumed in this country is produced domestically, most Americans face economic disaster. This is most interesting, since Americans have imported fuel for many decades, and even during the short-lived Arab oil embargo in 1973 and 1974, the American economy did not “collapse.” (The “energy independence” scam really is nothing more than attempts by politicians and politically-connected producers of “alternative” energy sources, like corn-based ethanol, to raid taxpayers’ wallets because people would not purchase these “alternatives” unless forced to do so by government.)

Reed stresses the point about “collective terms” noting that economic analysis by its very nature must begin with the individual. Socialists view human beings simply as a collective, be they “workers” or “capitalists” or “proletariat.” The good economists know that one cannot understand markets without understanding the behavior and preferences of individuals. There is no such thing as “social utility,” even though some economists – not the good ones – attempt to “construct” the fraudulent apparatus known as the “social utility function.”

When individuals are left out of the picture, then human beings are seen by those in power as little more than putty to manipulate. The mass murders by totalitarian governments over the last century took place only because the powers that be decided to define people solely in collective terms.

Therefore, one cannot understand “good” economic thought unless one realizes that collective terms like “country” or “the economy” are useful only in the informal setting, as they are words of convenience. However, they are useless and even harmful when government agents attempt to foist policies upon people in the name of “helping society.

Reed, Lawrence “7 Fallicies of Economics”
Examples of collective terms are “society,” “community,” “nation,” “class,” and “us.” The important thing to remember is that they are abstractions, figments of the imagination, not living, breathing, thinking, and acting entities. The fallacy involved here is presuming that a collective is, in fact, a living, breathing, thinking, and acting entity. The good economist recognizes that the only living, breathing, thinking, and acting entity is the individual. The source of all human action is the individual. Others may acquiesce in one’s action or even participate, but everything which occurs as a consequence can be traced to particular, identifiable individuals.

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What they mean is that unless all fuel consumed in this country is produced domestically,
I am just now rereading Ludwig von Mises’s magnum opus, *Human Action*. What a joy it is to get reacquainted with Mises’s masterful work and to use it as a benchmark to gauge my own intellectual odyssey since first reading it more than 40 years ago.

Early on the reader encounters the term “methodological individualism.” This mouthful may seem at first to be some abstruse epistemological concept that can be forgotten once the foundations for Mises’s economics have been established. On the contrary, revisiting Mises has made me realize just how thoroughly I have internalized the concept and what a big difference it has made in my thinking about political and economic controversies.

Let’s start with what methodological individualism is not. It has nothing to do with “rugged individualism.” It is not ideology at all. It is a term that describes the essential nature of human thought and action. It is a bedrock principle on which Mises grounds his entire exposition of economics.

“The Hangman, not the state, executes a criminal.” This is Mises’s pithy summary of methodological individualism. Mises does not deny that the hangman acts under the influence of his relationships to others in society. He is an employee or a servant of some penal system and is obliged to carry out executions when so ordered. He may fear consequences if he fails to act as ordered. He may have a family that he provides for. He may wish to secure his place in Heaven. None of these conditions alters the basic sequence of events: The hangman ponders the action he is set to perform, thinking carefully or hardly at all. He believes his best choice is to pull the rope that opens the chute. He causes his arm to move and the deed is done.

When we think about the hangman from the point of view of praxeology (Mises’s name for the science of human action) we are not concerned with the social or psychological factors that may have influenced his action, nor the neural firings in his brain, nor the musculoskeletal actions in his arm. We are simply observing that actions are always initiated and carried out by individuals and are always motivated by the individual’s expectation of being better off as a result of the chosen action rather than some alternative. We have volition, and we have goals. We cause things to happen hoping to remove “felt uneasiness,” as Mises puts it.

If only individuals act, “group action” means nothing more than the concerted actions of individual group members. Yet we constantly hear people talking in ways which imply that groups in and of themselves really do act. As a harmless example, think of a fan leaving the stadium and saying, “We beat the Tigers!” when all that really happened was that somebody hit a home run and somebody threw a bunch of strikeouts and so forth.

The language of group action gets serious with politics. The very first sentence of the U.S. Constitution, which declares that “We the People” established it, is simply a myth. A few select individuals voted it into existence, and they’re all dead. We might like the Constitution very much and wish the politicians would obey it, but in no way does that leadoff sentence morally bind anyone alive today.

It gets really serious when warfare is involved. It may be a convenient shortcut when a U.S. citizen says, “We are sending drones into Pakistan.” But the corrosive implication is that all of us Americans are somehow responsible for the actions of the CIA operatives and others who actually send in the drones.

Studying and internalizing Mises’s notion of methodological individualism inoculates one against the aforementioned fallacies and countless others. “But at what cost?” you might ask. Does this individualistic outlook somehow make one into a hermit, a curmudgeon, a sourpuss? On the contrary, I submit that our social and business relations are more satisfying for us and for those around us when we are grounded in the recognition of each individual as the source of his or her own actions. We are more likely to find people we can admire and trust and less likely to get mixed up with fools.

Gibson, Warren C. “Methodological Individualism”
To Rousseau belongs the credit of having given, in his passionate cry "Back to Nature!" the classic expression to the consciousness that all the refinements of civilization do not constitute life in its truest sense. The sentiment itself is thousands of years old. It had inspired the idyls of Theocritus in the midst of the magnificence and luxury of the courts of Alexandria and Syracuse. It reëchoed through the pages of Virgil's bucolic poetry. It made itself heard, howsoever faintly, in the artificiality and sham of the pastoral plays from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. And it was but logical that this sentiment should seek its most adequate and definitive expression in a portrayal of all phases of the life and fate of those who, as the tillers of the soil, had ever remained nearer to Mother Earth than the rest of humankind.

Not suddenly, then, did rural poetry rise into being; but while its origin harks back to remote antiquity it has found its final form only during the last century. In this its last, as well as its most vigorous, offshoot, it presents itself as the village story—as we shall term it for brevity's sake—which has won a permanent place in literature by the side of its older brothers and sisters, and has even entirely driven out the fanciful pastoral or village idyl of old.

The village story was bound to come in the nineteenth century, even if there had been no beginnings of it in earlier times, and even if it did not correspond to a deep-rooted general sentiment. The eighteenth century had allowed the Third Estate to gain a firm foothold in the domain of dignified letters; the catholicity of the nineteenth admitted the laborer and the proletarian. It would have been passing strange if the rustic alone had been denied the privilege. An especially hearty welcome was accorded to the writings of the first representatives of the new species. Internationalism, due to increased traffic, advanced with unparalleled strides in the third and fourth decades. The seclusion of rural life seemed to remain the quiet and unshakable realm of patriarchal virtue and venerable tradition. The political skies were overcast with the thunder clouds of approaching revolutions; France had just passed through another violent upheaval. Village conditions seemed to offer a veritable haven of refuge. The pristine artlessness of the peasant's intellectual, moral, and emotional life furnished a wholesome antidote to the morbid hyperculture of dying romanticism, the controversies and polemics of Young Germany, and the self-adulation of the society of the salons. Neither could the exotic, ethnographic, and adventure narratives in the manner of Sealsfield, at first enthusiastically received, satisfy the taste of the reading public for any length of time—at best, these novels supplanted one fashion by another, if, indeed, they did not drive out Satan by means of Beelzebub. And was it wise to roam so far afield when the real good was so close at hand? Why cross oceans when the land of promise lay right before one's doors? All that was needed was the poet discoverer.

The Columbus of this new world shared the fate of the great Genoese in more than one respect. Like him, he set out in quest of shores that he was destined never to reach. Like him, he discovered, or rather rediscovered, a new land. Like him, he so far outstripped his forerunners that they sank into oblivion. Like Columbus, who died without knowing that he had not reached India, the land of his dreams, but found a new world, he may have departed from this life in the belief that he had been a measurably successful social reformer when he had proved to be a great epic poet. Like Columbus, he was succeeded by his Amerigo Vespucci, after whom his discovery was named. The Columbus of the village story is the Swiss clergyman Albert Bitzius, better known by his assumed name as Jeremias Gotthelf; the Amerigo Vespucci is his contemporary Berthold Auerbach.

Roedder, Edwin C. “The Novel of Provincial Life”
Passage 74

It will hardly be denied that there is one lingering doubt in many, who recognise unavoidable self-defence in the instant parry of the English sword, and who have no great love for the sweeping sabre of Sadowa and Sedan. That doubt is the doubt whether Russia, as compared with Prussia, is sufficiently decent and democratic to be the ally of liberal and civilised powers. I take first, therefore, this matter of civilisation.

It is vital in a discussion like this that we should make sure we are going by meanings and not by mere words. It is not necessary in any argument to settle what a word means or ought to mean. But it is necessary in every argument to settle what we propose to mean by the word. So long as our opponent understands what is the thing of which we are talking, it does not matter to the argument whether the word is or is not the one he would have chosen. A soldier does not say "We were ordered to go to Mechlin; but I would rather go to Malines." He may discuss the etymology and archaeology of the difference on the march: but the point is that he knows where to go. So long as we know what a given word is to mean in a given discussion, it does not even matter if it means something else in some other and quite distinct discussion. We have a perfect right to say that the width of a window comes to four feet; even if we instantly and cheerfully change the subject to the larger mammals, and say that an elephant has four feet. The identity of the words does not matter, because there is no doubt at all about the meanings; because nobody is likely to think of an elephant as four feet long, or of a window as having tusks and a curly trunk.

It is essential to emphasise this consciousness of the thing under discussion in connection with two or three words that are, as it were, the key-words of this war. One of them is the word "barbarian." The Prussians apply it to the Russians: the Russians apply it to the Prussians. Both, I think, really mean something that really exists, name or no name. Both mean different things. And if we ask what these different things are, we shall understand why England and France prefer Russia; and consider Prussia the really dangerous barbarian of the two. To begin with, it goes so much deeper even than atrocities; of which, in the past at least, all the three Empires of Central Europe have partaken pretty equally, as they partook of Poland. An English writer, seeking to avert the war by warnings against Russian influence, said that the flogged backs of Polish women stood between us and the Alliance. But not long before, the flogging of women by an Austrian general led to that officer being thrashed in the streets of London by Barclay and Perkins' draymen. And as for the third power, the Prussians, it seems clear that they have treated Belgian women in a style compared with which flogging might be called an official formality. But, as I say, something much deeper than any such recrimination lies behind the use of the word on either side. When the German Emperor complains of our allying ourselves with a barbaric and half-oriental power, he is not (I assure you) shedding tears over the grave of Kosciusko. And when I say (as I do most heartily) that the German Emperor is a barbarian, I am not merely expressing any prejudices I may have against the profanation of churches or of children. My countrymen and I mean a certain and intelligible thing when we call the Prussians barbarians. It is quite different from the thing attributed to Russians; and it could not possibly be attributed to Russians. It is very important that the neutral world should understand what this thing is.

Chesterton G.K. “The Barbarism of Berlin"
Widespread resistance to reviled instruments of royal tyranny became one of the embers that sparked the Revolutionary War. Of course, the revolution culminated in the codification of the Fourth Amendment. The Bill of Rights stood as an enduring rebuke to the Crown’s overzealous surveillance during colonial times. That is, against the Crown’s principle of general suspicion, the Founding Fathers inserted this provision in the Bill of Rights to prevent history from repeating itself. If a man’s home is his castle, then the Fourth Amendment is the mortar binding each brick, making one’s home an inviolable bulwark against the prying eyes and ears of the government. The Fourth Amendment embodies a fundamental truth and the chief characteristic distinguishing a free society from a tyrannical police state. An individual’s right to privacy and freedom from arbitrary invasions cannot be infringed, unless probable cause “exist[s] where the known facts and circumstances are sufficient to warrant a man of reasonable prudence in the belief that contraband or evidence of a crime will be found.”

After having successfully prosecuted Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson eloquently reaffirmed the importance of this safeguard against unbridled governmental intrusion: Uncontrolled search and seizure is one of the first and most effective weapons in the arsenal of every arbitrary government. And one need only briefly to have dwelt and worked among a people possessed of many admirable qualities but deprived of these rights to know that the human personality deteriorates and dignity and self-reliance disappear where homes, persons and possessions are subject at any hour to unheralded search and seizure by the police.

And then came Richard Nixon’s “War on Drugs.” By blaming all of America’s problems on drugs, Nixon’s “tough on crime” rhetoric was portrayed as a necessary step to rid society of drug crimes, just as agents of the Crown sought to justify their abuse of general warrants under the guise of rooting out smugglers of tea and molasses.

But the hardline policies of Nixon’s “law and order” administration, far from being elixirs in terms of stopping drug use or crimes, initiated the process of slowly but inexorably eroding the Fourth Amendment over the course of the next 50 years. From increased canine searches at “drug” checkpoints, to militarized SWAT team raids of homes of “suspected” drug dealers, a man’s castle was seen as a rampart to be taken down by the State. From vague drug-courier profiles that allow law enforcement to target racial minorities, to the malicious application of asset forfeiture laws in which officials arbitrarily confiscate the life savings of the innocent, the War on Drugs has turned out to be a war on citizens’ persons and property.

But if the War on Drugs was an erosion of the Fourth Amendment, the “War on Terror” sounded its death knell.

The National Security Agency (NSA), with its warrantless domestic spying program has turned America into the most surveilled society in history, eclipsing conditions of East Germans under the Stasi. Two high-profile NSA whistleblowers, Thomas Drake and William Binney, have revealed the extent of the collateral damage to our rights from the surveillance dragnet. In their own words, the government is illegally monitoring (in real time) activities not tethered to any suspicious or illegal conduct—for example, phone calls, purchases, emails, text messages, Internet searches, social media communications, health information, employment histories, and travel and student records—and creating dossiers on everyone (even senators, congressmen, and decorated generals).

The twin wars on drugs and terror have coalesced to re-enact the same state of generalized suspicion which, both historically and practically, enabled a Soviet-style police state to emerge. Such blatant disregard for a citizen’s privacy, person, and property is a throwback to the conditions the American Founders rebelled against. Likewise, the surveillance state is a violation of the same natural law principles enshrined in the Magna Carta, which James Otis so eloquently defended.

Moghul, Faisal “The Death of Privacy”
One of the core tenets of unions is that they are a legitimate application of workers’ constitutionally protected freedom of association, so that anything that restricts unions violates that freedom of association. As Brenda Smith of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) put it, “Exclusivity for a union with majority support is not a monopoly, it is democracy . . . It allows employees to select their representative freely, without coercion from the employer. It allows them to amplify their voice through collective action under our constitutionally protected right to freedom of association.” Unfortunately for exponents of that argument, freedom of association does not endow the association with more powers than the members had as individuals. For instance, an individual who chooses not to work has no power to prevent someone else from taking the job, and freedom of association offers a group of workers no more power to do so. But government has given unions a host of special privileges, from monopoly representation to strike powers to exemptions from antitrust laws and union liability for member violence. Freedom of association does not justify these special privileges; in fact, they are inconsistent with freedom of association.

A fundamental or inalienable human right must be one that everyone possesses. If one party’s exercise of a right prevents a second party’s exercise of the same right, it is only a right for the first party, not a human right. If the second party is required to accept the first party’s offer of association on the terms the first party offers, the second party is not free to choose his associations. Freedom of association would be a right of the first party; it would be denied to the second party.

Labor law violates workers’ freedom not to associate with unions by forcing them to accept exclusive union representation whenever a majority of workers voting in a certification election voted for that union, regardless of the minority’s own votes or preferences. That forced representation is all but impossible to end, as well: Decertification is exceedingly difficult to execute.

Labor law currently violates the freedom of employers to not associate with unions by forcing them to accept and “bargain in good faith” (compromise) with a union selected by a majority in a certification election. Under contract law, however, a contract in which any of the parties was required to bargain would be legally void. Ironically, this also means that a worker is not allowed to “associate” with himself in order to act as his own negotiator with an employer.

Monopoly unions leverage one violation of freedom of association into an excuse for another. For instance, they claim they must be allowed to impose mandatory dues (“union security”) because some would “free ride” on union negotiating services. But government-mandated exclusive representation created this potential free-rider problem, and one union-coerced association abuse does not justify another.

Freedom of association, rightly understood, has long been a bedrock American principle. Alexis de Tocqueville celebrated our exercise of that freedom, and wrote, “The most natural privilege of man, next to the right of acting for himself, is that of combining his exertions with those of his fellow creatures and of acting in common with them. The right of association therefore appears to me almost as inalienable in its nature as the right of personal liberty. No legislator can attack it without impairing the foundations of society.” But unions have rhetorically twisted freedom of association into a special source of plunder that primarily denies freedom of association. As Frédéric Bastiat described it over a century and a half ago, “If the special privilege of government protection against competition—a monopoly—were granted only to one group . . . the iron workers, for instance, this act would . . . obviously be legal plunder.”

Galles, Gary M. “Unions: Freedom of Coercive Association”
Bastiat loved the market economy, and badly wanted it to blossom in full—in France and everywhere else. When he described the blessings of freedom, his benevolence shined forth. Free markets can raise living standards and enable everyone to have better lives; therefore stifling freedom is unjust and tragic. The reverse of Bastiat’s benevolence is his indignation at the deprivation that results from interference with the market process.

He begins his book *Economic Harmonies* by pointing out the economic benefits of living in society:

It is impossible not to be struck by the disproportion, truly incommensurable, that exists between the satisfactions [a] man derives from society and the satisfactions that he could provide for himself if he were reduced to his own resources. I make bold to say that in one day he consumes more things than he could produce himself in ten centuries.

What makes the phenomenon stranger still is that the same thing holds true for all other men. Every one of the members of society has consumed a million times more than he could have produced; yet no one has robbed anyone else.

Bastiat was not naïve. He knew he was not in a fully free market. He was well aware of the existence of privilege: “Privilege implies someone to profit from it and someone to pay for it,” he wrote. Those who pay are worse off than they would be in the free market. “I trust that the reader will not conclude from the preceding remarks that we are insensible to the social suffering of our fellow men. Although the suffering is less in the present imperfect state of our society than in the state of isolation, it does not follow that we do not seek wholeheartedly for further progress to make it less and less.”

He wished to emphasize the importance of free exchange for human flourishing. In chapter four he wrote,

*Exchange is political economy. It is society itself, for it is impossible to conceive of society without exchange, or exchange without society. ... For man, isolation means death.*

*By means of exchange, men attain the same satisfaction with less effort, because the mutual services they render one another yield them a larger proportion of gratuitous utility.*

Therefore, the fewer obstacles an exchange encounters, the less effort it requires, the more readily men exchange. How does trade deliver its benefits? Exchange produces two phenomena: the joining of men’s forces and the diversification of their occupations, or the division of labor. It is very clear that in many cases the combined force of several men is superior to the sum of their individual separate forces…

Now, the joining of men’s forces implies exchange. To gain their co-operation, they must have good reason to anticipate sharing in the satisfaction to be obtained. Each one by his efforts benefits the others and in turn benefits by their efforts according to the terms of the bargain, which is exchange.

But isn’t something missing from this account? Indeed, there is: the subjectivist Austrian insight that individuals gain from trade *per se*. For an exchange to take place, the two parties must assess the items traded *differently*, with each party preferring what he is to receive to what he is to give up. If that condition did not hold, no exchange would occur. There must be what Murray Rothbard called a *double inequality of value*. It’s in the logic of human action—which Ludwig von Mises christened *praxeology*. Bastiat, like his classical forebears Smith and Ricardo, erroneously believed (at least explicitly) that people trade *equal* values and that something is wrong when unequal values are exchanged.

Richmon, Sheldon “The Bastiat Solution”
Suppose President Barack Obama had appeared on television to give an energy speech and had declared the following: My fellow Americans, we are going to provide sustainable energy and lots of jobs for you by junking the automobile and all other fossil-fueled engines and going back to animal power. We also are going to make all coal-fired electric power plants illegal, so if you want electricity, you are going to have to depend on windmills or just live in the dark.

Needless to say, the speech would be greeted by something other than thunderous applause (except from Al Gore and the Sierra Club headquarters), and the Obama’s presidential career would be quite short. However, the policies coming from Washington these days, while not quite as draconian as what I described, nonetheless are bad and are going to make us poorer.

For years we have been bombarded with the “clean energy” line, the idea being that electricity that comes from burning of fossil fuels is “dirty,” while electricity that comes from windmills, solar, or “geothermal” sources or anything else that meets with Gore’s approval is “clean.”(Gore has a website that claims that in the next decade, the United States can switch entirely to what he calls “clean energy.” This is sheer fantasy made worse only because the President seems to believe it, or at least wants that to be our energy future.)

Unfortunately, the government does seem to be pushing hard to force Americans to accept energy sources that are going to make us much poorer, retard (if not eliminate) the economic recovery, and make our lives much more difficult. Let me count the ways. First and most important, it is true that switching to windmills will “create” jobs in that particular industry. No one is denying that. However, there is this little problem that occurs whenever government destroys wealth: It also destroys meaningful employment opportunities.

What the government is going to do is to count every job in an “alternative energy” field as proof that its energy policies are “creating jobs.” What the government won’t do, however, is report the employment opportunities that are lost because the authorities have artificially forced up the costs of efficient energy sources. In other words, in net terms, this whole thing is a loser.

Second, the issue is not jobs per se but rather economic growth. The government could give us all “jobs” tomorrow by telling us we had to scratch out a living by hand. For that matter, one can argue that Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge created “full employment” in Cambodia during their murderous regime three decades ago, but the “employment” was not particularly desirable.

The real problem is that the energy proposals this administration is demanding, from “clean” (and extremely inefficient and costly) energy to ramping up the corn-based ethanol fraud, will make fuel and electricity much more expensive, which is going to result in much slower – or even negative – economic growth.

To put it another way, this country cannot have both enactment of these energy proposals and a robust economic recovery. They are mutually exclusive, and there is no way around this point, no matter how much rhetoric President Obama and his supporters may use.

The great Henry Hazlitt once wrote that each generation has to learn the economic lessons all over again because it is easily seduced by what he called (after Frederic Bastiat) the “broken window fallacy” — the failure to understand that in a world of scarcity, resources commandeered by government are diverted from the uses that consumers and entrepreneurs would have chosen. Indeed, if any fallacy can be applied to the notion that forcing this country into a “horse-and-buggy” energy future will be an economic plus, it is the fallacy of the broken window.

Anderson, William “Environmentalism and Governments Last Hustle”
Passage 79

Back in 1651 Thomas Hobbes described life in the state of nature as “nasty, brutish, and short.” But even in civilized society during his lifetime, most people lived under what we would consider wretched conditions. At that time, you were lucky if you lived past 30; our notion of basic sanitation didn’t exist; people used city streets to dispose of their trash; plagues were not uncommon; food supply was often short and very basic; and rudimentary home-heating systems using wood or coal made indoor air pollution a serious health hazard. While many of the problems were environmental, few people had the time or leisure to worry about “the environment” as a public issue. Most simply worried about day-to-day survival.

But dramatic changes in the quality of life have occurred in recent history. Global life expectancy in the last century climbed from 30 to around 60. In the United States, life expectancy has reached 76. So many of the things we take for granted—hot and cold running water, health care, and a stable food supply—were unknown to mankind throughout most of history.

Why is it that in the last couple of centuries things have changed so rapidly, when for thousands of years life remained a struggle for survival? For one thing, free-market economies emerged, based on the principles on which the United States was founded. John Locke spoke of these principles as the unalienable rights to “life, liberty, and estate.” Later Thomas Jefferson echoed these sentiments and helped make them central to the American way of life. Such basic liberties mean that we in America have the right to self-determination and the right to profit from our own ingenuity. From the onset of government based on fundamental rights, free-market economies emerged, wealth increased profoundly, and our quality of life improved by leaps and bounds.

Among the many achievements was the development of manmade chemicals, which have revolutionized how we live. They make possible such things as pharmaceuticals, safe drinking water, and pest control. Yet popular perception is that manmade chemicals are the source of every possible ill from cancer, ozone depletion, and infertility to brain damage. Ignoring that nature produces far more chemicals in far higher doses and that most chemicals are innocuous at low doses, activists capitalize on these fears. They scare the public by hyping the risks to ensure that the government passes volumes of laws and regulations all focused on the elimination of chemicals, thus jeopardizing our freedom without much regard for the tradeoffs.

Advocates of such limits say that we need to make sure every chemical is safe before exposing the public. In his recent book, Pandora’s Poison, Greenpeace’s Joe Thornton calls on society to follow the “precautionary principle,” which says we should avoid practices that have the potential to cause severe damage, even in the absence of scientific proof of harm. Thornton advocates a “zero discharge” policy, which calls for the elimination of all “bioaccumulative” chemicals. In particular, he has long called for the elimination of chlorine, about which he noted in Science magazine (July 9, 1993): “There are no known uses for chlorine which we regard as safe.” More recently, perhaps in recognition that this standard is politically untenable, he suggested that we continue using chlorine for “some pharmaceuticals” and some “water disinfection,” but only until other options become available.

Promoting such “precautionary policies” could mean halting all industrial activity, because nothing can be proven 100 percent safe. Hence, such policies carry dangerous tradeoffs. While chemicals may create new risks, they have been used to eliminate others—many of which wreaked havoc on civilization for centuries. As the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Fred Smith notes: “Experience demonstrates that the risks of innovation, while real, are vastly less than risks of stagnation.” Indeed, he asks, what would the world be like if we had never introduced penicillin because we could not prove it was 100 percent safe?

Logomasini, Angela “Safer Living With Chemistry” 2010
One hundred years ago, a great and enduring myth was born. Muckraking novelist Upton Sinclair wrote a novel entitled The Jungle—a tale of greed and abuse that still reverberates as a case against a free economy. Sinclair’s “jungle” was unregulated enterprise; his example was the meat-packing industry; his purpose was government regulation. The culmination of his work was the passage in 1906 of the Meat Inspection Act, enshrined in history, or at least in history books, as a sacred cow (excuse the pun) of the interventionist state.

A century later, American schoolchildren are still being taught a simplistic and romanticized version of this history. For many young people, The Jungle is required reading in high-school classes, where they are led to believe that unscrupulous capitalists were routinely tainting our meat, and that moral crusader Upton Sinclair rallied the public and forced government to shift from pusillanimous bystander to heroic do-gooder, valiantly disciplining the marketplace to protect its millions of victims.

But this is a triumph of myth over reality, of ulterior motives over good intentions. Reading The Jungle and assuming it’s a credible news source is like watching The Blair Witch Project because you think it’s a documentary.

Given the book’s favorable publicity, it’s not surprising that it has duped a lot of people. Ironically, Sinclair himself, as a founder of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1905, was personally suckered by more than a few intellectual charlatans of his day. One of them was fellow “investigative journalist” Lincoln Steffens, best known for returning from the Soviet Union in 1921 and saying, “I have seen the future, and it works.”

In any event, there is much about The Jungle that Americans just don’t learn from conventional history texts.

The Jungle was, first and foremost, a novel. As is indicated by the fact that the book originally appeared as a serialization in the socialist journal “Appeal to Reason,” it was intended to be a polemic—a diatribe, if you will—not a well-researched and dispassionate documentary. Sinclair relied heavily both on his own imagination and on the hearsay of others. He did not even pretend that he had actually witnessed the horrendous conditions he ascribed to Chicago packinghouses, nor to have verified them, nor to have derived them from any official records.

Sinclair hoped the book would ignite a powerful socialist movement on behalf of America’s workers. The public’s attention focused instead on his fewer than a dozen pages of supposed descriptions of unsanitary conditions in the meat-packing plants. “I aimed at the public’s heart,” he later wrote, “and by accident I hit it in the stomach.”

Though his novelized and sensational accusations prompted congressional investigations of the industry, the investigators themselves expressed skepticism about Sinclair’s integrity and credibility as a source of information. In July 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt stated his opinion of Sinclair in a letter to journalist William Allen White: “I have an utter contempt for him. He is hysterical, unbalanced, and untruthful. Three-fourths of the things he said were absolute falsehoods. For some of the remainder there was only a basis of truth.”

Most Americans would be surprised to know that government meat inspection did not begin in 1906. The inspectors Holbrook cites as being mentioned in Sinclair’s book were among hundreds employed by federal, state, and local governments for more than a decade. Indeed, Congressman E. D. Crumpacker of Indiana noted in testimony before the House Agriculture Committee in June 1906 that not even one of those officials “ever registered any complaint or [gave] any public information with respect to the manner of the slaughtering or preparation of meat or food products.”

Reed, Lawrence W. “Of Meat And Myth”
Essential to the maintenance of support for the government is the idea that the nation’s wars have been just and heroic, and that the leaders who presided over them were great men. Ugly truths about those wars and leaders are routinely swept under the rug. Court historians (and yes, democracies have them) try to convince people that all the blood, sweat, and tears were never expended in vain.

History professor Ralph Raico is a dedicated opponent of the court historians’ cant and deception. *Great Wars and Great Leaders* is a collection of his essays challenging the conventional wisdom, ranging from the beginning of World War I to just after World War II.

As Robert Higgs notes in his introduction, “Raico’s historical essays are not for the faint of heart or for those whose loyalty to the U.S. or British state outweighs their devotion to truth and humanity.” Raico is usually called a “revisionist” historian, but a more fitting term would be “correctionist” because his work corrects false ideas that glorify wars and political leaders who deserve the sharpest condemnation.

The victors get to write the history, and Raico shows that it’s mostly wrong. The Germans and their Austrian allies were not as devilish as they’ve been portrayed, and the Allies were far from angelic. Most important, President Woodrow Wilson was an authoritarian eager to engage in military interventions to advance his fevered notions of “good government.” Raico points out that Wilson had sent U.S. troops into Mexico in 1914. Some of them died—utterly in vain. Throughout 1915, 1916, and early 1917 Wilson pursued a provocative policy meant to serve British interests. He was glad to trample on international law with respect to the rights of neutrals and declined to pursue diplomatic efforts at restoring peace. Nevertheless, most historians grade Wilson a “near-great” president. Raico shows how undeserved that accolade is.

Winston Churchill’s lustrous reputation also takes a beating in the book. Most people think of Churchill as a rock-ribbed defender of Western traditions. After all, he was a Conservative prime minister who abhorred communism and fascism. Raico makes it plain, however, that he had no real principles when it came to the economic order. At one point in his career Churchill advocated free trade, but he later abandoned that position when it became a political liability. Nor was Churchill an opponent of the advancing British welfare state. He supported the Trades Union Act that gave legal privileges to unions and advocated “a sort of Germanized network of state intervention and regulation” over the labor market. That made him popular with the socialists. Beatrice Webb applauded him for his support of “constructive state action.”

There are hordes of politicians who will get on popular crusades even though they carry the seeds of long-run social ruin. What puts Churchill in a different class is his willingness to sacrifice innocent lives. Raico gives several particulars. Against the advice of his officers Churchill ordered the British fleet to fire on the French Navy, harbored at Mers-el-Kebir in Algeria after the Germans had defeated France in 1940. The French commander had said that he would neither surrender his ships to Britain nor permit them to fall into German hands. Nevertheless, the British shelled the ships, killing more than 1,500 sailors. Raico comments that this was a war crime and Germans at Nuremberg were sentenced to death for less. Worse still was the continuing bombing campaign against German cities long after it was evident that Hitler was on the verge of defeat. The bombing of Dresden, a city with no military importance, killed some 30,000 civilians in February 1945.

Another “great leader” Raico demolishes is Harry Truman. Truman is often praised these days for his supposed common sense, but the truth is that he was a statist demagogue whose instincts were to escalate the New Deal’s attacks on liberty and property. Americans are fortunate that most of his efforts were parried by Congress or the courts. The same cannot be said, unfortunately, about his decision to use atomic bombs to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Raico eviscerates the excuse that Truman “had to” use the bomb because the Japanese would otherwise have fought on and killed half a million Americans.

Leef, George C. “Great Wars & Great Leaders: A Libertarian Rebuttal”
Passage 82

After 9/11 the U.S. Congress created the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). America went to war, overtly and covertly, in several countries. Nearly $8 trillion was spent on what is called “security,” Chris Hellman of the National Priorities Project estimates.

Was it worth it? Yes, in many ways, says author Ann Coulter. No, says Reason magazine editor Matt Welch. “There’s no reason at all that the bureaucratization of security is going to make us any more safe,” Welch said. “All we have to do is go on an airplane . . . to see that there’s a difference between security and security theater, between federalizing a problem and actually solving the problem.”

Coulter thinks the government got lots of things right. “Whatever liberals screamed bloody murder about was very important on the war on terrorism,” she said. “I think Iraq was a crucial part . . . .” Welch dissented.

“We’re on the verge of bankruptcy . . . . We are at the sort of tipping point of imperial overstretch.” Imperial overstretch? Welch has a point. Politicians talk about tight budgets, but National Defense Magazine recently ran this headline: “Homeland Security Market Is Vibrant Despite Budget Concerns.” I fear this is the military-industrial complex President Eisenhower warned us about. Military contractors collude with politicians to keep the money flowing. I blame the politicians. The contractors just do what they’re supposed to do. The politicians are supposed to spend our money well. They don’t.

After 9/11 the Senate voted 100 to zero to federalize airport security. Then-Sen. Tom Daschle said, “You can’t professionalize if you don’t federalize.” Nonsense. Before the TSA was created private contractors paid airport inspectors not much more than minimum wage. They weren’t very good. Now we spend five times as much, and they’re still not very good.

Today even the TSA knows that private security is better. In one of its own tests its screeners in Los Angeles missed 75 percent of the explosives planted by inspectors. In San Francisco, one of the few cities allowed to have privately managed security, screeners missed 20 percent. In a reasonable world the government would disband the TSA and move to a private competitive system.

But we live in a Big Government world. Randolph Bourne, who opposed U.S. entry into World War I, said, “War is the health of the state.” He meant that in war, government grows in power and prestige—and freedom shrinks. As Freeman columnist Robert Higgs of the Independent Institute documents in Crisis and Leviathan, government never recedes to its prewar dimensions.

Shortly after September 11, Sen. Charles Schumer declared that the “era of a shrinking federal government is over.” This was more nonsense. The government hadn’t been shrinking. But for politicians like Schumer 9/11 was an excuse to take more power. Price was no object.

I can’t tell you what Homeland Security does with your money. Much of its spending is secret. Certainly much is wasted. The department made a big fuss over its color-coded airport security system, then scrapped it because it provided “little practical information.” The department spent billions on things like special boats to protect a lake in Nebraska, all-terrain vehicles for a small town in Tennessee and 70 security cameras for a remote Alaskan village. That’s what politicians do. Members of Congress say, “You want my vote? You’d better give my district some cash.” And when people are scared, they let bureaucrats spend.

This played into Osama bin Laden’s hands. In one videotaped message he talked about “bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy.” The attacks on 9/11 were largely a failure of government. Our so-called “intelligence agencies” knew nothing about the plot. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, charged with keeping track of foreigners who overstay their visas, did not pay attention to the 19 hijackers. And as Rep. Ron Paul points out, history did not begin on September 11. Part of the failure was America’s interventionist foreign policy, which needlessly made enemies.

So government failed on 9/11, and yet the politicians’ answer to failure is always the same: Give us more money and power. And we do. When will we learn?

Stossel, John “Ten Years After”
The war on drugs can be dated to 1914, although the phrase “war on drugs” was coined in 1972 during the presidency of Richard Nixon. The war on kidneys began in 1984.

It’s an oft told tale how drug prohibition has led to the promotion of organized crime, skyrocketing violence here and abroad, and a simultaneous increase in potency and decrease in safety. The solution to these perhaps unintended but predictable negative consequences is legalization. So it is, too, with the sale of organs—kidneys in particular. Since 1984, under the leadership of Senator Al Gore, the United States government has made it illegal to buy or sell kidneys and in so doing has effectively launched a “war on kidneys.” Again, the consequences, unintended but predictable, are mostly if not wholly bad.

According to the Human Resources and Services Administration there are currently over 93,000 persons in the United States on the waiting list for a donated kidney. Another source estimates that the list grows by 3,000 to 4,000 candidates a year. Between 1988 and 2008 yet another source reports that the number of kidney transplants performed in the United States has ranged from 8,873 (in 1988) to a high of 17,091 (in 2006) for an average of about 13,847 per year. While that may indicate a dwindling list of candidates, the reality is that the number who die each year still runs into the thousands.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services, for instance, claims that 18 people die each day waiting for a kidney donor. That’s 6,570 deaths a year, and though their figure for the waiting list is considerably higher than the HRSA’s, they are in the same ballpark.

Kidney sales are legal in Iran, which offers a mix of private and government financing for kidney transplants. Not surprisingly, waiting lists there are practically nonexistent (because of a larger supply), and so is the number of people dying while waiting for one.

Moreover, the incidence of black markets and of “medical tourism”—in which relatively wealthy foreigners travel to relatively poor countries to buy local kidneys or have other procedures performed at lower cost than in the United States—would probably fall, much as legalization of alcohol after Prohibition saw the downfall of speakeasies and bathtub booze.

And although some estimate that the cost of a kidney may be as high as $100,000—which would make the total cost of the transplant procedure around $350,000—keep in mind that in addition to the value of the lives saved, the savings from unnecessary kidney dialysis is about $70,000 per person per year. Some argue that only the rich would get organs and only the poor would die giving them up. Existing black markets and medical tourism already reinforce any such tendency by keeping prices high. Would a free market in organs mean that the relatively poor would supply the relatively rich? Perhaps. More generally, would abuses occur? Yes, they would, just as they do in other aspects of organ transplantation—such as in shabby hospitals or lousy medical care. Nobody suggests banning hospitals or doctors because some hospitals and some doctors occasionally screw up. The cure lies largely in greater competition, the prerequisite of which is making organ sales legal.

I confess to being uncomfortable with the thought of selling off body parts. In the same way, I would never recommend to anyone, including myself, taking cocaine for fun. But I would stop short of banning cocaine, and my qualms about selling body parts doesn’t keep me from staunchly supporting legalization, especially when a strong case can be made that banning it would itself be immoral. Selling body parts for money should be no more illegal than letting people make a living fishing for crabs on the high seas or give up their lives for a cause they believe in. I may disapprove of a practice that harms the practitioner, but that by itself doesn’t give me the right to stop it, especially if it harms no one else. Criminalizing activities—whether drugs, prostitution, or organ sales—typically generates consequences that are usually unintended but, with the aid of some basic economic knowledge, mostly predictable. After decades and over a trillion dollars spent and countless lives ruined, a summit of Latin-American politicians earlier this year declared that “the war on drugs has failed,” a sentiment echoed around the world.

It’s time that our government ended the war on kidneys, too.

Ikeda, Sandy “Ending The War On Kidneys”
I—and most other people, I assume—grew up being taught that the end doesn’t justify the means. This is an injunction not to rationalize one’s own behavior while using other people as mere means to one’s ends.

Most people apply that principle day to day. If we want at an item on a supermarket shelf and someone is standing in the way, few of us would think to shove that person aside. A utilitarian (or any other sort of consequentialist) might say that greater good, happiness, or utility would be achieved by waiting rather than by shoving. But since interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility are impossible—not only is there no unit of measurement, in principle there’s nothing to measure—that claim has no content.

“This lack of commensurability eliminates all possibility of reference for the expression ‘greater good’ as the consequentialist uses this expression,” natural-law philosopher Germain Grisez writes. So why wouldn’t we shove the person aside? We abstain because we have a sense that it would be an injustice and that injustice is to be avoided. We don’t calculate that committing the injustice would in this case be contrary to our own self-interest (what would you think of someone who actually did that?), nor do we even determine that shoving the person aside would ill-serve that person’s interests. Rather, we know that the act would be wrong because it is wrong to use another person as a mere means.

So why is that principle absent from most discussions of government policy? Why are political measures routinely defended on the sole basis that they will bring about some good consequence that supposedly outweighs any costs (from the perspective of those who propose them)? A tariff is justified by the help it is thought to give to a struggling domestic industry. A mandate that employers or insurance companies (nominally) pay for women’s contraception is justified in terms of women’s health or of reducing the number of abortions. Obliteration bombing is justified as a way to shorten a war.

In all these cases and more, those who proffer the government policy seem to think that all they need do is identify a consequence as the “greater good” and the discussion is over. The end justifies the means.

But there are always costs to—and therefore victims of—any government action. “Coercive intervention . . . signifies per se that the individual or individuals coerced would not have done what they are now doing were it not for the intervention,” Murray Rothbard wrote in Power and Market. All those who are forced to bear the costs are treated by the government and the special-interest groups it empowers as mere means to other people’s ends—that is, they are treated as less than human. The proponents of such measures never tell us why the benefits they aim for are more important than the benefits other people must do without. But of course they couldn’t tell us. The benefits are incommensurable.

Furthermore, apart from the material loss, the victims’ progressive loss of freedom is real, both in the immediate instance as well as with respect to the precedent set for future government action. Intervention begets intervention as policymakers try to clean up the mess their previous actions created.

As Grisez puts it, “The economic advantages and disadvantages of a proposed public project can be quantified. But people also want freedom of speech and of religion, equal protection of the laws, privacy, and other goods which block certain choices, yet which cannot be costed out. . . . [Cost-benefit] analysis cannot tell one whether the objectives one seeks are objectives one ought to seek, or whether nonquantifiable factors should be ignored.”

Means and ends of course are intimately related. The end determines the array of relevant means. But that is not the end of the story. In selecting from that array considerations apart from the end are highly pertinent—such as the injunction never to use others as mere means. To ignore those considerations is to mock human dignity and countenance the slave principle.

Richman, Sheldon “Do Ends Justify Means?”
During the numerous “Occupy” protests in 2011, many of the signs on display declared that capitalism was to blame for the nation’s ills. Obviously, the protesters had not read this book. The Morality of Capitalism is aimed especially at young people who have gotten a negative impression of capitalism—as the subtitle accurately suggests, college students are likely to hear little that’s good or accurate about it in their courses—but even veterans of the battle for liberty will find a lot of fresh, intriguing material here.

As Tom Palmer emphasizes in his introduction, capitalism (by which he means the pure free market) “is a system of cultural, spiritual, and ethical values,” and the essays that follow show that those values can and do operate to improve the lives of people around the globe. The global aspect of the book is one of its most effective features. Readers learn from writers of extraordinarily diverse backgrounds that capitalism is what their countries lack and that its absence is the reason that their people remain poor and oppressed.

June Arunga, a citizen of Kenya, argues in her essay, “Global Capitalism and Justice,” that free trade, far from harming the poor of Africa, has made them much better off. They enjoy higher incomes, better products, and easier lives because capitalism (to the extent that it is allowed) enables them to earn more and trade for better goods. She further observes that the coercive and corrupt governments in most African countries inhibit the expansion of capitalism. “Our own governments,” she writes, “are hurting us; they steal from us, they stop us from trading, and they keep the poor down. Local investors are not allowed to compete because of the lack of the rule of law.” Too bad that June Arunga was not around to explain to those wealthy American protesters that laissez-faire capitalism is crucial to human flourishing.

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Most critics believe that capitalism is based on greed, but John Mackey, founder and CEO of Whole Foods Market, shows the charge is false. The wealth that his successful company has created, starting from nothing more than an idea and achieving a current market capitalization in excess of $10 billion, does not just mean profits for stockholders. It also makes possible Mackey’s donations to the Whole Planet Foundation, which extends microloans to poor people around the world so that they can make capitalist investments of their own. The wealth created by capitalists is not confined just to themselves, but spreads in countless ways. Mackey also stresses that capitalism is “a healthier outlet for energy than militarism, political conflict, and wealth destruction.” Just think of the lives lost, property destroyed, and misery caused by the anticapitalist regimes of the twentieth century.

The big, inescapable lesson of the book is that advocates of capitalism have the moral high ground. Unfortunately, they often cede it to their opponents, forcing advocates of capitalism to make defensive, “yes, but . . .” arguments. That is a terrible mistake. After reading this book, you will be well prepared to do battle with those who, as Ludwig von Mises put it, are imbued with “the anti-capitalist mentality.”

Palmer’s book is a project of the Atlas Economic Research Foundation. He and Atlas deserve three cheers (at least) for it and their continuing efforts at making the case for capitalism and liberty around the world.

Most people believe that government must regulate the marketplace. The only alternative to a regulated market, the thinking goes, is an unregulated market. On first glance that makes sense. It’s the law of excluded middle. A market is either regulated or it’s not.

Cashing in on the common notion that anything unregulated (disorderly) is bad, advocates of government regulation argue that an unregulated market is to be abhorred. This view is captured by twin sculptures outside the Federal Trade Commission building in Washington, D.C. The sculptures, which won an art contest sponsored by the U.S. government during the New Deal, depict a man using all his strength to keep a wild horse from going on a rampage. The title? “Man Controlling Trade.”

Since trade is not really a wild horse but rather a peaceful and mutually beneficial activity between people, the Roosevelt administration’s propaganda purpose is clear. A more honest title would be “Government Controlling People.” But that would have sounded a little authoritarian even in New Deal America, hence the wild horse metaphor.

What’s overlooked—intentionally or not—is that the alternative to a government-regulated economy is not an unregulated one. As a matter of fact, “unregulated economy,” like square circle, is a contradiction in terms. If it’s truly unregulated it’s not an economy, and if it’s an economy, it’s not unregulated. The term “free market” does not mean free of regulation. It means free of government interference, that is, legal plunder and other official aggressive force.

Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek pointed out years ago that the real issue regarding economic planning is not: To plan or not to plan? But rather: Who plans (centralized State officials or decentralized private individuals in the market)?

Likewise, the question is not: to regulate or not to regulate. It is, rather, who (or what) regulates? All markets are regulated. In a freed market we all know what would happen if someone charged, say, $100 per apple. He’d sell few apples because (under current cost conditions) someone else would offer to sell them for less or, pending that, consumers would switch to alternative products. “The market” would not permit the seller to successfully charge $100. Similarly, in a freed market employers would not succeed in offering $1 an hour and workers would not succeed in demanding $20 an hour for a job that produces only $10 worth of output an hour. If they try, they will quickly see their mistake and learn.

And again, in a freed market an employer who subjected his employees to perilous conditions without adequately compensating them to their satisfaction for the danger would lose them to competitors. What regulates the conduct of these people? Market forces. (I keep specifying “in a freed market” because in a State-regulated economy, competitive market forces are diminished or suppressed.) Economically speaking, people cannot do whatever they want—and get away with it—in a freed market because other people are free to counteract them and it’s in their interest to do so. That’s part of what we mean by market forces. Just because the government doesn’t stop a seller from charging $100 for an apple doesn’t mean he or she can get that amount. Market forces regulate the seller as strictly as any bureaucrat could—even more so, because a bureaucrat can be bribed. Whom would you have to bribe to win an exemption from the law of supply and demand? (Well, you might bribe enough legislators to obtain protection from competition, but that would constitute an abrogation of the market.)

It is no matter of indifference whether State operatives or market forces do the regulating. Bureaucrats, who necessarily have limited knowledge and perverse incentives, regulate by threat of physical force. In contrast, market forces operate peacefully through millions of cooperating participants, each with intimate knowledge of her own personal circumstances and looking out for her own well-being. Bureaucratic regulation is likely to be irrelevant or (more likely) inimical to what people in the market care about. Not so regulation by market forces.

Richman, Sheldon “Regulation Red Herring”
Many people are perplexed by the new government programs that have changed American life in the last century. So much of this intervention has been damaging, and so much of it is unconstitutional. Can we pinpoint a time, or an event, that led Americans to accept a more powerful central government in their lives? The intervention has been gradual since the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, but one event helped crystallize the rising dominance of statist ideas: President Roosevelt’s promotion of his Economic Bill of Rights during World War II. FDR announced this new bill of rights during his State of the Union message in January 1944. “Our Economic Bill of Rights,” the President said, “like the sacred Bill of Rights of our Constitution itself—must be applied to all citizens.” He added, “A new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all—regardless of station, race, or creed.” Among others, these new rights included the following:

the right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of our nation;
the right of every family to a decent home;
the right to a good education;
the right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health.

Roosevelt concluded: “All of these rights spell security. And after the war is won we must be prepared to move forward, in the implementation of these rights, to new goals of human happiness and well-being.” Where do Roosevelt’s new rights come from? They are not natural rights, or God-given rights, because nature, or God, does not endow man with “a good education,” “adequate medical care,” or “a decent home.” Only if government is the source of rights do Roosevelt’s rights have meaning. If an American has a right to “a useful and remunerative job,” then government has the obligation to find or provide employment, even if that requires taxing those who have jobs. If an American has a right to “a decent home,” whatever size and furnishings that might include, then if necessary, other Americans have the responsibility to pay for that decent home. Thus Roosevelt’s new Economic Bill of Rights was revolutionary. To provide these new rights, government would have to tax and redistribute wealth on a massive scale.

The original Bill of Rights was very different. It listed freedoms from government interference, not the freedom to invoke government to fulfill wants. The Founders understood that freedom of speech and religion were natural rights that all people can enjoy without hampering one another’s liberty. During Roosevelt’s 12 years in office, he increased government immensely, preparing the nation for the larger government he wanted after the war. His New Deal firmly established the government’s right to guarantee a minimum wage for jobholders, Social Security for elderly Americans, and targeted subsidies for groups the president needed for reelection. The Economic Bill of Rights presaged programs for national health care, federal aid to education, and a federal housing authority.

The taxing machinery was also in place. Building houses, sending people to college, creating job programs, and providing medical care for many millions of Americans would be costly, and FDR needed a steady torrent of cash to do it all. World War II gave FDR the opportunity to raise taxes and keep them high afterward to support his Economic Bill of Rights. FDR had increased taxes step by step during his presidency. He started with the rich. In 1932, the year FDR won the presidency, the top marginal tax rate was 25 percent. By 1939, the first year of the European war, FDR had hiked that rate to 79 percent. During World War II he was able to get the rate up to 94 percent on all income over $200,000. The top marginal corporate rate had risen to 90 percent.

But, as FDR discovered, near-confiscatory taxes on the rich were not enough to pay for the war and not enough to fund houses, education, jobs, and medical care for many millions of Americans after the war. He had to make taxpayers out of most American wage earners. This he achieved by lowering the personal exemption from $1,000 to $500, so only that amount was tax-free. He increased the bottom marginal rate from 4 to 23 percent from 1939 to 1945. Thus when FDR made taxpayers out of most Americans, the revenue from the income tax skyrocketed from just over $1 billion in 1939 to more than $19 billion in 1945.

Burton, Fulsom “How FDR’s Bill of Right Changed American Polotics”
Passage 88

F. A. Hayek’s most famous book, The Road to Serfdom, was written as a warning—to “socialists of all parties”—that socialism, the intellectually fashionable trend of his day, would lead to the loss of both liberty and prosperity. He was right, but the nature of the threat has changed from the time of his writing in 1944. Politicians today are not so enamored of government takeovers of business and industry as when the theories of Marx and Lenin were still ringing in their ears. Now they are more infatuated with socioeconomic control through regulations, bailouts, endless government “services,” and, especially in Europe, supranational planning.

That is the witches’ brew that Daniel Hannan warns us against in this book. Hannan is the British member of the European Parliament who became famous for a remarkable dressing-down he gave to then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown after a speech in which Brown tried to paint a pretty picture of Europe’s future. Hannan replied that the future was bleak, due to the embrace by politicians of unsustainable collectivistic policies. In this book Hannan explains why Americans must avoid the road that Europe is on and return to the original “British liberties” that our revolution sought to preserve.

“The United States is Europeanizing its health system, its day care, its welfare rules, its approach to global warming, its foreign policy, its federal structure, its unemployment rate,” Hannan writes. Unless we change course abruptly, we will bitterly regret it. The severe financial problems that have beset much of Europe since the book’s publication strongly amplify Hannan’s message. In truth the United States is already far along in the “Europeanizing” process, but not yet at the point of no return, he suggests. Health care is Exhibit A in his case. Although the State has been invading this crucial field in America, in most of Europe it is a near monopoly by government. “Britain,” he writes of his native country, “is pretty much the last place in the industrialized world where you’d want to be diagnosed with cancer, stroke, or heart disease.”

In the nineteenth century, British doctors and scientists were leaders in medical research and treatment, and the health of the populace improved dramatically. Today, however, the nation is stuck with the National Health Service (NHS), a state-controlled system that demolishes the incentives for quality care—when patients can get any care at all. Even though the NHS produces miserable results, reform is proving to be impossible. That is why Hannan advises us to stop the politicization of our health care system before it’s too late.

Hannan also counsels against abandoning federalism. He observes that the most free and vibrant country in Europe is Switzerland, which is still a federation of largely autonomous cantons. Federalism protects against the manifold evils that result from unchecked power in the central government, and Hannan shows his grasp of Public Choice theory in explaining that the problem of factionalism becomes more and more acute as a nation becomes more politically centralized. Again America has already begun down the road that Hannan cautions against—our commitment to federalism has been steadily eroding ever since the New Deal—but we will suffer increasingly severe consequences if we continue moving toward omnipotent central government. Hannan argues that the European trend toward supranational government is especially to be avoided. Whereas Americans still can vote out of office politicians who displease them, in Europe many critical social and economic decisions are now made by the bureaucrats of the European Union, who are accountable to no one.

Most of The New Road to Serfdom is solid, but libertarian readers will find some of Hannan’s advice discordant. In particular he favors an America that “projects global military power” as opposed to the weakling foreign policy of Europe’s major nations. Like most conservatives Hannan sees imaginary benefits in a policy of acting as the world’s policeman and is oblivious to its heavy costs, including its nasty habit of creating the very antagonisms that then seem to demand our further military presence to quell. It’s a vicious circle, but Hannan dismisses the idea that a militaristic foreign policy causes trouble rather than solves it.

Nevertheless it is valuable to have a book by a European intellectual that runs counter to the widespread notion that America can solve its socioeconomic problems through increasing the power of the State. Trying that will only make them worse.

Leef, George “The New Road To Serfdom: A letter of Warning To America
Passage 89

There are attempts from time to time to father American statism on Progressivism. This will hardly do. First, union-nationalist theorists like John W. Burgess and Orestes Brownson reveled in the vastness of national sovereignty after 1865. In cases like In re Neagle (1890), the U.S. Supreme Court theorized abstrusely on national sovereignty per square foot. At the level of ideas there was quite a lot of statism about. Second, as legal historian William Novak writes, a steadily rising curve of interfering (“statist”) state and federal legislation runs from the 1870s into the 1920s. This upward trend was across-the-board and predated Progressivism.

Here is one example. After the biggest western land-grabbers crowded small farmers onto marginal lands, especially in California, the cry went up for federal engineers to build colossal dams in the arid West to help small farmers become competitive. These projects reinvented ancient hydraulic despotism, coupling it rhetorically with a Jeffersonian end. Here Veblen’s favorite social class, the engineers, did wondrous works and overcame nature itself over many decades. It was impressive—but hardly chargeable to Progressivism.

Eastern, urban Progressives were committed to efficiency, expertise, regulatory bureaucracy, and scientism. Their program was effectively a political phase of corporate liberalism, of which Teddy Roosevelt, an artificial westerner, and Woodrow Wilson, an ex-southerner, offered somewhat different brands. (Wilson’s corporate liberalism did not wear the Progressive label.)

An important point of historical controversy concerns the relation of big business to Progressive legislation. Gabriel Kolko has argued that many key statutes were prepared by big-business lawyers and contained provisions intended to cartelize industries by restricting competition and discouraging new entrants. Sanders counters that the resistance of the farm bloc and organized labor sometimes kept business from getting exactly what it wanted.

The related “capture” thesis holds that, whatever the intention of legislators, the businesses to be regulated will eventually dominate the relevant bureaucracy. American socialist William J. Ghent commented that regulatory bodies were “Irresponsible to both the people and the people’s officials” and “peculiarly liable to the influence of the Big Men.” In private, businessmen themselves agreed with Ghent.

To the extent that eastern Progressives were able, between 1900 and 1916, to control legislative agendas nationally and in the states, they unleashed the reign of bureaucratic tidy-mindedness. In southern states legislatures fine-tuned racial segregation and classification. In a cross-section of states, legislatures blessed the pseudoscience of eugenics and provided for sterilization of unwanted classes. At the federal level Justice Holmes helped out by finding such laws constitutional.

There was also what we might call “departicipation”—a trend that reflected upper- and middle-class WASP panic about the working classes, immigrants, and “unassimilable” races. Instances of departicipation included judicial rules narrowing legal standing, increasing top-down control over juries, and eroding common-law concepts; voter disenfranchisement North and South; city manager regimes with at-large voting in city elections and standing armies of police; and finally, detailed task-management in the workplace, or Taylorism.

In foreign affairs many eastern, corporate-liberal Progressives favored forceful American expansion into overseas markets. If this required empire—and even war to secure the deal—they were up for it.

Stromberg, Joseph R. “The Twisted Tree of Progressivism”
Passage 90

I’m inclined to think of George Orwell and F. A. Hayek at the same time. Both showed great courage in writing the truth, undaunted by the consequences awaiting them. Both valued freedom, though they understood it differently.

Orwell, a man of the “left,” could not remain silent in the face of the horrors of Stalinism. Twice — during the Spanish Civil War and again at the dawn of the Cold War — he refused to permit his comrades to blind themselves to where their collectivism had led and could lead again. For his favor he was called a conscious tool of fascism, a stinging accusation considering he had gone to Spain to fight fascism. (But for a few inches, the bullet that penetrated Orwell’s neck in Spain would have denied us the latter warnings, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four. We would have never known what the fascists had cost us.)

Hayek, a man of the “right,” risked ostracism and worse in 1944 by publishing The Road to Serfdom, in which this Austrian-turned-Briton, writing in England at the height of World War II, warned that central economic planning would, if pursued seriously, end in a totalitarianism indistinguishable from the Nazi enemy. That couldn’t have been easy to write at that time and place — central planning was much in vogue among the intelligentsia. While a good deal of the reception was serious and respectful, a good deal of it was not. Herbert Finer, in Road to Reaction, called Hayek’s book “the most sinister offensive against democracy to emerge from a democratic country for many decades”; it expressed “the thoroughly Hitlerian contempt for the democratic man.”

Not surprisingly, it was The Road to Serfdom that brought Orwell and Hayek together in print. Orwell briefly reviewed the book along with Konni Zilliacus’s The Mirror of the Past in the April 9, 1944 issue of The Observer. The man who would publish Animal Farm a year later and Nineteen Eighty-Four five years later found much to agree with in Hayek’s work. He wrote:

Shortly, Professor Hayek’s thesis is that Socialism inevitably leads to despotism, and that in Germany the Nazis were able to succeed because the Socialists had already done most of their work for them, especially the intellectual work of weakening the desire for liberty. By bringing the whole of life under the control of the State, Socialism necessarily gives power to an inner ring of bureaucrats, who in almost every case will be men who want power for its own sake and will stick at nothing in order to retain it. Britain, he says, is now going the same road as Germany, with the left-wing intelligentsia in the van and the Tory Party a good second. The only salvation lies in returning to an unplanned economy, free competition, and emphasis on liberty rather than on security. In the negative part of Professor Hayek’s thesis there is a great deal of truth. It cannot be said too often — at any rate, it is not being said nearly often enough — that collectivism is not inherently democratic, but, on the contrary, gives to a tyrannical minority such powers as the Spanish Inquisitors never dreamed of.

This is a significant endorsement, for no one understood totalitarianism as well as Orwell. Indeed, in Why Orwell Matters, Christopher Hitchens points out that Nineteen Eighty-Four impressed Communist Party members behind the Iron Curtain. He quotes Czesław Miłosz, the Polish poet and Nobel laureate, who before defecting to the West was a cultural attaché for the Polish communist government: “Orwell fascinates them [members of the Inner Party] through his insight to the details they know well…. Even those who know Orwell only by hearsay are amazed that a writer who never lived in Russia should have so keen a perception into its life.”

But true to his left state-socialism, Orwell could not endorse Hayek’s positive program: Professor Hayek is also probably right in saying that in this country the intellectuals are more totalitarian-minded than the common people. But he does not see, or will not admit, that a return to “free” competition means for the great mass of people a tyranny probably worse, because more irresponsible, than that of the State. The trouble with competitions is that somebody wins them. Professor Hayek denies that free capitalism necessarily leads to monopoly, but in practice that is where it has led, and since the vast majority of people would far rather have State regimentation than slumps and unemployment, the drift towards collectivism is bound to continue if popular opinion has any say in the matter.

Richman Sheldon, “From 1944 to Nineteen Eighty Four”
Modern science and technology, of course, have taught us why we cannot simply strap on wings and fly like birds. We now understand just how numerous, and unobservable to the naked eye, are the details that enable birds to soar. The exact positioning and strength of a bird’s wing and tail muscles; the bird’s blood pressure; its sensory receptors that alert it to changes in wind direction—science reveals to us (some of) these myriad details and teaches us that they are indispensable to that bird’s ability to fly.

And science makes clear just how essential nearly all of these details are. Alter a detail here and the bird’s flight becomes less graceful; alter a detail there and the bird is no more able to fly than is a goat.

The common reaction to scientific revelations of the enormous complexity of the flight of a seemingly simple sparrow is to admire nature’s handiwork. Unfortunately, the same wisdom that guides our understanding of biology all too often abandons us when we contemplating the economy.

Attempts to centrally plan economies, or even to intervene in major ways into market economies, are very much like humans’ attempts to fly by dressing like birds and flapping fake wings: utterly futile, and potentially calamitous, because the most that can be observed of any successful economy are a handful of large details (assembly lines, retail outlets, money). Consciously calling into existence steel factories, wheat farms, supermarkets, currency, and other apparently obvious keys to economic success, and then trying to get these things all to work together to achieve economic takeoff, is akin to a man strapping sheets of fake feathers to his arms and legs and trying to fly. The effort simply won’t work, even if it appears to the untrained eye as if it should.

This reality isn’t altered by modern science. A market economy is indescribably vast and complex—its success depends on so many intricate, changing details all somehow being made to work smoothly together that the “facts” that are essential to its thriving cannot be catalogued with anywhere near the completeness that can be achieved by a 21st-century scientist studying and cataloging the “facts” that enable sparrows to fly. A sparrow is complex compared, say, to a limestone rock. Compared to the modern market economy, however, a sparrow is extremely simple.

A surge in the supply of steel in Detroit for the month of October 2012—an uptick in consumer demand for a specific color of car and a downtick in demand for another color—the possibility of using a new financial instrument to spread investment risks more widely—unexpected difficulties in hiring workers who possess a certain set of skills—an innovation that lowers the costs of advertising—an electrical failure that threatens to shut down for several days a section of a factory—a trucking company that discovers it underestimated the fuel costs of delivering 1,000 new automobiles to dealerships throughout New England. . . . Dealing with details such as these—details that Hayek called “the particular circumstances of time and place”—is not incidental to the success of a modern economy; it is of the essence.

Awareness of these facts, and of knowledge of workable options of how to respond to them, are key to the growth and continued success of any market economy. These facts are dealt with successfully only in market economies and only to the extent that individuals on the spot are free to respond to these facts as they, individually, see fit.

Yet no observer or planner or regulator can see and catalog all these highly specific facts. The facts—each of which must be dealt with—are far too numerous at any moment for an observing scientist to catalog even if that moment were to be frozen for decades. Greatly intensifying this complexity is the reality that these facts are forever changing. A moment from now many of these facts will be different from what they are at this moment.

Nevertheless, too many people, including politicians, continue to believe that because they can observe a handful of bulky facts about the economy, they can thereby know enough to intervene into that economy in ways that will improve its operation. That belief, though, is hubris. It’s very much like believing that you’ll fly if you simply strap on a pair of wings and commence to flapping madly.

Boudreaux, Donald “Inconceivable Complexity”
Passage 92

Cultural historian Francis Spufford’s *Red Plenty* is a novel about the reform of the planned economy in the Soviet Union during the years of the Khrushchev thaw. It is one of the oddest books written about economics—a fictional approach peopled by computer researchers, planning bureaucrats, Communist Party apparatchiks, and factory managers.

Spufford’s vivid storytelling—the book is very intriguing historical fiction—explores this counterfactual: Could the Soviet Union’s planned economy have delivered plenty to its citizens as well as a market economy would? The idea of prosperity under communism certainly did not seem as preposterous in the late 1950s as it does today. The Soviets took the lead in the space race, and their official statistics showed an annual 5 percent growth in GDP, apparently higher than the United States’ at the time.

The Soviet economy was, despite those growth statistics, enormously ineffective, consuming far too much capital for little output. Communist Party leader Nikita Khrushchev was prepared to open up the economy to reforms and received new ideas from economist Leonid Kantorovich and computer engineer Sergey Lebedev.

Their idea was to replace centrally determined production quotas with a pricing system based on opportunity costs. Linear programming, a mathematical method that could supposedly determine the optimal allocation of resources, would be used instead of bureaucratic output goals. The new, more powerful computers would perform all the necessary calculations. Kantorovich, incidentally, was the only Soviet to receive the Nobel Prize in economics.

But could it work? Readers of *The Freeman* will recognize here the arguments from the socialist calculation debate in the first half of the twentieth century. Economist Oskar Lange stated that prices are merely rates of exchange of one good for another. Whether they are provided by a central planner or by a market is irrelevant, he maintained, as long as managers of State enterprises were instructed to act as cost-minimizers. “Market socialism” would work. So said Lange’s theory, anyway. Reality caught up with theory in the Novochebarkas hunger riots in 1962, a key episode dramatized in the book. The introduction of a price mechanism also led to a reduction of food subsidies, and citizens suddenly were made aware of the true extent of their deprivations. The riots led to a coup that ousted Khrushchev; afterward, the conservative Leonid Brezhnev opted for stagnation of the economy and paying the bills by public debt and the export of oil.

Spufford’s story shows why socialism (even “market socialism”) is bound to fail. That great unpredictable—human nature—will foil the best bureaucratic plans. Besides the food riots, central planning led to many other debacles Spufford includes, such as the environmental disaster of the Aral Sea (which dried up owing to the diversion of water for collective farms) and the demise of the Soviet computer industry (wiped out by a decree from the Ministry for Radio Production).

Reading *Red Plenty*, one has a hard time seeing how market socialism’s practical shortcomings would not lead people to doubt the system’s underlying ideas. That goes for the author too. Despite awareness of its failure, however, he still seems to be gripped by the fascination so many intellectuals have with Kantorovich’s market socialism theory. Without going into detail, Spufford seems to imply that it could be done right, in spite of all the arguments and historical evidence he presents to the contrary.

Planned economies are mostly gone, but *Red Plenty* tells us a lot about the ideas behind the political steering and commandeering of resources in the 21st century, ideas that are still very much alive. Politicians may tolerate or even use market mechanisms, but only if those mechanisms achieve certain politically predetermined results. This is particularly visible in the subsidies for “green jobs” in Europe and the Solyndra scandal in the United States.

The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, put it right, saying, “The most puzzling development in politics during the last decade is the apparent determination of Western European leaders to re-create the Soviet Union in Western Europe.” *Red Plenty* inadvertently gives an explanation for this lingering attachment. The free market threatens the power of the politicians by taking away their control over society. They cherish control, not plenty for the masses.

Ingdahl, Waldemar “Red Plenty: Inside the Soviet Dream”
The Coase Theorem is an economic proposition which says that when property rights are well defined and enforced, and the costs of search, bargaining, and enforcement are reasonably low, voluntary trade will tend to produce results that are economically efficient. Negative externalities will be internalized, as unowned resources are transformed into marketable goods. And if, because of incomplete property rights, entrepreneurs are unable to capture enough of the benefits from their actions (that is, if positive externalities would result), they will be less inclined to make the discoveries that drive economic development. Those benefits would be internalized, too.

There are some positive externalities that most, perhaps all, of those who favor tough property enforcement would hesitate to try to privatize. For example, cultures develop in part on the basis of imitation. Jazz musicians copy from one another all the time, from motifs to entire songs, and reinterpret them in their own creations. Classical musicians have also done this. As a courtesy, the protocol is to name the artist from whom you are copying, such as in “Variations on a Theme of Paganini.”

On an even higher level of abstraction, artists, writers, and even ordinary people partake in an aesthetic ethos; scholars, intellectuals, and laymen draw on the intellectual milieu of a place and time. Without the experimentation that comes from such borrowing and give-and-take, cultures would stop evolving; they would die.

The same thing goes for economic development. One entrepreneur discovers a demand for flat-screen televisions and is soon followed by imitators, which in the long run results in lower prices and better quality—and often new products and uses, such as tablet computers. Don’t get me wrong! Private property rights prevent the kind of free riding that hinders economic development. And of course private property is essential for personal freedom: Property rights not only help to avoid or resolve interpersonal conflict—such as the tragedy of the commons—they are what provide a person with a sphere of autonomy and privacy in an economically developed world where contact with strangers is commonplace.

There are many instances where free riding is a net negative, and the overuse of the atmosphere in the form of air pollution is probably one of them. Despite the efforts of some economists, legislators, and policymakers to institute so-called “cap-and-trade”—which would attempt to establish property rights in the air through government policy—it may be impossible to do something similar for all scarce resources, either by legal mandate or market arrangements. But this need not discourage libertarians, of either the minimal-state or market-anarchist variety.

What one can observe in the world, however, is that neither the state nor the market is uniformly successful in enabling individuals to sustain long-term, productive use of natural resource systems. Further, communities of individuals have relied on institutions resembling neither the state nor the market to govern some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success over long periods of time. In those instances the nonstate, nonmarket institutions she studied were, when successful, conventions that the users of common-pool resources agreed to and used sometimes for centuries. They were made voluntarily and evolved over time, but they were not market outcomes, at least in the narrow sense, because no one “owned” the resource in question and it was not bought and sold. Ostrom added: The central question of this study is how a group of principals who are in an independent situation can organize and govern themselves to obtain continuing joint benefits when all face temptations to free-ride, shirk, or otherwise act opportunistically.

Her research covered the harvesting of forests in thirteenth-century Switzerland and sixteenth-century Japan and irrigation institutions in various regions of fifteenth-century Spain. Although not every community Ostrom studied was successful in establishing such conventions, it is instructive how highly complex agreements, enforced by both local norms and effective monitoring, were able to overcome the free-rider problems that standard economic theory—and perhaps vulgar libertarianism—would predict are insurmountable without property rights.

Ikeda, Sandy “Property Rights Aren’t Always the Libertarian Solution”
Passage 94

There is very little either complicated or interesting about poverty. Poverty has been man’s condition throughout his history. The causes of poverty are quite simple and straightforward. Generally, individual people or entire nations are poor for one or more of the following reasons: (1) they cannot produce many things highly valued by others; (2) they can produce things valued by others but they are prevented from doing so; or (3) they volunteer to be poor.

The true mystery is why there is any affluence at all. That is, how did a tiny proportion of man’s population (mostly in the West) for only a tiny part of man’s history (mainly in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries) manage to escape the fate of their fellow men?

Sometimes, in reference to the United States, people point to its rich endowment of natural resources. This explanation is unsatisfactory. Were abundant natural resources the cause of affluence, Africa and South America would stand out as the richest continents, instead of being home to some of the world’s most miserably poor people. By contrast, that explanation would suggest that resource-poor countries like Japan, Hong Kong, and Great Britain should be poor instead of ranking among the world’s richest places.

Another unsatisfactory explanation of poverty is colonialism. This argument suggests that third-world poverty is a legacy of having been colonized, exploited, and robbed of its riches by the mother country. But it turns out that countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were colonies; yet they are among the world’s richest countries. Hong Kong was a colony of Great Britain until 1997, when China regained sovereignty, but it managed to become the second richest political jurisdiction in the Far East. On the other hand, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tibet, and Nepal were never colonies, or were so for only a few years, and they rank among the world’s poorest and most backward countries.

Despite the many justified criticisms of colonialism and, I might add, multinationals, both served as a means of transferring Western technology and institutions, bringing backward peoples into greater contact with a more-developed Western world. A tragic fact is that many African countries have suffered significant decline since independence. The colonial powers never perpetrated the unspeakable human rights abuses, including genocide, that we have seen in post-independence Burundi, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Central African Empire, Somalia, and elsewhere.

Any economist who suggests he has a complete answer to the causes of affluence should be viewed with suspicion. We do not know fully what makes some societies richer than others. However, we can make guesses based on correlations. Start out by ranking countries according to their economic systems. Conceptually we could arrange them from more capitalistic (having a larger free-market sector) to more communistic (with extensive State intervention and planning). Then consult Amnesty International’s ranking of countries according to human-rights abuses. Then get World Bank income statistics and rank countries from highest to lowest per capita income. Compiling the three lists, one would observe a very strong, though imperfect, correlation: Those countries with greater economic liberty tend also to have stronger protections of human rights. And their people are wealthier. That finding is not a coincidence, so let us speculate on the relationship.

One way to gauge human-rights protection is to ask to what extent the State protects voluntary exchange and private property. The difference between private property rights and collectively held rights is not simply philosophical. Private property produces systemically different incentives and results from collective property.

Since collectivists often trivialize private property rights, they are worth elaborating. When property rights are held privately the costs and benefits of decisions are concentrated in the individual decision maker; with collectively held property rights they are dispersed across society. For example, private property forces homeowners to take into account the effect of their current decisions on the future value of their homes, because that value depends, among other things, on how long the property will provide housing services. Thus privately owned property holds one’s personal wealth hostage to doing the socially responsible thing—economizing scarce resources.

Williams, Walter E. “Poverty Is Easy to Explain”
Today’s schools were designed over a century ago to emulate the efficient factories of that era. By standardizing the way they teach and test, school systems could educate children as standardized plants produced widgets. The model—in which we batch students up in classrooms and teach the same thing to them in exactly the same way—worked well enough when most students went directly to industrial jobs.

In 1900 only 17 percent of all jobs required knowledge workers, whereas more than 60 percent do today. We now ask more students to master more challenging subject matter and develop more specialized skills. In the knowledge economy, people need to be more flexible on the one hand, while on the other they benefit from cultivating their individual talents and interests. Factory-style education falls short, therefore, as it is an ineffective way for most children to learn and to maximize their potential. So, while the world has changed, our schools have not. If we hope to have all children succeed in school and in life, then we need a system that can customize for different student needs—the exact opposite of standardization.

We have an education system that mandates the amount of time students spend in class but does not expect each child to master her learning. The result is that students don’t receive the support they need to master each subject before they move on to the next one. This creates gaps in most children’s education—gaps that haunt them later in their schooling. Attacking any dominant organization directly rarely produces transformative results. Taking a disruptive path instead—by going around and underneath the system—yields more successful outcomes. From the airline industry to the mail business and from banking to the trucking industry, the process of disruption has transformed countless regulated and unionized industries.

Disruptive innovations can transform a sector marked by expensive, inaccessible, and complicated products or services into one in which the products or services are affordable, convenient, and simple to use. They first take root in simple, undemanding applications within a new market or arena of competition. Little by little, disruptions predictably improve. At some point, disruptive innovations become good enough to handle more complicated problems—and then they take over and supplant the old way of doing things. It is happening in education right now. Disruption, in the form of online learning, is beginning to sweep through the U.S. With its rapid growth and built-in ability to help students discover different learning pathways (along with rapid feedback to inform students what to tackle next), online learning has the potential to bring true choice and customization to millions of students and their families. And because these disruptive systems are also decentralized, they deliver individualized learning opportunities unbounded by school or geography.

Online learning started in areas outside of the heart of the K–12 education system, where the alternative was nothing at all. For example, some students wanted to take advanced courses districts couldn’t afford to offer. Other students needed to recover credits or earn degrees after they had dropped out of school. Of course, homeschool and homebound students came in search of the best and most flexible curricula.

Just as every disruptive innovation does, online learning is now improving and expanding its reach. One way it is improving is that it is accommodating the non-academic roles traditional schools once played. The vast majority of American families, for example, like schools because they keep children safe and protected and allow them to have social ties and fun with their friends. Many parents also work. As a result, although online learning initially was a distance-learning phenomenon, increasingly it’s happening in blended-learning environments.

Blended learning is defined as a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of learning and at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. Online learning is on the march. As it grows and improves in the coming years, it promises to disrupt and escape from the conventional classroom. If we leverage it correctly, online learning has the potential to provide each child with a customized learning experience that matches her needs and allows her to realize her fullest potential.

Horn, Michael “Disrupting the Classroom”
A few years back we thought about building a deck or a porch on the back of our house. But we decided against it when the estimates started coming in. They were about double what the architect had told us it would cost. Six months earlier the Mississippi had overflowed its banks and destroyed a lot of houses in the St. Louis area. Carpenters and builders had no time to build a back porch or a deck. To get them to build a porch, you had to pay a premium.

We delayed the project for a couple of years, and prices came down. That delay was an example of the hidden benefit of high prices. When prices are high, the least-urgent projects get delayed, freeing up resources for more urgent projects. The porch just isn’t worth it. So the wood I would have used instead gets set aside to rebuild a washed-away house. The carpenter I would have kept busy now works on building that new house.

That magical role of prices in directing resources is the bread and butter of economics. But to the non-economist, high prices are just a form of gouging that ought to be stopped. It’s wrong to let people profit from the distress of others.

Economists tend to be pretty agnostic on morality. Prices work, we explain patiently; price controls don’t. If you try to limit prices by law, you’ll just end up hurting the people you’re trying to help. Price controls will discourage lumber from coming into disaster-struck regions. Better to let prices do their job, we’ll say.

Non-economists tend to look at motivation as either altruistic or greedy. Either you’re motivated by profit or by the opportunity to help others. A lot of people are turned off by market-based solutions because using the market is so mercenary. Why would we want a social order based on greed? Why would we want to encourage some to profit from the hardship of others?

Non-economists see resources whizzing around the country to help people in distress, non-economists see profiteering, gouging, and immorality. Let’s look a little more closely at natural disasters like the Mississippi flood in 1993 or any of the various hurricanes that touch land and wreak havoc. After these disasters, prices of lumber and tools and the services of carpenters often spike upward for a while and can remain high. I’ve been told that when hurricanes hit and lumber prices go up, some people don’t just ship the lumber they bought for their own use to the devastated area to make a killing; they load it into trucks and drive it there themselves. Those are the people I want to think about for a moment. What do you think is on their minds as they drive south? I assume they’re glad to make some money on their lumber. But I also assume they’re glad to be part of helping people out.

Presumably the high prices motivate some cold and heartless people to overcome their desire to spend the weekend counting their money and instead to head to Florida. But I also presume this is not the typical person driving lumber southward. The typical person is someone who wants the lumber for purely personal use—a nice deck or porch, some home-repair project—but who now finds the incentive of the higher price attractive. That person drives down joyously knowing that the lumber is going to help someone who lost a house. The money is nice. And so is the intangible feeling of helping others.

Here’s the key insight of economics: some of those folks who go down with a song in their hearts because they know they’re helping others would have stayed home if the price of lumber hadn’t soared. The monetary incentive makes it easier. The higher price doesn’t just induce the hard-hearted to go. It induces the altruist as well.

How sad it is that people think economics is the study of money or that they think economists believe in elevating mercenary motives above compassion. The great insight of economics is that people make tradeoffs. The basis for that insight is a recognition that behavior is complex and that no one has a single-minded motivation or a single goal. When we talk about the role of prices in our economy, we need to remember that complexity.

Roberts, Russell “Profits Versus Love”
Opportunism can be defined as acting to promote one’s welfare by taking advantage of a trust extended by an individual, a group, or society as a whole. The possibility of opportunistic exploitation drives up the expected cost of transacting. Such transaction cost reduces the scope of transactions through which exchange and cooperative surpluses can be realized. Where opportunistic activity is widespread, evidence of its crippling effects is everywhere.

The moral “don’ts” matter most because if an individual obeys all moral prohibitions, it is impossible to engage in opportunism. Widespread obedience to moral prohibitions therefore directly and dramatically reduces transaction costs by precluding opportunism. So while there is nothing for moral exhortations to do to support the development and operation of a free-market economy, there is plenty for moral prohibitions to do.

Individuals who believe they are morally obligated to obey all moral prohibitions before even considering obeying any moral exhortation can be rationally expected to always behave in a trustworthy manner. They will never engage in “greater good” rationalizations at your expense. Societies within which such moral beliefs predominate enjoy a social norm of unconditional trustworthiness, which makes a high-trust, low-transaction-cost society possible.

Social harmony is directly related to the existence of clear standards for behavior. This is a problem for moral exhortations because, as noted, there is no objective basis for discerning to what degree a positive moral action should be taken, and they entail action that requires resources an individual might not have in sufficient measure.

As we’ve seen, neither of these problems applies to moral prohibitions. So with moral prohibitions we know what we can practically expect from others and what others will be expecting of us. Because of this, with moral prohibitions everyone can conclude at the same time that someone has not lived up to a particular standard for moral behavior. This produces a consensus of disapproval. When everyone can agree that a given action is wrong and therefore requires disapproval, standards can be reinforced automatically and informally. There is no need for a central authority to make value judgments because obeying the standard is not a matter of degree and is therefore not a matter of subjective judgment.

Many firms have been caught engaging in questionable practices because of a competitive race to the bottom of ethical behavior. Modern moral theorists normally attribute this to corporate leaders not having been sufficiently exhorted to want to “do the right thing.” But a better approach might lie in the fact that clear moral standards made possible by prioritizing obedience to moral prohibitions would provide minimum standards for behavior that people of integrity can use to avoid getting into a competitive race to the ethical bottom.

The absence of clear moral standards for behavior can make managers feel they are morally compelled to disobey moral prohibitions as a means to the end of pursuing positive moral actions (such as telling a small lie so as not to fire an employee). Such managers can even conclude that being unwilling to disobey a moral prohibition amounts to an insufferable act of moral self-righteousness. A society composed of individuals who strongly value obeying moral prohibitions is a society composed of individuals who expect to feel very guilty if they undertake negative moral actions. Even when opportunism cannot be observed and no one is appreciably harmed at the margin, they still feel guilty. Such a society will enjoy low transaction costs. Such a society has the reason to create and the ability to sustain institutions that fully support property rights and the creative use of contracts, which in turn strengthen incentives for effort, investment, innovation, and invention.

So what explains efforts by firms to appear benevolent? In low-trust societies firm owners and managers are forced to extend the radius of small-group trust, which is largely based on mutual affection. This they do by treating customers and employees “like family.” Such “warm glow” behavior is actually a symptom of a society’s inability to produce a norm of unconditional trustworthiness. As a society we do best when, with the exception of those very close to us, we do not expect others to promote our welfare and only expect that they will obey all moral prohibitions.

Rose, David C. “Why Moral “Don’ts” Matter Most”
In this excellent book Andrew Bacevich provides an easy-to-read history of the evolution of post-World War II American intervention overseas. Bacevich argues that “prior to World War II, Americans by and large viewed military power and institutions with skepticism, if not outright hostility. In the wake of World War II, that changed. An affinity for military might emerged as central to the American identity.” The book is a history of that monumental shift from a public desire to avoid war to a tolerance for permanent war.

Bacevich first takes the reader through the 1950s, when the postwar U.S. national security apparatus was built and when the “trinity” of Washington rules—American global military presence, armed forces configured for power projection rather than defense, and a willingness to use such forces to intervene worldwide—was adopted as U.S. policy. He could have added that the first U.S. permanent alliances were formed just when the advent of nuclear weapons made them unneeded for American security. Also, during this period, peacetime foreign military and economic aid first became a major tool of U.S. foreign policy.

Initially, according to Bacevich, President Eisenhower, both enamored with and frightened by the dawning of the atomic age, relied on a massive buildup of such destructive armaments to deter the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, he tried to avoid conventional conflict that could escalate into a nuclear conflagration by developing covert operations to do “dirty tricks” in foreign countries. By the end of Eisenhower’s tenure he began to believe that the now-permanent “military-industrial complex” (MIC)—the vested interests in the military services and the industrial interests profiting from the permanent state of Cold War—was a threat to the country’s institutions. Bacevich is concerned about what MIC-driven foreign interventions are doing to freedom at home.

During the Kennedy-Johnson tenure the long neglected Army was able to use its doctrine of “flexible response” to get back into the national security game by fighting conventional wars that filled the gap between CIA covert action and nuclear war. Vietnam was a failure of that strategy and almost took down the trinity with it. But the “Vietnam Syndrome” didn’t last long, as Ronald Reagan began the march back toward military adventurism. George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton stepped up the interventionism further. When George W. Bush took office he established the doctrine of preventive war, which pledged to use military force to take out threats to U.S. security before they have even formed and established a permanent war footing. His successor has not repudiated either policy. Bacevich argues that too many vested interests in the security bureaucracies, the defense industry, Congress, and the media benefit from the Washington consensus on interventionism to cause its demise. Only education of the public and civic involvement can turn back these forces that are ruining the republic.

Although Bacevich is correct that only the public can override the vested interests to effect change, that outcome is hard to accomplish because Public Choice theory shows that concentrated benefits of a government policy usually trump costs dispersed across the entire population. The public is rational about how much effort to expend to alter policies that cost each taxpayer only a small amount. Educating the public is important, but it is slow and other solutions may be needed. Bacevich provides little help in this realm. The only other solution Bacevich hints at is a return to compulsory military service, but enslaving people to promote freedom is contradictory.

Sometimes a crisis provides impetus for public support for reform, but policies aiming at reform can just as well do the wrong thing as the right thing. The record U.S. budget deficits and gaping national debt provide a danger that may allow shrinkage of the grossly excessive U.S. security posture. Across-the-board cuts in every program the government runs—with no exceptions for the military, intelligence, entitlements or any other government effort—might allow the following justification: “In a time of fiscal crisis, everyone has to sacrifice.”

Although Bacevich correctly recommends cutting the Pentagon budget, reducing U.S. overseas military presence drastically, and using the U.S. military only to defend the nation, he could have spilled more ink telling us how we can overcome vested interests to achieve these worthy goals.

Eland, Ivan “Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War”
Several aspects of human behavior, besides a misunderstanding of reality, are critical to the survival of political scoundrels. Let’s look at a few.

Tariffs and import quotas raise sugar prices. Michael Wohlgenant and Vincent H. Smith, say sugar restrictions cost the economy an average of over $3 billion a year in higher food prices. That’s the cost side. Roughly 40,000 Americans in the sugar industry benefit from import restrictions because they raise sugar prices and deliver higher profits and wages. One might reasonably ask, “How is it possible for the few to impose huge costs on the 312 million of the rest of us?”

It is easily explained by a phenomenon economists refer to as concentrated large benefits versus dispersed small costs. It pays those in the sugar industry to raise millions to lobby Congress with campaign contributions in order to get them to vote for restrictions on foreign sugar. They receive billions of dollars in higher profits and wages. That’s the benefit side. The cost is the doubled price that 312 million American consumers pay for sugar, increasing annual food costs by about $9 per person. Members of Congress are at ease in imposing this cost because they know that few Americans are willing to bear the burden of trying to unseat a legislator whose actions cost their families $40 or $50 more a year in sugar costs. It’s cheaper just to pay the higher price.

Sugar tariffs and quotas produce effects beyond simply higher food prices. Chicago used to be America’s candy manufacturing capital. In 1970 Chicago’s candy manufacturers employed 15,000 workers. Now the number is 8,000 and falling. Brach’s employed about 2,300 people; now most of its jobs are in Mexico. Ferrara Pan Candy also moved much of its production to Mexico. Yes, wages are lower in Mexico, but wages aren’t the only factor in candy manufacturer flight from America. Sugar is a major cost, and in Mexico, the sugar cost is one-third to one-half what it is in the United States. After 90 years, Life Savers has moved to Canada. Canadian wages are comparable to ours, but Life Savers’ yearly sugar cost is $10 million lower.

Most Americans are decent and truly care about the welfare of their fellow man. Few things create as many opportunities for self-interested manipulators and political hustlers to exploit this sense of decency as wages earned by the poor. The recent Occupy Wall Street movement demonstrates that Americans can be easily swayed by claims of inequality in income distribution. This helps explain the popularity of income redistribution and calls for the rich to give something back. Under some visions of how the world works this would make sense.

Suppose there was a gigantic pile of money meant to be shared equally among Americans. The reason some people have more money than others is that they got to the pile first and greedily took an unfair share. That being the case, justice requires that those who took their unfair share give something back, and if they won’t do so voluntarily, Congress should confiscate their ill-gotten gains and return them to their rightful owners.

Or perhaps income is distributed by a dealer of dollars. The reason some people have more dollars than others is that the dollar dealer is a racist, a sexist, a multinationalist, or a conservative. The only right thing to do for those dealt unfairly is to re-deal the dollars. If this isn’t done voluntarily, then Congress should send the IRS to confiscate the ill-gotten gains.

The sane among us recognize that in a free society, income is neither taken nor distributed; for the most part, it is earned by pleasing one’s fellow man. The greater one’s ability to do this, the greater one’s claim on what one’s fellow man produces. Those claims are represented by the number of dollars received from him.

Contrast the morality of the requirement of having to serve one’s fellow man in order to have a claim on what he produces with government, where in effect Congress says, “You don’t have to serve your fellow man in order to have a claim on what he produces. We’ll take what he produces and give it to you. Just vote for me.”

How we fall prey to charlatans and quacks is not complicated, but it still has to be explained.

Williams, Walter E. “Poverty Is Easy to Explain”
Government-sector collective bargaining is being challenged in many states. In response, government-employee unions (GEUs) are asserting that the human rights of government employees, including freedom of association, are under assault. But a correct understanding of human rights gives the lie to the unions’ self-serving jeremiads.

In states such as Indiana, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin, chronic budget deficits and monstrous unfunded liabilities tied to government-employee pension funds and retiree health benefits have led to a revolt against GEUs. In brief, a genuine human right is nonrivalrous; that is, it can be exercised by every human at any time without one person’s exercise of the right interfering with, or diminishing in any way, any other person’s exercise of the same right. Philosophers usually refer to nonrivalrous rights as “negative” rights because the exercise of them by anyone imposes a duty on others not to interfere. Nonrivalrous rights are not created by politicians or anyone else. They are our birthright.

Jefferson called such rights “inalienable”—all human beings hold them simply because they are human beings. They are our natural rights. Thus the rights delineated in the Declaration of Independence are nonrivalrous. For example, the right to pursue happiness can be exercised by all without conflict or contradiction. In contrast, there is no right to achieve happiness in the sense that anyone is guaranteed to succeed in his pursuit of happiness. We can all pursue happiness by, for example, making offers of voluntary exchange to others, which they are free to accept or reject in their pursuit of happiness.

If I, on the other hand, had a right to achieve happiness, there would have to be some others who have a duty to provide me with the means necessary to guarantee my success. In that case my exercise of the right to achieve happiness would be in conflict (rivalry) with the right of those others to achieve their happiness. Philosophers call rivalrous rights claims “positive” rights because the exercise of such a right by Person A imposes on Person B the duty to provide Person A with the means to achieve success. Politicians are fond of enacting positive rights—that is, giving some people legal, but not natural, claims to the resources of others. Positive rights are imply politician-granted privileges.

Politicians have created mandatory good-faith bargaining between employers and certified unions representing employees. Workers are coerced into association with unions through majority vote, and employers are forced into a bargaining association with the unions. The bargaining must be in “good faith,” which means that no take-it-or-leave-it offers may be made. All of this is coerced, not free, association. Collective bargaining is consistent with human rights when a union, representing only voluntary members, bargains on behalf of them with an employer who agrees to bargain with the union. Both sides would be able simply to say no and walk away. The ordinary common law of contract would apply.

Moreover, mandatory good-faith collective bargaining in the government sector violates basic principles of democratic government. Mandatory “good-faith” bargaining is done behind closed doors with the general public having neither access nor voice. Because of “good faith” rules, the agency bureaucrats that allegedly sit on the opposite side of the collective-bargaining table from the GEUs must get consent on some matters of public policy, thus the GEUs have veto power over those matters. In effect the GEUs are coequal with the executive branch of government in all matters that come under the scope of collective bargaining. They are a fourth branch of government.

During government-sector collective bargaining the agency heads that negotiate with the GEUs do not represent the interests of taxpayers. The bureaucrats want larger and larger budgets, and the GEUs want higher and higher wages, salaries, and retirement benefits. Thus the bureaucrats and the GEUs have a common interest—picking the pockets of taxpayers. Politicians created these positive rights for unions, so politicians are entitled (I think morally compelled) to take them away. Scott Walker and the others violated no human rights when they reduced the set of privileges given to GEUs by their predecessors. Unions do not have natural rights. Only humans have natural rights. Moreover, there are no “labor rights” apart from the human rights possessed by all workers. Government-sector bargaining is always based on arbitrary privileges pretending to be human rights.

Baird, Charles W. “Collective Bargaining and Human Rights”