

The funny thing about fear is you fear the future. You fear what MIGHT happen. You fear what is coming. Then, it doesn't come. It doesn't happen. We don't have a massive depression, or nuclear cataclysm. Your home isn't broken in to, and you aren't attacked. You don't get disease x, y, or z. Yet you have wasted all this time fearing it, and preparing for it. Preparation is not bad, but perennial dread is very simply a waste of time. Think of all the happy thoughts that were—in retrospect—fully justified. Think of all the holy happiness you missed out on, all the opportunities for connection and love and growth. It's sad, really, how little life we really live.

Positive thought: we can control, collectively and individually, the future. Clearly, we can't control everything that happens, but we can control our emotions, and how we respond to WHATEVER happens.

Good thinking is simple thinking. Common sense applies to simple tasks. It then disappears, in the minutiae say of building freeways, or understanding quantum physics. It then reappears in large scale thinking about these projects as a whole. Once they exist, things exhibit, again, common sense, obvious organization. It is when people get stuck in the (necessary for a period) minutiae that problems happen. For example, in economics, the basic problem is that technical solutions are offered, which do not take a step back and look at the system as a whole, saying—for example—that a job created by the government is a job lost to the private sector.

Science is a method for socializing and communalizing truth without coercion.

It occurred to me that the point of the constant insults and invocations of “right wingers”, and constant recitation of the ideological “crimes” of conservatives is simply to reinforce the dominant narrative that conservatives are evil. It is integration propaganda, and very necessary. The lines must constantly be redrawn.

I think when we die, our best memories are very simple things, like me sliding with the kids in Branson. Cultivation of such moments is the point of life.

It's interesting to note that the supposed crime of Joseph McCarthy is ruining hundreds or thousands of lives. Yet, there WERE real Communists, and the simple fact of the matter is that their infiltration of and subversion of the American “Peace” movement enabled the take-over of South Vietnam by North Vietnam. It also enabled a Communist coup in Cuba, and who knows how many other tragedies in which something on the order of millions of people DIED. Add to this that some 68,000 Americans DIED in Vietnam in a cause made futile by precisely the people McCarthy was targeting, and you begin to see how pathetic are the efforts to demonize him and ignore that real problems he was trying to solve.

The uneducated man will only see what is in front of him. In large measure, the role of education is to teach people to “see” things that are NOT in front of them. It is for this reason that the child was unable do see the Emperors clothes, and the reason many principled conservatives are less educated than most Leftists. It is nearly impossible, in a land of plenty, to be a Leftists without considerable indoctrination.

I need to write a piece on what Individualism is and what it isn't. For me, the primary and most important reality is the PERCEPTION of the individual. No one can tell you that what you see is not what you see. The individual is ALWAYS the primary perceptual unit. Every scientist is an individual. Every thinker is an individual. Every prophet is an individual. An undivided, IN-divided unit of perception and identity.

A lot of the activity of adolescents in suburbia is scanning for identity. Death metal, goth, whatever, any and all of these cultural trends give you identity. Generally speaking, they are more or less explicit rejections of the banality of our success: of clean stores, generic construction, uniform housing, etc. Everything is the same in the suburbs. Dallas is like Duluth. They have the same stores, same music, same TV. If I put you in a house, and gave you a car, and located you close to stores, you would have almost no way of figuring out where you were other than obvious things like the landscape.

There is something homogenizing about mass media. Our shared traditions are gone. The reverence of the Bible is largely gone. We have been lifted up onto a tide of constant change, which we have accepted and become addicted to. It makes the diversion of attention both easy, and unnoticed.

We need to build our communities along Aristotle's ideas, that your community should be no larger than a strong man can shout. We need, too, more beauty in our public places. We recognize it when we see it. Not monument, imperial architecture, as characterized the Greeks and Romans, but authentic, pleasing American architecture. I personally like fountains of all sorts, but when constructed with ingenuity.

Thinking of early days of the Roman Republic, where all the leading citizens were expected to serve in the military. Nowadays, many leading political families view service as optional or even bad. There may or may not be something here, but I wonder to what extent decadence and the reduction in service coincide.

Whenever a dialogue is reduced to labeling you have ceased useful communication. The role of propaganda is to reinforce biases. To the extent you reduce dialogue to labels, you have succumbed to a fundamentally anti-liberal bias. Bigotry is when you conflate reality with a label.

Sex in America might be a good topic. How we mature, how we relate.

A piece on Albert Camus might be useful. I admire him for his desire to solve problems, and for his use of logic and reason in essays.

Sociology of Horror films and books: I could go to a fan website for these types of things, and see what people are saying. This is basic research. The effects of horrific violence are well documented, such as alienation, decreased empathy, and increased rates of depression, itself tied to practicing disconnection from others. The connection is with fellow fans.

I could call this recomunalization process the Danish model, or tribal model. The reason socialism works there is they are all alike. They don't have the diversity that we do. There is an implicit trust that when they pay their taxes they are not being cheated, and that the money is being used for the purpose for which it was intended. This is not a bad model. The Jewish and Catholics and others take care of one another, and engender a faith that if you fall you will be picked back up. In our ghettos you have white (frequently) bureaucrats far from the situation conceiving policies that others implement (who themselves often don't live in the communities). Information is always local. Care always has to be local. Real quantitative problems do exist, but in general the problems are qualitative, and the point is that the more centralized the solution, the less information there is. We are currently reinforcing failure, in no small measure to line the pockets of corrupt politicians.

One of the contributing factors to the decline and progressive failure of marriage in the United States is the death of poetry. You need a certain amount of tenderness, and openness, and vulnerability—even sentimentality. When you look at our grandparents generation, they still read poetry, and were still “sappy” in some ways; non-ironic, non-detached. They didn't hold back warmth from others as much as I think many kids raised by televisions do. Other factors of course are the rise of easy divorce, and the financial ability of single parents to survive. **There is something about sentimentality and poetry that is needed as a sort of palliative to greed and selfishness.** This is progressively lacking, in no small measure to our embrace of Scientism. Politically, the least compassionate are often those who talk the most about it.

It might be worth writing an essay on “If today was your last day”, or “Live like you're dying”, as a way of asking the question: what is worth doing? What is the best way to organize your life? What if you are already forgiving people, and doing work worth doing? What is it you would be doing if thought you were going to die? Work in Camus quotes. Everyone has to make their own decisions, but one important criterion, to me, is that it not be about consumption. What is the value of jumping out of an airplane, other than helping you reduce fear, and become a more complete person? Simply consuming experiences is not worth doing, except to the extent that they foster qualitative growth.

It is an interesting irony that artists—who so value individual freedom to create—so often support totalizing and conformitarian ideas. I think they have too much freedom. They also mistake the grandeur of large ideas for the reality of pedestrian conformity and police brutality.

Write a piece on seduction to Leftism. Watch the trajectory of bright suburban kids who grew up watching Gilligan's Island and other tripe, then at some point—sophomore, junior year in high school, or college--ran into **“The Package”** of Political Correctness, and ran into sex in college, and resented anyone who might have suggested promiscuity might be wrong. I wonder if there is a literal connection between seduction/sex and leftism. All of these things are feel-good policies, where you are helping others, and getting sex from it at the same time. You hate Republicans since they are all Christians who hate gays and fornication.

Perfectionism and laziness have killed far more dreams than mediocrity.

What traits of qualitative materialism are retained in systems like that of Ayn Rand which reject Socialism, but retain some type of Scientism?

It might be worth comparing the Communist reeducation camps to Gitmo. In the one case you have hundreds of people who are treated humanely, and in the other you have millions locked in cages and fed rice with sand in it.

As far as the Vienna Circle, and their position that there are only two valid types of statements, Atheism is based on the notion of the verification of propositions. If the God Idea has merit, it can be tested. Any thesis which can't be verified is beyond science, and since science is the means by which truth is found, then any thesis which can't be verified is untrue. This misses the fact that Atheism cannot be verified either. Wittgenstein saw the foolishness of this. He agreed we can't talk about things like God and morality, but disagreed strenuously that they didn't exist, or should be rejected. He simply thought that speaking of abstractions necessarily led to misunderstandings, and the potential for the abuse of language, and through it, of power.

It should be noted in addition that empiricism is individual. What I experience has absolute validity for me. If I see Bigfoot and no one else does, no one who was not with me can reject my experience. My truth does not become less true even if the whole world rejects me. Likewise for religious experiences. Simply because they are not repeatable, or communicable, does not mean either that they didn't happen, or are non-empirical. They categorically ARE empirical, just for one person. Science is the process of sharing truth, of making truth communal. It does not reject subjective truth, since subjective truth—what one feels and sees—IS truth.

Socialism and true imperialism are similar in that the overarching idea is that how you get money is by taking it from people who have it. This was the leitmotif of the Conquistadors. Also, in both Socialism and Imperialism, for every winner there is a loser. Money has to come from somewhere. In Capitalism you can have win/win situations. I can make money on a transaction, and so can you. Given enough flow of money, everyone can become wealthy. This is the root difference. Obviously, if wealth is generalized, then everyone wins.

The core conception of conservatism is the self organizing system, and the idea that power that CAN be abused WILL be abused. The concept of local information both in economic terms and moral terms is critical. This idea should be on the main page, to help sell non-conservatives on reading further.

It would be interesting to write an essay on Tribalism as ethical system, or hatred as ethical system. Environmentalism is based on hatred. Not love of the planet, but hate of people who don't do things the way the tribe thinks things should be done. The tribe provides an identity, and is consequently an ersatz cultural, moral, and religious system. The critique made of traditional religion is that it is exclusionary. Everyone who is not in the fold is Other, and can therefore be subjected to the use of force. This is considered evil; but the people who talk about this the most, are the ones most eager to use it. They deceive both themselves and others; this is made necessary by the dynamics of their tribalism.

Counterintuitively, the descent into centralized power actually represents an increase in anarchy. Latent order emerges spontaneously. A forest is ordered in a certain way, an

adaptable way, a rich way. The concept of Central planning is based on planting trees in exact rows and columns. It ignores the necessity of local self organization. This is the idea of the ‘Uncarved Block’ of the Taoists, which in my understanding translates literally as “uncut forest”. Conservatism, as it should be expressed in tandem with genuine Liberalism, is based on the concept of the self organizing system. And no serious conservative can oppose the marginalization of moneyed interests in the corruption of our Republican system, since those, too, represent consolidations of power beyond that of the individual.

Many ideas of what should be conservatism have been co-opted by the Left. We value localism, tempered by Federalism. Really, what the Constitution was written to say. It is a perfect Liberal document, and conservatives really just want to preserve 18th and 19th Century Liberalism. Adam Smith, the Founding Fathers, John Stuart Mill.

Autogenics might be a solution to many of our social problems. A lot of the fear of deep relaxation stems from the awareness that things that have been hidden will fly out. But this is the process of healing.

If you look back 1,000 years ago, we really have improved tremendously in our general morality. Even 50 years ago, segregation was accepted. It was accepted that groups of people could be inferior under law. Many years ago you didn’t have all the broken homes and other maladies of modernity. You didn’t have large levels of self pity, since life was hard, and that’s just how it was. But that didn’t mean people were nice. Many nasty things—like public hangings—were commonplace. There was no protection of children from molestation. In our modern age, we have time, since life is easy, so that forces a more systematic means of adapting to and healing from the wounds of life. There is a necessary continuum between “Shit happens”, and actual mending and mourning and integrating and growing. Religion, historically, has provided the template for qualitative growth. But it has often also provided a cloak for actual immorality. So many people, today, are looking for something that serves the purpose of religion, without all the baggage.

It would be worthwhile going through a few sample opinion pieces—say Olberman, Krugman, whoever—and showing the process of the abuse of truth that they undertake systematically, typically through decontextualized assertions. It might also be interesting to compare what Obama said he was going to do, with what he actually did.

The real purpose of any goal oriented discipline is to manifest externally an internal order, a reality of self control. That’s what you see, for example, in someone that is physically fit. The motivating factors, obviously, can vary from narcissism, to a desire to get women, etc. This is external to the actual point of creating latent order. You can stay healthy with very little exercise. This is the point of competition. It is the point of any work which is not necessary for survival.

The insight of Zen is that you can’t grow qualitatively in a linear fashion. There is always something beyond any line you can draw for yourself. A koan is a line that is cut. It goes a certain ways, then breaks. If the process works, it forces a higher level integration.

When a properly indoctrinated leftist runs into someone who has absolute belief in right and wrong—say that homosexuality is wrong, even if this is framed as rejecting the behavior, but not the person or the legality of it—you are dealing with two fundamentally different myths. The myth of the leftists is that there are no myths, which leads to a scientistic dogmatism, which states that since there are no myths, everything is knowable. If things are knowable, they are known ONLY through science. This avoids the necessity of identity. It pretends that you don't need it to be a healthy happy human being. In the first case identity is based on conformity with other people, which is mutable; and on the other on principles that are based on books which don't change. Leftist tribalism doesn't end the us/them of the past. They REINFORCE it while simultaneously pretending they are transcending it. That is made necessary by the myth within which they operate. Liberalism is the only means by which we can live in peace long enough to develop a sustainable, nurturing, shared culture, in which differences, if not discarded, are considered means to richer living.

Thought of analyzing the Big Lebowski mythically. Got to thinking of analysis generally. There are some types of analysis that are helpful, and some that are not. What I did in Graduate School was NOT useful. We were basically moving puzzle pieces around in pseudoartistic, aesthetic ways. Even if we were right, there was close to no utility. But how could, for example, one analyze the Big Lebowski in such a way that it facilitated richer living: greater personal congruence, awareness, and better interpersonal connections.

Comment on how social conservatism and political conservatism are two different animals. The question is how ends are reached, not what specific ends are desirable.

Exuberance is not a particularly desirable trait, since it simultaneously betrays pain. People that are exuberant are people who have suffered, and ARE suffering.

How do we analyze people to say if they are good or not? The reality is that good and bad traits are always present simultaneously in all people. The best analysis is simple description. If asked what sort of person Bob is, you would cite every fact about him you could think of. No further commentary is needed. No matter what broad category you choose, it is going to be wrong in part. The point of judgment is to make decisions. We need moral codes to establish legal codes. Rape is wrong. We can jail people who commit that act, without the need to call them evil people.

Sitting in church, it occurred to me that Christian doctrine is insufficient. It won't make sense to many people. Yet the role it plays is valuable, so it needs to be supplemented. It solves the meaning problems of life, but the doctrine is so strange that it is only emotional need and social fixity that has enabled it to survive so long. I really feel Christ himself would be outraged at what is done and taught in His name.

Only mediocre people want to be told what to do, so a big part of the process of developing support for Socialism is developing mediocrity.

What I am writing is a refutation of Marxism. The economic critiques have been made, but they ignore Marxism as a meaning system. That part has NOT been refuted. It is something people need emotionally; it gives them something to live for. Yet it doesn't have a meaning system. It is a philosophical materialism, that recognizes no qualitative differences. It doesn't provide an answer to the problem of pain. It does for the Revolutionary, but not for the Future Man. They assume the end result will assemble itself, but it has always looked like totalitarianism. They don't answer the problem of pain, of what to do, and why to continue.

You could have limitations by law on businesses, so they have no more than 100 employees. Why not reform the existing system, rather than throw it out completely? Reform is distributed. You take an idea, and let it get deployed many ways in many places. Revolution is the extreme consolidation of power, which then uses that power to force programs down people's throats. When you don't have distributed power, you have to tell people what to do. A sacrificial order can work, but not a Sadeistic order, which rejects morality, and thereby forces force.

Revolution, per se, is never the solution to a physical problem. For the intellectual, it is a solution to a meaning problem: what to do with their lives. They want to surrender their freedom, while pretending to work for the freedom of others. It is a necessary fiction for them, although on some level I think they all know the truth. They want freedom only for a select few, who understand, ideally, their freedom to be a curse. Sartre wanted a revolution, since he didn't trust people; his radical freedom led to anarchy, and he understood that. Reform is always local, where revolution is global. If you look at a totalitarian system in terms of the restricted access to information, it is no different than the centralized information of the medieval church, even though it tries to wear the patina of science. Communism, of course, is worse in the sense that it rejects meaning, where the Church did not.

There really is a lot of value in moral diversity. It's bad to have moral fixity, in that you statically perceive things in unvarying ways. It is best to have constant movement, within bounds. Chaos, bound. Every moral perception needs on some level to be unique, else you will begin, slowly, and increasingly fail perceptually. Thinking of B., not worrying, as I do, about the future. Is this wrong? Do we not need people who aren't worrying constantly? It takes all sorts of different people to make the world work. If everyone did their jobs, locally, then there would not be large problems, globally.

Describe the process of shrinking from the innocent and good and pure. People that are too open, too innocent, make people (me, but I think this is general) uncomfortable. We surround ourselves with so much brutality in our media.

Life itself will deal you wounds, and if you don't have a redemptive mechanism, you carry it forever. You retain that hurt. Innocence is pain waiting to happen, from the perspective of someone who has been innocent and been hurt. You get into this state where you avoid innocent sentimentality. This doesn't necessarily lead to surrounding yourself with horror, but Horror itself is in some ways a sort of proactive inoculation. Humans have always been brutal—people used to be racist and love to watch executions—so Horror, too, is in part reckoning to the meanness in life, but that meanness, itself, is related to the destruction, as a result of hatred, of

innocence. Evil itself, perhaps, is best defined by the extent of its rejection of innocent, open emotion.

Evil, in a way, could be seen as the long term inevitable result of the desire to never, ever get hurt emotionally. Resentment is simultaneously anger, a self pity, and a type of pain—wounded vanity. You say “this shouldn’t happen to me”. If you are playing not to lose, you can’t win. In a game with no timeline, you can’t win unless you have a goal, and you achieve that goal. A negative goal can go on forever, if you are just avoiding something. The desire to avoid pain leads to position where you start to seek out ways of avoiding that. Emotional numbness coupled with the pursuit of power are the two obvious ways to do that. This is, in part, why all men want to be King. Satan only flies down since the formulation is purely negative. Any activity which is foundationally ungenerative would fit in this category of constraint and shrinkage.

Watching B.: she has a range, within a continuum, that she can live within, with personal congruity, with the sense of honor and integrity, that is less than what would be possible if she didn’t have to deal, in some measure, with the failings of her parents. I’m assuming that what happened was between mildly and extremely unpleasant. All of us have to scope out our space in the world, and develop our little routines. You can, for example, work at a factory your whole life, and never find it satisfying, but it is still an answer to the existential question of what to do: I work, and drink beer on weekends. Describe this process. Large segments of our population keep their sanity through habit. This is how our society keeps working. You take your thoughts to a certain point, and don’t take them past that point. These are the “lines”, which are needed by virtually everyone, even the people who supposedly reject them. Those people, normally, just draw different lines, such as never getting INSIDE the other lines.

What I would like to do, debating/arguing on the internet, is plant a seed, an initial perception, and watch it grow like a plant. Opposition is like manure, that splits the plant in multiple productive lines of growth. On any given topic, I don’t always know where they will lead. There are common threads, but not uniformity. I try to make every discussion unique in some ways. I’m like an idea gardener.

Phrase: **you ask more from life than is there, or than you are willing to create.**

If I was trying to explain to someone all the “smart” things I’ve said, I can’t remember any. Mediocrity hoards, quality circulates is one. But **thinking, in the form of language, is really my art form**, I suppose. I want it to be perishable—like butter art--that has a lifespan, so you don’t create something once, then fetishize it. Rather you figure out a thousand different ways to create the same thing. **When you’ve done this for a long period of time, it develops a mindset of non-fixity, so you don’t take previous ideas, and just repeat them.** You must always be looking for some new detail, or aspect that is slightly different in your understanding. You must think of thought as living, of ideas as phoenixes that die and are reborn. It would, actually, be an interesting addition to the myth of the phoenix to point out that the Phoenix, when it rises from the ashes, is in some respects DIFFERENT than the one that died.

James was right when he said, in effect, that the only real philosophical question is the nature of the universe, and specifically the existence or non-existence of God and the soul. It seems to me atheism, when adopted as a thorough-going belief system, leads to a sense of disconnection, and a sense of personhood as a sort of thing-ness. We are all things, and we are things who cannot talk with one another—or any non-material spirit—when we are not together. These attributes are qualitative, and cannot but affect the subjective senses in which you approach life and the world. They are, in some respects, maddening in all but the most comfortable circumstances (admittedly, most of the most ardent atheists DO live in comfortable circumstances). How does or could one consume enough of life in a brief span of say 80 years to counterbalance eternal nullity? Is Objectivism something other than a rationalization of the consumption of experience through creation as an individual with a limited span of life, layered within an economic defense of Capitalism?

The thing about Americans is we are not A tribe, but many tribes. This is the truth of multiculturalism, which however draws the wrong conclusion in excluding our historical culture. We WERE largely one tribe, but that time has been past, at least since the Civil War, and likely long before that. The point, though, is that at our best we are unified by non-ironic principles.

I wonder if the recognition and acceptance of personal weakness is not helpful in some ways in recognizing and accepting the weakness of others, and if it isn't more helpful in some ways than being congenitally strong and brave, which is of course praiseworthy and good. But how often, in the long run, does rigidity lead to perceptual shortfalls? It would seem the Tao Te Ching is advocating something like weakness, but not exactly. It advocates both discipline and the rejection of sainthood. The final goal must be the ability to move perceptually, morally, and emotionally.

Perfectionism is a type of aggression, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but it doesn't grow things; it isn't organic and optimal. It is categorically better than passivity, but what is best is a mature, patient, nurturing engagement with people and process. Personally, I use aggression as a means of creativity, in seeking out conflict. I thrive on conflict, since it forces constant recreation of my view. But you get addicted to it. You get in this state where you can't imagine a world without conflict, or a quiet evening without worried thoughts. It would be a more functional adaption to be sometimes underprepared than to be ALWAYS be dramatically overprepared. And in point of fact, **being constantly wary and mistrusting leads to CHRONIC underpreparedness with respect to the basic business of life: giving and receiving affection and getting useful work done. You can't do everything, so the goal is to do what needs to be done with as little fuss and inefficiency as possible.**

I may want to start each essay with a short synopsis. For Cultural Sadeism: for the revolutionary, all crimes are justified. I believe this feature is the primary attraction for certain types of intellectuals; and that violence and cruelty are not a means to an end, but an opportunity for the ideologically pure expression of hatred and evil.

In the body, go through some actual examples, such as the whorehouses in St. Petersburg, and ask the reader to place themselves in the position—petit bourgeois—of those attacked; the basic mechanism, of breaking in, killing the man, raping the women, taking whatever they wanted,

moving in if they wanted to, was the same as that applied to the Jews. Functionally, the term “bourgeois” was equivalent to a Yellow Star. Most all Americans and Westerners are petit bourgeois. The Communists have to go to the developing world now, to find a suitable foil by which to proclaim us evil, but many want to. If they got power, then virtually every American would be vulnerable to that treatment, as indeed the Weather Underground planned for us.

I think sometimes when we dream of missing school, of forgetting that we enrolled, it is deeper than a simple anxiety dream. Life is a school, isn't it? And do we not sometimes forget the magic in it, and forget that every day that passes can leave us richer and wiser? Is this not like enrolling in school, then forgetting to attend?

I do think school cultivates sundry anxieties that are somewhat unique. It teaches that there are right and wrong answers to all problems. One could think this would lead to moral clarity, but the fact is that when first presented with ambiguity, most products of this sort of indoctrination tend to adopt solutions that conform to what is around them, and to fail to engage with the shades of grey which invariably draw the attention of the morally serious. **In that regard, Leftism is the result of a true/false orientation to life itself. This point can be drawn out through sundry actual examples.**

Art idea: take a happy picture, then cover it up in happy colors to hide it, to leave it latent. Better: to combine lines and colors in such a way to both hide and integrate it.

I can have individual pieces where I create each of the major religions, and a sort of template for tribal religions.

When you have a creative thought, where does it come from? How much of that is “you”? When I sit quietly, and something just appears; or when I'm drunk; or when I'm exercising, or driving? Could one not imagine that every thought that could be thought exists, in potentia, in something like the Buddhist “void”. To the extent that we manifest, then, ideas which simply emerged—or got copied onto our brains, from a primal place—how much of who we are is also the Void? Is spiritual practice not in large measure understanding both how little and how large we are? Are we just what we decide, or also what we create? Creation is not a decision, per se: if something is new, it is beyond choice. Perhaps I put yellow somewhere in a painting, and not green. That IS a decision. Maybe creation is deciding too; I'm not sure. Ponder all of this.

In effect, the bail bondsman exists as a private sector adjunct to our legal system. Also, ponder the types of law, and particularly the ecclesiastical courts that used to exist. Are they related in ANY way to any current judicial body? Does Common Law contain any elements from that?

Need to have dictionary. Socialism=**philosophical materialism**=idea that all ideas and people are equal in principle, except this idea, which is superior, as is the person holding it. Both Ayn Rand and Nietzsche were trying to reject philosophical materialism, both of them without rejecting physical materialism. Both in effect argued that there is a Will to Creation, and a will to destruction, starting with philosophical self destruction. I largely agree.

The so-called Religious Right did not invent religion in the classroom or courtroom. It is, in fact, a REACTION to the Anti-Religious Left, which has endeavored long and hard to remove all traces of religion from our public life, contrary to history of our nation, and the explicit intent of our Constitution.

Consumerism is the idea that positive experiences come into our lives from the outside, rather than being acts of creation that arise from within, in reaction to qualitatively exalted ideas. In this respect, Socialism is a type of consumerism, whose primary aim is the equalization of consumption.

James had his misunderstood Will to Believe. Nietzsche his Will to Power. **What is Will? In the final analysis, I think it is a type of concentration, or awareness.** It consists in making a conscious decision that one set of behaviors is better than another, and focusing on that difference even in the face of temporary situations in which another set of behaviors looks more attractive—for example, sleeping in on a cold winters morning, when you had decided to get up and exercise. It is NOT force, but awareness. You get what you want the most. If it is always rest, you get rest. If it is fitness, then it is fitness. This idea is definitely not original to me, but worth stating. I actually think James put it this way.

One way of discussing the limits of government might be to ask—relative to any given proposal—if you would be willing to grant the same power to your arch-enemy. For example, would Democrats be willing to grant to Republicans the absolute power to determine how insurance companies do their business, and who and how they pay claims? Would they be willing to facilitate, legally, the chicanery they claim already characterizes the system? Or is the abuse of power only something they can tolerate if its them abusing it?

The nature of Goodness is that it is a self organizing system. You have to always look to these systems, on all levels, from the individual to the global. The converse of this is that you can compel behavior. Someday literal brain programming may be possible. But this will lack the richness of spontaneous organization. Being able to perceive rich realities can only be done when the lines are not rigidly determined. You must be able to flex, even if you don't. Intuition must be involved, which implies a larger perceptual domain than can be consciously expressed; than can be thought, in other words.

Everyone is flawed in some way. What people tend to do is ignore either positive or negative traits. The latter is what enables us to get along. We ignore minor sins to get along. When our eyes are opened to flaws in others, we tend to want to withdraw, even if we possess the same traits, if we don't recognize that. There is a tension between reality and connection. The way you see people as they are, honestly, and yet still accept them, is love, which is a spontaneous acceptance of everything. Love is not the rejection of moral values or of behavioral standards. It is a perceptual process which looks to the inner identity of a person, which is not just the decisions they have made, but the decisions which they COULD make in the future. No one is ever fallen. Everything is in motion, forever, and thus there is no sin which is irredeemable in the final analysis. Again, though, this does not imply accepting evil behaviors. It is an effort at channels errors into correct decisions.

When I think about “love”—like the Love of God—it brings back bad memories from church. You can’t compel love. It is an attribute of a self organizing system that is optimized for the highest qualitatively positive experience.

Goodness, in the end, is the placeholder—the name we give—to the process of balancing ideational and behavioral evolution with the necessary “sternness” in human life, the need for pain, for transcending difficulty. To a great extent, our problems arise from imbalances in one direction or another. Always, in human life, is the possibility of the “ontological crisis”, where you lose your bearings, where everything you assumed was true is shown to be false; or where you just lose your faith. This possibility lurks in the darkness outside the proverbial village, and of course has been diffused throughout our contemporary life under the moniker of modernity. The primary human task—in my view (i.e. I both believe it is true and useful)—is to grow in our ability to be more and more happy in more and more contexts. Happiness breeds spontaneous love, and that is what makes life worthwhile. Yet, at many times in human history, the more pressing concern has been to survive, and what was needed for survival was uniformity. There could be no questions about the nature of reality, because there simply wasn’t time to worry about those things. Lurking behind these devolutions to conformity lurks, though, I suspect, a ritualism whose purpose is to stave off the Chaos of the ontological crisis. A ritual is precisely a commitment to not change, to not alter something.

And one can analyze various belief systems with respect both to their objective truth—as best we can determine—AND their relative truth: do they provide a means by which to transform pain? No doubt many things have been believed that we either do or will come to believe are objectively wrong. But if they performed the purpose for which they were intended, they were, in some important respects, true. They did their job.

Thus one can reach a point where all the various ideologies and belief systems are understood both as useful, and as potentially wrong. I visualize them all standing in a line, back into the mists of prehistory. What do they offer us? Consolation and purpose.

What do they also create? Difference. Different solutions to the same problems. Different dietary ideas. Different ways of dressing. Different languages. Different ideas about the roles of the sexes. Different rituals. Different constructions of the universe.

Difference need not lead to conflict, but the fact of the matter is that social constructions of reality will often claim absolute truth, making people who believe otherwise wrong. Into this can easily creep a sense of superiority, which justifies—if justification is needed within that cultural system, which is not always the case—violence against them.

And when one loses a battle with a more aggressive “tribe”, quite often identity is lost as well, being dissolved into a larger polity. The Jews are perhaps histories only solid exception to this rule; at least, of which I am aware. This leads to ontological malaise. You don’t know what to do, or why. It is painful. This is likely why American Indians drink so much (in many cases).

America is founded on the ideal of ALL the different solutions coexisting peacefully under a rule of law which is applied equally and without bias to everyone. Yet this ideal, itself, is the product of a particular cultural system. Alternative cultural systems exist, for example the Muslim one.

The multicultural critique of America is based on this. Our ideals are based upon Anglo-American philosophy. To the extent this philosophy is not shared by cultural “Others”—non Anglo-Americans—why should our system be embraced?

To my mind, the questions exist at different levels. In our solution, no one solution is considered superior to others. All are protected. In the multicultural solution, you get collapse. If you have no criterion by which to judge which solutions is best, and refuse to treat them all equally under law, then all you generate is moral confusion.

The end task is to soften all philosophies. There is no foundational difference between the religious fundamentalist, the conservative fundamentalist, and the Leftist fundamentalist. All share an exaggerated fear of ontological collapse, of a descent into meaninglessness. Hence they get more rigid, and harder.

Goodness is the process of softening them up. It is a placeholder by means of which people can dialogue about the meaning of life, and how they both share views, and differ. Most creeds want peace, prosperity, and love.

There is more, but I’m not quite reeling it in. This would be a good day project.

“The opposite monster”. This is a game I invented for my children to show that for some people you should always assume the opposite of what they say. If they say “let me help you”, you should be very, very scared. If they say run, you should attack. We must always remember that words and intentions often diverge. People lie.

The common threads among DDT, low fat, AGW, and Marxism are: they were all scientifically formatted propositions that were proven wrong; they were used to demonize corporations, which is to say economic independence from the State; they were used to gain power for political activists who act as parasites on the public body, since they don’t create anything (Al Gore, Marx, Lenin: none of them were “workers”); and when proven wrong, the historical record was simply rewritten. The Vietnam War—actually the Cold War generally—could be added to this, as of course could virtually every program they ever invented.

Christ taught to “love your neighbor as yourself”. This is different than saying “love the world”. The fact of the matter is that you have to start by building a loving community. You must love concrete, actual human beings with names and faces you can identify in order to have any chance at something larger than that. We live best in small communities. Add Liberalism to this and you have a recipe for global peace (and possibly new science like communication with the dead, which would be an interesting reversion to the practices of the Chinese and others.)

Black people are different than white people. Not inferior: different. Jefferson wrote on it. It might be worth quoting what he wrote relative to what black activists say today. I suspect that

white people, on their rendering—which of course they are allowed—are dull and grey. The fact of the matter is that what have most enhanced our national polity are the differences.

Affirmative action is based on the idea that you can never know when race might have played a factor, so the only solution is to discriminate proactively.

Both Fascism and Communism might be viewed as “scientific socialism”. The main difference is that the first is based on nationalism and aims to take over the world through conquest. The second is based on classism—which in practice means virtually nothing—and aims to take over the world by sponsoring subversion in other nations, and of course where possible by outright invasion and occupation.

Social order is defined as a set of customs and beliefs which order the distribution and creation of meaning, truth, power, and material wealth.

Thought as art work.

Science is the process of building shared, useful perceptions through carefully crafted procedures which result in evidence. The only way that any given path of inquiry could be formally ended is by positing that no further evidence is possible. Not available, but POSSIBLE. Philosophically, there is no way to do this, and hence no formal way to close any path of inquiry which actually impinges on the visible—which is to say measurable--world.

It is a truism that we should feel lucky to be so wealthy, but in reality, of course, we are very poor. We have no sense of meaning.

When under attack, philosophically or otherwise, the first step in most cases is to develop a defense that will hold until you can figure out how to counterattack, or of course that may thwart the assault completely, leaving you choice as to how to proceed. Thus, philosophically, the first step is to prevent decay, to prevent the cessation of the use of logic, since a reliance on romantic affect makes one wholly vulnerable to propaganda. Absent logic and reason there is no means by which to combat it, other than simple distaste, and that will only occur in the event of unskillful propaganda.

Ellul speaks of the “artificial satisfaction of real needs”. TV is one example he gives. To that I would add Porn, but beyond that, I would even add sex itself, when done without love. Sex is—for many—a substitution for love. It is a means to the approximation of that feeling, especially for women. This relates to my concept of Qualitative Repression.

Materialism is the myth that everything about the Universe, from beginning to end, is in theory knowable. Scientism is the myth that only those parts of human experience matter that can be measured directly.

One clear attribute of the “highly educated”—a misnomer, unless we substitute “indoctrinated” for educated—is “ritual submission”. This is the rite whereby secular priests—apparent scholars or scientists with the appropriate ritual standing—proclaim some sort of truth. At that point, you

are supposed to bow in obeisance, and discussion is supposed to cease. It is regarded precisely as a form of ignorance when you don't. This is the proverbial redneck.

Insult is the sincerest form of flattery.

When entropy is not opposed with creativity, collapse is inevitable sooner or later. Societies and social orders are in a constant process simultaneously of collapse and rebuilding/recreation on a new basis. This is how change happens. If you were in Rome in the early days, creation vastly outweighed entropy. In the latter days, of course, this was reversed. Call **Entropy weight of matter, creativity power of spirit. You can even subtract metaphysical elements, but retain the quality that Freud did not.**

Perhaps I could develop "life" as the complex interplay of creation and decay, as a sort of spiritual Manichaeism, or perhaps dialectical spiritualism. A key point is that even the process of maintaining is simultaneously recreation, so even apparently stable orders are simply those in which patterns are faithfully recreated generation after generation. To stand up is to create.

It's in the nature of the human condition to want to lean on some sort of habit or practice. That's what culture provides. This is the true wealth of cultures. You celebrate certain holidays, dress a certain way, have a certain attitude to work, government, parents, children. To never go wrong, you have to both be able to exist within a culture, but also transcend it by not leaning on it. There is no there there. There is no existential reality that demands you celebrate Christmas on Dec. 25th. You simply can't lean on it, but also understand that we are radically free. Sartre was right about that, but not about the need to derive anxiety from it. Certainly, this is the normal result—since people have no way to calibrate their behavior-- but for example in Kum Nye you need no "facticity" to live well; you live in a sense of pleasure in experience. You could wake up with no memory and still live a fulfilling life. Culture is a protection from freedom, that is necessary for most people, since most people would otherwise collapse. Throughout the ages, though, more perceptive people have recognized the human condition as that of contingency.

Culture as protection from freedom. Leftism is designed to create freedom from external restraint, but that functions as a de facto rejection of identity. Leftists are right that if you have a set of expectations as to the proper role of women, for example, that that is a limitation of freedom, especially if real, material detriments flow to those who reject such roles. At the same time, to the extent that a defined role facilitates the rejection of self pity, it opens up THAT freedom. It is a freedom from freedom, but what is better: ontological anxiety, or an identity into which you were born? If you have no idea what matters, or what is worth doing, are not all solutions equal? Some combination of fixity and the possibility for growth would seem optimal; something more conservative than what we have today.

People want to lean on some idea that one group is wonderful, and everyone else is evil. Ayn Rand it's Capitalists. Marxists it's workers. There is this mythic need that something somewhere out there is flawless, is not subject to all the vagaries and chance that happen to us. God used to play that role, but He has been deleted, to the extent possible.

I wonder if the importance culturally of reality shows is that people don't know how to act any more. We're not the 60's or the 70's. Who are we? Things have changed so much, so fast, in unprincipled ways, which is one of the effects of social propaganda. People want to watch other people make decisions, since they don't know what to do.

When you see all the kitsch say at Lynn's, it's a liberal thing; it's ironic when you have something from the 50's, where you've kept it intact, or developed an ironic stance towards it (as in the many vulgar riffs in cartoon bubbles with pictures from the fifties; the contrast is what creates the effect). This shows that you're not of the 50's, you're liberated. But this is just a different sort of propaganda; you are every bit as enthralled in conformism as they were, if not more. Likely more. They can't ingest it in the form they find it, but rather riff off the propaganda of another generation, and in so doing cloak their own fundamental conformity with respects to myths like the consumption of life, the primacy of personal narcissism and political activism (as a disguise), and their pronounced tendencies towards simply doing what everyone else around them is doing, as was the case in the 50's.

Ignorance is a type of assault, in that not understanding someone "invalidates" them. If Love is helping others create themselves, ignorance is not love, particularly when you simply aren't taking the time to learn. This is why the principled pursuit of understanding is a primary task of Goodness.

The true, most important element in the formation of identity are religion and history, and those are precisely the two subjects that have been eliminated from our school curriculums. Religion entirely—we are only not socialist since our churches are strong. The strategy of the Left has been to marginalize those in our society who held up America as a positive advance in human history. For that they want to substitute psychology and leftist policies, which call themselves compassionate. It is an amythic substitution. The myths are progress and compassion, but they are empty. America was and is a valid myth and ideal for the genuinely liberal society.

There's something in the quality of repetition (listening to X-mas songs I've heard a million times, that have lost their effect)—of being constantly deluged and bombarded by a dozen emotions that dulls you of necessity, that reduces your ability to address fine emotion, like that of good poetry. It's a type of propaganda, possibly. What happens is people come to rely on that repetition in a sort of symbiotic way. It's what's constant in your life. Culturally, you can always talk about Stiffler, or Animal House. It's like an organism that's out there that attaches to you, but you also attach to it. Your self expression becomes a function of the media you choose. In this context, you lose fine delineations of quality. Everything is a commodity, that can be exchanged readily by changing the channel. There is a banality to Goodness, that people tire of, and find themselves attracted to the apparent excitement of countercultural narratives of evil. You need larger and larger doses of quantitative difference. Horror loses, too, its affective element, with repetition.

You can't understand our culture—so-called—without placing on the table the elimination of sincere religiosity, elimination of history, and mass media as characterized by repetition, which eliminates spontaneity, and makes us more clumsy as far as feeling and perceiving. It is a constant substitution of modern, ahistorical narratives for the traditions and beliefs

of our ancestors. It is not creation, but rather a systematic assault on our personhoods. We are as generic as the stores at our strip malls. People sense this, and it makes them angry, but they can't figure out how to create for themselves genuine differences. They go "goth", or "Hippy kid", or angry Leftist, or whatever, but all they are doing is creating subcultures which don't really solve the overarching problem. In my view you have to have history, and you have to have intent to do things, not just express in some external way who you "are", as an individual. It is silly and ridiculous, although it is an effort to meet what I will grant is a real challenge.

The same political use is made of manufactured Environmental consciousness as was made of Class Consciousness. It's merely a means of coalition building, which can be used a stepping stone to power.

To claim that we have reached the pinnacle of human living is silly. Our lives are too complex and too filled with surrender to anonymous forces and abstractions. We have too much, and feel too little.

Idea: encourage people to create their own Goodness apparel, to send pictures of T-shirts, tattoos, and other things. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. Something like that. Doubly ironic in my case.

In developing concepts like "how to debate a leftist", the interesting thing is what the tactics needed reveal about the morphology of their social and cultural system.

Ray Kurzweil's work to develop an electronic map of the brain is simultaneously work to develop literal brainwashing capability, by means of which entire personalities could be wiped clean, if his thesis—that the brain is best understood as a machine—is correct. I don't think it is. However, clearly electrical implants permit, already, crude control.

The moment when you really become a leftist, when you transition from a soft-headed progressive to the full deal, is when you begin to systematically equate the stated goal of a program with the actual results. When you stop asking questions about efficacy; about whether programs intended to decrease poverty actually accomplish that goal. When you stop evaluating information, and substitute rhetoric for it. There are more leftists now, because we know what works, we know how to create poverty and wealth, which means people have to choose between a reality they don't like, and a comfortable cult which offers simplistic understandings of complex issues which NEVER have to be reevaluated. This is a religious ideal, and provides an ersatz meaning system. The principle is all that matters, which practically means that all they care about is what is being said, and nothing at all about what is done. We've known these things for a long time, probably since the founding of our nation, roughly. However, the realities are not acceptable for people who have been brainwashed to assume that all good things are easy. If they say they are trying to decrease poverty, that is true for them, even if in fact they are working to increase it.

Couple points missed by critics of "supply side" economics. The overall idea is government should be as small as possible, and should only provide things that cannot be provided otherwise.

This is what was envisioned in our Constitution. The raw data shows, as far as I know, that when tax cuts are implemented, a year or two later we see job creation, and growth in GDP. This allows us to collect more in taxes, since you have a smaller portion, but of a bigger pie. The argument then made is that of course tax receipts went up, since the economy grew. This argument assumes that the government—tax income—should increase at the same rate as the growth of the economy. Bush's problem, of course—and Reagan's too—is that they increased spending more than they increased tax receipts. This was not genuine Conservatism, which seeks first to reduce the government, and only after to reduce taxes. There is nothing in Conservatism inherently opposed to taxation, or in favor of fiscal profligacy. On the contrary.

Labor does have mythic appeal on the Left precisely because it is a good myth, even if they misconstrue it necessarily because they want to idolize it and not emulate it. They don't want to BE workers, so much as put them on a pedestal (that the intellectuals own, and can take away). It is a strange sanctimony that simultaneously rejects workers and makes them the standard for all behavior. What they really need is the Rejection of Self Pity, but they don't pursue that.

The American Experiment is a political and economic one. We do not provide a meaning system, or a truth system. Historically, this has been done through Christianity, and more recently through science (for truth, but it creeps into Meaning, too, typically through Socialism), but we are at a stage where something better is needed; some more comprehensive system of cultural inclusion.

Cleanliness and organization are a part of Kum Nye, and a part of the spiritual path. You cannot be tranquil in clutter, and it is facilitated if your place is nice.

There is no doubt something vulgar about Consumerism. There's something vulgar about a social order based solely on greed and profit. These are valid points. But what they fail to take into account is the historical connection of Capitalism with Christianity in the West. It provided a moral narrative, or counterpoint, to the tendency towards pure self-aggrandizement. What needs to happen is both a recognition that we can't sustain a moral order solely on Consumerism, NOR one based on the moral vacuity of Socialism. Christmas songs make people money, which is bad, but what would be better? An evolutionary process initiated by individuals based on principles.

There's a bit of a homology between our confessional culture, based on the self styled "science" of psychology and the brainwashing of Mao. In both cases you are submitting your inner life to the judgment of others. You are acquiescing to a paradigm of what is acceptable, and that the goal is perfection, and we have all fallen short. WE have bad parents or whatever. But it is never framed morally. You can say "I'm codependent; have wounds, etc. It is framed in the language of medicine, which is a victory of the anti-mythic movement. The way you create qualitative richness is through moral narratives, not scientific narratives, which are Truth narratives with respect to the physical world. Skinner tried to make us things, but failed, since my awareness and consciousness is not a thing; it is a process, that needs to be mythic if it is going to have qualitative richness. The alternative is quantity, which is sooner or later seeking out or submitting to the power of others.

It seems to me that spirit is both distributed and centralized. All of us are local expressions of God and His Creation. There is also a sort of central “plan”. We are all supposed to do what we can, where we are, shining our light. This is a spiritual equivalent to the economics I advocate.

Pragmatism as a philosophy is always partially empty: it can never be completed, since it is just a process of treatment—really, a sincere concern with thinking clearly. Always needed are raw materials, which are concrete problems. Unless you are trying to solve a problem, you cannot be a Pragmatic philosopher. No navel gazing allowed. If you want to talk endlessly, try to determine absolute moral laws that never change, then you will fail, and Wittgenstein will hit you on the head with a poker. Pragmatism solves the problems that have collapsed Continental philosophy.

Listening to Guns n Roses, and wondering about how nostalgia is evoked in Americans. This song had a period when it was popular, that ties in people’s memories with times in their lives. This is very different than, say, the Bible. Every generation has different clutter that ties to them, but which is largely irrelevant to the next. The experience of each generation is not connected to the following generation. This is how our whole culture gets to be mutable, and suggestible.

It might be interesting to write a piece “In Defense of Pigs”. Thinking of Bill Ayer’s wife, who called the people they didn’t like “pigs”. They are denigrated in Islam as well. But reality is they are not that unclean, and they are good animals.

Speaking of which, why are pigs always smiling at barbeque joints?

Perception is always creation. Stupidity is always inevitable if you stop creating new perceptions. Hindus and others view ignorance as playing the same role as Satan, as leading you off the path of righteousness. I think this view is more accurate. Satan has no power, except to the extent you fail to continue to renew, spontaneously, and with open awareness. This is a value of asceticism, in that it frees you from the temptation to slack. If you are not careful enough, though, it becomes an end in itself, and you slack again. It is never enough to say “I’m going to be a good person in this way”. Loving your neighbor is not enough. There is a certain amount of brutality you have to have in how you approach perceiving. If you want to choose to believe that everyone is nice, and violence is never needed, or that people don’t benefit from a kick in the ass, then you will fail perceptually. Soft leftists want to visualize world peace, which is not inherently bad, but it just isn’t realistic at this stage of human cultural evolution. They are not just pretending things will work out when that might be an accurate perception. They are, rather, turning a blind eye to realities they find unpleasant.

Socialism is based on the flawed idea that you can change human nature by changing human institutions; that you can eradicate greed by eradicating Capitalism. This is foolish. It is the opposite. If Greed were magically eliminated tomorrow, Capitalism would be done very differently automatically. However, you do NOT eliminate Greed simply by outlawing profit. You force it to move and hide; that is all. The end goals of Socialism, therefore, can only be attained morally, not economically. This position is forced on them by the rejection of moral autonomy, itself caused by an inability to reconcile the One and the Many. People want to trust “The State”, but the State is only as good as the moral aptitude of the INDIVIDUALS (not-

dividual) running it. Any State which can grant life, can withhold it or take it. This is a structurally dangerous situation, as well foreseen by our Founding Fathers, particularly when those who want to run the State are themselves the products of a system of indoctrination in which basic moral beliefs are absent or so problematized that coherent moral stances are nearly impossible in contested situations.

The basic problem of governance can be summed up as: the farther the Capital, the less it speaks to your needs. If it doesn't speak to your needs, it isn't needed, and if it tries to, it is oppressive. The Socialist solution to this is make everyone the same, so that all policies will apply everywhere; sort of applying the franchise model to human beings. This includes the destruction of religion, creed, and every possible human idiosyncrasy, presumably in large measure through the tool of pseudo-scientific psychology. **The conceit—one of many—of Socialism is that by changing laws you not only change human beings morally, but that you chance the quality of their EXPERIENCE. When you end “injustice”—unequal outcome, often due to unequal work and capability—you end resentment, where resentment is the primary source of unhappiness.** The whole thing reeks of some sort of mouse maze where rewards and punishments are handed out from on high, and individuals are not: they are “dividuals”.

Perhaps Socialism might be defined as the legal eradication of “individuals” in favor of moving parts to be called “dividuals”, which can be combined as needed in a pseudo-rational polity controlled by power mongering intellectuals.

The argument that the Vietnamese or Cubans had to rebel is similar to an argument that a woman who gets beat twice a week is better off under a man who beats her 7 times a week, and who killed or threatened her other suitors. It is fatuous. You have to first define what a good society looks like, then determine if your actions moved it towards or away from that vision. In both those cases, the victories of the Communists were horrific, and remain counterproductive, by any rational accounting.

There's an important qualitative difference between unconditional loyalty and loyalty. In the latter, you recognize that people are human, and make mistakes. You are willing, therefore, to forgive and forget the foibles of others, as they forgive yours. This is an important aspect of community. The former is a demand for absolute submission. You have rejected, in principle, the moral necessity of evaluation of your commitment to the other person. This is directly autocratic. It is the morality of the mob, and source of much suffering in this world.

The problem upon which Western philosophy has foundered is the lack of a category for the approximately existent. There is no room for contingent existence. Ontology studies nothing, in the popular rendering, but words. I think the Buddhists solved this problem well by stating that (as I understand it), there is neither a self, nor a not-self. Nirvana does not exist, but neither does not-Nirvana. You can't get stuck like that, and you can work your way to it perceptually, directly.

Noticed that the Breckinridge Inn has New Year's Eve packages. It's not a nice hotel. What if this was the apex of the year for someone? Someone is doing it. If you are able to enjoy simple experiences, is that in any way inferior to the ability to enjoy much more sophisticated

experiences, say black tie affairs with champagne and beautiful women? Are not the latter often somewhat jaded? The most sophisticated sensibility is the one that gets the most satisfaction from the least input. You can reach a point where you need nothing more than something very simple that is enjoyed thoroughly. Conversely, a simple life is the natural outcome of knowing how to live, how to not need the extraneous fluff.

The task of the reader—any consumption of material is not intended as a download, but a dialogue—is not to agree with me. I hope they disagree with and engage with critically what I have to say. We need individualism. We are all better if each of us brings a unique perspective. Americans are mediocre in many ways. I would say intellectually—but Europe is worse.

Nirvana is when you are both capable of feeling profound pleasure and peace, and also not dependent on those feelings. You exist somehow above both of them, taking part in something so large we can't imagine it. Goodness is BOTH taking pleasure in the happiness of others AND the ability to generate happiness for yourself on your own. You do not depend on others; they depend on you. This is what makes you a guru. Tao Te Ching: A good man is a bad man's teacher; a bad man is someone taught by a good man. None of this is absolute, but one is always looking up, and flowing down.

America's main virtues are tolerance, work ethic, and honesty.