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OPTIMIZING FOR TRUTH

Posted by Spandrell on 2013 / 4 / 30

Nrx, Trichotomy, Theory

So I wrote about **different kinds of reactionaries**. I'm quite happy it created a lot of buzz, got thousands of visits, and a lot of links from people I didn't know about. We all love to talk about ourselves.

Alas I'm not about to categorize our beliefs and let them be happily everafter. I want closure. I'm annoying like that.

So we all know what we hate. Liberalism. The equality cult. But what are we for?

Some people **just want heavenly bliss**:

If it means a choice between living in a traditional civilization geared toward the spiritual health of its citizens or living in a barbaric society geared toward the physical wellbeing of its inhabitants, I would choose the first, even sans penicillin. As has been said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)

Some **care about their racial brethren**:

Whites must return to quality learning, quality thinking, and quality behavior. This won't guarantee prosperity- that is hard to come by these days for anybody- but it will provide dignity and self-respect, which a jet ski can't.

And others want to **maximize intelligence**, people be damned. **And they give links** to what is coming:

Breakthrough in a theory of intelligence might enable a quasi human AI. (This is mindblowing shit)

The importance of the Higgs boson.

Experiment tries to build a perpetual motion machine.

What do these three positions have in common? Only that they regard the equality cult as working against their goals. The faith addicts believe that the equality cult breaks the authority of God and the religious hierarchy, which breaks the ground for spiritual health.

Ethno-nationalists believe that progressivism undermines tribal solidarity by outlawing discrimination and giving power to individuals who can't handle themselves. Without the natural laws of tribal organization, hierarchy, a certain amount of xenophobia, patriarchy, etc. society crumbles in disorder.

Singularitarians believe that the equality cult is taking resources from intelligence maximization into caring for unintelligent animals which produce nothing of worth. They believe you need free markets to set up a system in which people are forced to behave rationally and maximize total intelligence, hence techno-capitalists. The sort of society that would result from rationalizing free markets is beyond the point. People suck anyway.

Now I focus on attacking techno-capitalists. Why? Well the traditionalists position is self-refuting. Sorry fellas. If you think that where there is an altar there is civilization, you have a pretty low threshold for civilization. You can **keep your sanctimonious highs for yourself**, and get stoned with your spiritual health.

Ethno-nationalism sounds good, very good really. But it is not feasible anymore. Nationalism isn't some natural law of human societies. It is a particular historical phenomenon where modern polities acquired the means to fool their subjects into believing they were part of the same tribe. **David Friedman has this paper** on how you can derive the size and nature of a polity by its system of taxation. By depending on income tax, i.e. taxes on labor, states have an incentive to produce a cohesive, monocultural populace that will not want to migrate, i.e. deprive the state of their income taxes. Of course that's not all the story, but you get the point. Nations were artificially made through massive state propaganda. States today have no incentive for that. They live off financial engineering. Ergo ethno-nationalism is not going to happen. QED.

So the only plausible way out of demotism is techno-capitalism. Now let's see techno-capitalism from two sides.

One is the moral side. Techno-capitalism is in some sense a sort of religion, in that it postulates a purpose for human existence. Nick Land put it square by talking of optimizing for intelligence. Humans are purpose driven animals, and the withering of traditional religion meant people just didn't know what to do with their lives. What to strive for. Nationalism for a while became a good replacement, an even better replacement than the original, by channelling the most basic human purpose of them all: advancement of the tribe. Of course tribalism is zero-sum, and quite dangerous given the firepower of the industrial age. So

after WW2 it was understood that human purpose was to be found in individual utilitarianism. Hedonism. It feels good, but **few people can handle it**, and if taken to its logical conclusion it destroys you, and society.

We still have no good alternative, but if you listen to what many intelligent people say, there is this common thread that the better people don't seek pleasure. They seek truth. Why do we write blogs, and read others, spending hours and hours every week? Because we feel good by contributing to what we think is discovering the truth. In an amoral world, truth-seeking is one of the few places where an intelligent man can pursue the moral high ground. Well, truth-seeking taking to its extreme is intelligence maximization.

So the moral foundation of techno-capitalism is solid. It is hard not to feel excited reading those science articles linked above. And even if further technological progress might produce the AI singularity, bringing forth Skynet and Terminators, what is the alternative? Kim Kardashian and Kanye West? Or a "traditional civilization geared toward the spiritual health of its citizens"? Good luck with that. You can have intelligent people feeling good by discovering the truth, or you can have them beating each other in the sanctimony treadmill until they unleash the leftist singularity and go Pol Pot. There's nothing in between.

In my view argument against techno-capitalism goes against the right half of the term, that is capitalism. The question is, does capitalism, and the concentration of wealth it produces, enable intelligent maximization? Or it does it inevitably degenerate in an unequal society where cronies become lazy and just use their resources to stay on top and keep everyone else in the bottom? What is hierarchy and does it always work? Are free markets self-sustaining? Leftism has momentum inherent to it, momentum which in the end brings over the leftist singularity. Does libertarianism have momentum though? Or is it self-defeating? My impression is that it is. I will try to elaborate in a later post. The keyword is Korea before 1910.

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⊖ **Nick Land** | 2013/04/30 05:48:35

This was worth waiting for -- it's great. My problem begins with this: "In my view argument against techno-capitalism goes against the right half of the term, that is capitalism." At least in part, that's an artifact of an imbalance in the term you've

picked. 'Capitalism' is irreducibly technical (or techno-scientific) and commercial, which is to say that it summarizes 'techno-commerce'. Your objection, strictly speaking, is an anti-commercial rather than anti-capitalist one, suspicious of market dynamics as the principle driver of technical innovation. Clearly, your work is cut out for you there, because -- quite apart from any cybernetic argument demonstrating that catallactic commerce maximizes economic feedback intensity -- the historical complicity of technological explosion with market-oriented social processes is overwhelmingly strong. The old (and now forgotten) growth-positive communist model was exactly the attempt to retain technological advance without a market-based economic infrastructure, and the failure of this project was spectacular. The era of consumer computing destroyed communism, because the Soviet heartland could not do Cyberspace. I don't think this is a controversial conclusion. Fascism is more flexible, of course, and precisely because it subordinates markets to a more sophisticated system of controls, it also proves itself more technologically adept. Insofar as it works, it preserves a capitalist (i.e. techno-commercial) social motor, and to the degree that it impairs this -- which it is bound to, to some extent -- it falls prey to socialist dysfunction. Economic momentum is inextricable from commercialism. Political momentum is something else, as you say, which is why a Left Singularity is even imaginable. I'm sure you'd agree that Left Singularity is dramatically incompetent, as far as technological development is concerned. In the short term at least, its popularity is unaffected by that. If there was an anti-commercialism that works, we'd know it by now.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 06:03:44

"the historical complicity of technological explosion with market-oriented social processes is overwhelmingly strong." I don't contest that. Nor am I pushing for fascism. I'm not pushing for anything really, I'm just trying to think what is likely to happen. The (relatively) free markets since the 1980s have unleashed a technological revolution, which has caused a profound societal change. It's pretty

obvious that plutocratic rule has come back. Given that the conditions aren't just there for another socialist rebellion (Western societies are older and less homogeneous, there is no USSR to coordinate, Jews don't give a shit anymore), it is fair to say that the plutocrats have a free hand. The free markets have produced a plutocracy. Will the plutocrats push for ever freer markets? Or will they push for Brazilization? Will Fnargl go on being Fnargl? Or did he only become Fnargl because it was his only way of achieving power in a demotist system? Creative destruction is scary business, I just wonder how sustainable it is.

reply

⊖ **Baker** | 2013/04/30 07:22:32

It is inaccurate to think free market as the cause of plutocracy. Any system has the tendency to corrupt under power grab; plutocracy is just the particular manifestation of power grab corruption under free market system. Plutocracy relies heavily on political regulation of economy, which is a violation of free market. No, free market plutocracy doesn't push for free market, rather it try to limit its freedom. But since it survives in the name of free market, it cannot go too far in it, not without the help of other anti free market ideologies. Free market plutocracy seems more lenient and has a less destructive healing process than other systems human has tried.

reply

⊖ **Nick Land** | 2013/04/30 07:51:24

Sorry to repeat so much of your argument (in the comment below) -- I was dithering around so long that I missed your remarks. They're very sound.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 19:33:20

Sure, but that's beyond the point. I'm not talking about a hypothetical 'real free market'. I'm talking about what is possible, about free markets in the real world. We aren't going anarcho-capitalist any time soon, so if you hold the existence of the state as a constant, then free markets (as free as they can get) are producing a plutocracy as of lately. Hong Kong has the freest markets on earth, Hong Kong is a plutocracy controlled by a few families.

reply

⊖ **Baker** | 2013/04/30 20:20:53

Corruption is part of the nature. Even without free market there will be worse form of corruption. Hong Kong plutocracy is still better than other manifestations of corruption in less free markets. As much as we like a perpetually healthy system, nature always operate in corruption -> rebirth/replaced cycles. Seeking a perfect system is like seeking immortality -- not theoretically impossible, but lets not get our expectation too hung up on it, for now we need to deal with what we have pragmatically.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 20:28:58

I agree. I just wonder if the plutocrats will go against free markets eventually. Hong Kong is a special case though, it's not a self-contained society. China's plutocrats need Hong Kong to be free market. Perhaps the globalization of plutocrats is pushing towards free markets more than a localized plutocracy would.

reply

⊖ Nick Land | 2013/04/30 07:38:16

"The free markets have produced a plutocracy." -- I'm not going to dogmatically negate that thesis, but it's at least questionable. The plutocracy that is evidently entrenching itself today owes much to the revolving door between 'private' too-big-to-fail financial conglomerates and 'public' regulatory authorities and other political positions. It seems at its strongest where market disciplines are weakest. Is it reasonable, then, to attribute the phenomenon entirely to commercial dynamics?

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/04/30 09:12:40

Hate to pile on but I agree with Land and Baker. Plutocracy, where it exists, is evidence that markets are not free, whether or not they are nominally "Capitalist". Free markets require (more or less) sound money and (more or less) low barriers to entry--neither of which we have had in the industrialized West for a long time. The computer tech revolution was due to low (state-imposed) barriers to entry and (probably more to) laws of semi-conductor physics. But it is, if anything, an exception that proves the rule. State Capitalism, trading on government force to win elections (and vice-versa), acts generally against free markets and is a long-term stranglehold on technological development.

reply


⊖ Spandrell | 2013/04/30 20:31:17

Again, I'm not talking about free markets in abstract. Free markets doesn't mean free markets as in an economics textbook. Free markets means the freest the market can get in this real world, circumscribed by real politics.

Free markets don't require sound money any more than true love requires non hypergamous women.

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/05/01 14:12:42

Sure, of course there are only more and less free markets. Which tendency do you think is reflected in  **this chart**? Surely true love does not *require* non-hypergamous women, but it was a helluva lot easier to marry a virgin a century ago.

reply

⊖ Greying Wanderer | 2013/04/30 15:26:47

"The free markets have produced a plutocracy." The opposite. Regulatory capture has produced a plutocracy.

reply

⊖ Michael Soren | 2013/05/01 05:00:42

I'm not sure it will do for libertarians to declare at every regulatory capture "Ah, but that's not true capitalism, that's **crony** capitalism!" It reminds me of Marxists who would insist that we not judge their ideology by Stalin and Mao because they weren't **true** communists or because socialism/the dictatorship of the proletariat was only an intermediate stage to the withering away of the state and true communism, etc. Whatever the theory, reasonable observers could predict that allowing people who called themselves communists of whatever sectarian stripe to seize power would result in tyranny as it always had. If the freest markets imaginable in the real

world include even a minimal state, that is a state prone to capture and the wealthy are well-placed and motivated to do the capturing.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 06:59:13

My point exactly.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/01 08:53:22

Again, your plutocracy thesis fails to match with the observable real-world behavior and position of the supposed plutocrats. If they are the ones holding the real power and enjoying the very pinnacle of social status, then why on Earth do billionaires compete in Cathedral-approved sanctimony and handing out money to Cathedral institutions to win status and prestige, instead of lighting their cigars with rolls of \$100 bills? And how come they get jailed whenever a prosecutor decides to throw the book at them, even if only for a breach of some impossibly convoluted, obscure, and contradictory regulation? Why does this supposedly plutocratic system mandate that private businesses must organize and finance internal leftist thought-policing at their own expense? And so on. Plutocracy is a hopelessly naive and inadequate model for how the power and status in the Cathedral-run world actually work.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 09:11:15

1. We are becoming a plutocracy recently, we aren't quite there yet. But you can't deny the concentration of wealth and regulatory capture have been growing. 2. Plutocrats might use the system to jail their peers all the time.

Plutocracy doesn't mean that all rich people get a pass, there's internal struggle. But how many billionaires thrown in jail for spurious reasons? Can't think of any right now.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/01 10:54:18

1. Then we should see new generations of billionaires becoming less eager to supplicate the Cathedral, mandatory leftist thought policing in business becoming less eager, etc. But we see quite the opposite trends. Even the last remaining bastions of non-ideological, purely profit-driven business, such as the computer industry, have been getting increasingly Cathedralized in recent years. Concentrated wealth is there only because it doesn't bother the Cathedral nowadays, since it perceives correctly that the modern system of incentives they've put in place (by which I mean both informal status incentives and the legal incentives) will ensure that this private wealth will be effectively made to work for leftist causes. Why confiscate wealth when you've successfully incentivized its owners to work for your cause eagerly? 2. What non-spurious reasons was Martha Stewart jailed for? Of course, you can argue that billionaires jailed for insider trading and the like deserved it -- but the point is that the system is set up so that any significant financial player can be found guilty if they really decide to throw the book at him. This is simply not a system where wealth gives you legal privileges and immunities, de facto or de jure.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 03:15:27

The relationship between the plutocracy and the Cathedral is complex, I won't deny that. Perhaps I give the plutocrats too much power, on the other hand I do think you give the Cathedral too much

also. The Cathedral needs money to run itself, and increasingly it has been depending on the plutocrats for that. That will likely get worse in the middle term. And anyway I wasn't talking about the Cathedral in this post. Just speculating in which strand of neoreaction was more likely to prevail in the long term.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/02 07:06:31

Increasingly? The very seed of the modern Cathedral were the private-money foundations set up by the late 19th/early 20th century industrial magnates. Ever since then, the Cathedral has thrived on the cash (and PR) provided by rich people in their urge to pursue sanctimony and buy political favor. What's more, there used to be significant glitches in this system, in the form of rich businessmen who rebelled and put their money into serious anti-Cathedral activism (most notably the Liberty League and later Robert Welch). But nowadays we don't even see anything like that. The closest modern equivalent are businessmen donating money to the Beltway neoliberal and quasi-libertarian think-tanks, which are still Cathedral toadies on all questions that really matter.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 07:14:05

Well spell it out, what's your point? Progressivism is a memetic virus which hijacks the elites brains' and makes them work against their class interest? The plutocrats will eventually be eaten up by the Cathedral and we'll have a new USSR? What does your theory predict?

reply

⊖ **alfredwclark** | 2013/04/30 06:02:53

Here are my thoughts on neoreaction and Christianity:

<http://occamsrazormag.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/is-christianity-inherently-left-wing-and-egalitarian/>

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 06:09:35

Which relate how with this post?

reply

⊖ **alfredwclark** | 2013/04/30 06:27:00

I was responding to this post and then got distracted.... Capitalism can and often does have great feedback loops but seems to be a great leveler. Instead of having a grand vision of where to go, capitalism operates in small blind steps. Sure, the "grand vision" can be misguided, as with Marxists, but some vision is probably preferable to no vision. Capitalism seems to work best when steered by higher caliber people, such as the old WASPs in America or the 19th century Liberals one finds in Trollope's novels.

reply

⊖ **alfredwclark** | 2013/04/30 06:27:32

"Creative destruction is scary business, I just wonder how sustainable it is." Exactly!

reply

⊖ VXXC | 2013/04/30 07:12:58

"truth-seeking taking to its extreme is intelligence maximization." Well. Is it? The men who clothed you, provide you with all you consume, warm you, made the house around you and the machine you type on, the networks that carry your words seem to have found truth in achievements. Granted for which you give them money. Let's not forget farmers. You do eat. And let's not forget the armed Helots - soldiers, police, spies who count - who also undergird all by standing sentinel and acting as necessary in the interests of the rest. I have no use for this decaying, degenerate corpse of a government. The worst of tyrants mad and impotent. However if you're the alternative I'm very glad I'm an armed Helot, from the very backbone of Armed Helotry. I consider myself these days a small "r" reactionary - that is we'll do without the racism, thanks. It was no great leap for the Left to decide that whites who disagree with them are the new niggers, and it's already no leap for you, it's in the compact.

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/04/30 08:55:13

Well the traditionalists position is self-refuting. Sorry fellas. If you think that where there is an altar there is civilization, you have a pretty low threshold for civilization.

Well, that was a rather low blow. To notice that an altar is a sufficient condition for civilization, or even to aver that it is a necessary condition for civilization, is neither an admission that civilizations are all the same, nor that the barest level of civilization is "good enough" for de Maistre or those who dare quote him. So you **do** recognize the necessity of religious traditionalism?

The sort of society that would result from rationalizing free markets is beyond the point. People suck anyway.

and...

So after WW2 it was understood that human purpose was to be found in individual utilitarianism. Hedonism. It feels good, but few people can handle it, and if taken to its logical conclusion it destroys you, and society.

Even hyper-rational techno capitalists care about the kind of society they inhabit, don't they? Aren't we all at least just a teeny bit Speciesist? I think neoreaction does (must) accept the "realism" of local customs, traditions, religions, and mores as a coherent (more or less) set of (more or less) slowly adaptive memes that solve underdetermined, very complex social problems--problems which would render a group less fit or extinct--and not see them, as the Marxists would have it, as a largely cynical ploy to allow the Oppressor Class to oppress the Oppressed. Obviously not all such "sets" are equally coherent, nor *a fortiori* do they all line up equally with the remainder of observable (yet currently officially denied) reality: social hierarchy, sex difference, race/group difference, microeconomics, etc. But those "Meme Sets" which do better so line up have, it is undeniable, done a pretty amazing job of presenting *at least pretty good solutions _to complex social problems which in their limit tend to get a lot of people killed. So it seems, Spandrell, you admit that unfettered techno-capitalism unleashed on humanity has the potential to do as much damage on society as liberalism has done. Perhaps more, being more efficient. This is not surprising because capitalism itself arises out of the hyper-rationalism of the Enlightenment. Capitalism unconstrained, like equality unconstrained, like liberty unconstrained have predictably devastating social consequences. But the toxin in the mix is the "unconstrained" part. And religious traditionalism is the natural constraint to ideologies gone wild. Remember social problems are underdetermined in potentially chaotic space (Pol Pot great example), so there are many _pretty good_ solutions, but none which can be calculated a priori by brute force... i.e., by pure rationalism. So in a sense, and I think you admit this, reaction _needs_ religious traditionalists on board. I know that's a drag. Singulatarianism does not give us a boner, of course, but we're perfectly happy with natural increases in secure, effecting, and not insane government._*

reply

"So it seems, Spandrell, you admit that unfettered techno-capitalism unleashed on humanity has the potential to do as much damage on society as liberalism has done." Precisely the point. It depends in if you consider that "damage". Skynet wouldn't do damage, it would wipe out humanity. But what can we do about it? Go Butlerian? Local customs, traditions, are gone. Finished. Unless there is a way for independent nations to defend themselves from the Cathedral military and not depend on trade with the Cathedral, well you don't get to have local customs and traditions. Japan is under attack right now to get into the TPP and have its laws rewritten by USG officials. China has lost most of their local customs decades ago. The rest of the world will starve in decades. Tradition depends in meme-transmitting technology. Mass-media and the internet have killed it. It's not coming back.

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/05/01 14:18:31

Local customs, traditions, are gone. Like cockroaches, local customs and traditions are very adaptively fit. They are next to impossible to stamp out. Fail to perform your quarterly fumigation and they will reemerge. We *are* here, and make *lots* of babies. You're just not looking under the right rocks...

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/02 03:08:42

"They are next to impossible to stamp out." Hah. Ever seen a list of languages going extinct? And that's without even trying. China has destroyed dozens of tribal cultures in 10 years of economic expansion. What's the story about your babies? Be careful though, they have this tendency to become liberal at 18.

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/05/02 05:30:20

The weaker cultures, whether by lack immunity, weak transmission, and/or overall lack of fitness, yield to the stronger ones. No one said all particularities are created equal(ly)... well, no one around here at least. The basic story of my "babies" is that they are homeschooled, and the older ones are, each in their own way, at least as reactionary as I am. Too soon to tell on the younger ones, but I'm cautiously optimistic. Homeschooling is the *enabling technology* for Reaction--painfully slow but very effective. BTW, eldest is now 3rd yr at Univ., 2nd finishing up HS.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/04/30 10:38:05

Breakthrough in a theory of intelligence might enable a quasi human AI. (This is mindblowing shit)

There, I fixed it for you. These are not science articles, but vapid effusions of starry-eyed scientism garbled by half-educated 'science journalists' writing specifically with the intention of blowing unsuspecting minds. Too much enthusiasm is a dead giveaway. I advise strongly against reading such stuff.

They live off financial engineering.

We'll see how long the party lasts. I seem to remember that late Imperial Rome used to live off financial engineering, which in those simpler times took the shape of the debasement of coinage and other equally crude measures. The money economy tanked, serfdom exploded and subsistence farming cum stationary bandits was in. The Soviet Union used to live off a kind of financial engineering too, pumping capital from the consumer sector and agriculture into its military-industrial complex by means of price management, supply restrictions, forced savings and maintaining a firewall between the consumer currency (cash roubles) and the industrial currency (credit roubles).

When those sectors were pumped dry, energy exports propped the system up for a while; eventually an external price shock finished it off.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Saddam Hussein's Whirling Aluminium Tubes** | 2013/04/30 12:54:45

If you are primarily concerned with technological progress, as I am, then you should probably be concerned about saving the white gene pool. Whites are currently a pathetic and degenerate people, but we do have a proven *historical* track record of technological and scientific innovation that is unsurpassed. It hasn't been that long since that period of innovation so the genetic potential has not yet been lost. White decadence is mostly spiritual, moral and cultural, rather than genetic. But that gene pool is under threat as minorities with no track record of scientific innovation overwhelm formerly innovative countries like Britain and the United States. East Asians appear to be more intelligent than white people (on average) and they are certainly more vital and less degenerate at present. But their track record of technological innovation is not quite as good as that of Europeans. Furthermore, innovation is not a zero sum game; it is more beneficial to have two or more centers of innovation, rather than just one. Multiple centers of innovation can feed off each other and accelerate innovation, as well as serving as backups in case another civilization goes crazy the way Western civilization did. Additionally, different human population groups think differently. It goes beyond just IQ to many different measurable aspects of personality and cognition. We don't fully understand what factors lead to innovation, but it is exceedingly likely that they are real, measurable and heritable. We do know which population groups have a track record of innovation and which ones don't. When a historically innovative gene pool is subsumed into a historically non-innovative gene pool, something of value may be lost. I'm an ethno nationalist not because I hate minorities or even because I love white people. White people are kind of pathetic. I'm an ethno nationalist because I want a future with high levels of technological innovation, eventually including colonization of other planets. Carving out some sizable reservations for white people would probably be beneficial

to that goal, at least until we have a much more comprehensive capability for understanding and engineering the human genome. From an evolutionary perspective, white people don't deserve to survive due to our low biological fitness relative to other population groups. But evolution doesn't care about technological advancement. We should probably think about protecting low fitness high innovation population groups, assuming we want a future with maximized technological innovation. The same conclusions would apply to East Asians or other groups, but their gene pools aren't really under the same level of threat, since they're not as foolish as white people.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 19:42:30

I am aware of this argument, and I can't say I disagree. But check my post above. Ethno-nationalism is not happening. End of story. And multiple centers of innovation means a different military balance of power than what we have today.

reply

⊖ **Saddam Hussein's Whirling Aluminium Tubes** | 2013/04/30 21:01:59

In the United States ethnonationalism has to happen, otherwise we won't be meaningful long term participants in the techno-capitalist future. A nation with the demographics of Brazil run the by Democrat's rainbow coalition simply won't produce meaningful amounts of science in the long term, except possibility in the field of home security devices. Some countries have the luxury of starting on the techno-capitalist future immediately, but those of us in the United States have to focus on partition or secession to save a portion of the country. Otherwise our contribution to the techno-capitalist future will simply fade away as we gradually turn into a Latin American country. And in the future we will have a far different military balance of power than we have today, almost certainly. Everything is coming up China.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 21:05:57

"In the United States ethnonationalism has to happen" Good luck with that.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 21:15:06

Don't get me wrong though, yours is *the* argument for ethnonationalism. I've been making it myself for some time. But I am not optimistic.

reply

⊖ **Saddam Hussein's Whirling Aluminium Tubes** | 2013/04/30 21:39:39

Me neither.

reply

⊖ **anonymous3349004556** | 2013/05/01 20:00:23

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Americans#Demographic_information

Number of White Americans in 1790: 3,172,006 (A population lower than that of modern-day Norway) Number of White Americans in 2010: 223,553,265

Obviously, you can dispute how many of those are "really white", but even if we were to accept only 200 million of them as "really white", that's 65x the white population that was present shortly after the War of Independence. Yes, the *percentage* of the American population is lower, but raw numbers aren't exactly

threatened. I'm not convinced that a very large percentage of that 223 million is capable of contributing much to technological progress.

reply

⊖ **vimothy** | 2013/04/30 13:01:11

Spandrell (and Nick), What's so great about techno-capitalism? If we re-engineer society so that it is organised around the market, as opposed to state bureaucracy, is it really better? In what sense? If we agree that maximising the growth in output is the ultimate aim of society; then it comes down to whatever method is more efficient. But I don't see why we should agree that.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 19:45:31

There's two points to that: 1. The alternative is the leftist singularity. 2. Commercialism produced everything that feeds you, clothes you, and cures you of your diseases. I am the first to agree that commercialism can be very unpleasant, but technological innovation depends on it. See Nick Land's comment above.

reply

⊖ **vimothy** | 2013/05/01 02:15:02

1, I don't see that the only alternative is left singularity. Why should I believe that? 2, Okay, but so what if it did? Let's say we can break down every traditional institution and social structure. Then we can re-structure society around the market. What I want to know is *why* that's a good thing. If it's a good thing because it will increase our material wealth, why is increasing our material wealth the alpha and omega for society as a whole?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 03:30:34

1. What alternatives do you think there are, and why do you think they are feasible? 2. If you haven't sorted that out yet I think you are in the wrong blog, but for the purposes of clarity: a. "Good" doesn't exist. b. My argument is that capitalism helps the maximization of intelligence. Why is that a good thing? Well I can't think of any else. Unless of course you think that "Good" means doing God's will.

reply

⊖ **vimothy** | 2013/05/01 04:31:20

I think that "techno-capitalism" and the "left-singularity" are for the most part functional equivalents. What I would prefer is a society based around the traditional (i.e., Classical, Christian) understanding of man. In such a society, neither the state nor the market is the only institution that is a material factor in people's lives. Is this implausible? Certainly no less than Nick Land's hyperstitional techno-utopia. For one thing, my ideal dominated the West for centuries, whereas Land's is science fiction. For another, as some have pointed out (e.g., Eric Voegelin: "We find ourselves in the Platonic situation"), the conditions that gave rise to the Classical understanding of man (and Western Civilization) are comparable to conditions today. So things look bad for conservatives, but they've looked bad before and still come good. At any rate, people make choices and the tradition is well adapted for life, whereas attempts to re-engineer society around the market or the state don't seem to work well. Hopefully, putting those things together... As to your second point, it is contradictory. If "good" doesn't exist, how can you argue maximising intelligence is good?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 04:43:14

"For one thing, my ideal dominated the West for centuries, whereas Land's is science fiction." Well things have changed. What can I say? Society hasn't been re-engineered around the market; people have rearranged their lives around the market to make money. People didn't arranged their lives around 'tradition', people arranged their lives according to the technology and the economics of their day. As it happened, the technology and economics of grain farming didn't change much for millennia, which the slow creation a traditional culture which served well to most people. But that's over. We'll have genetic screening for intelligence in 10 years. We have dark factories without lighting because robots don't need to see. The people who run the new economy have power because they make money. Tradition doesn't. That will only get worse. "As to your second point, it is contradictory. If "good" doesn't exist, how can you argue maximising intelligence is good?" I don't. I just take a look at what is likely to happen, and pick one.

reply

⊖ 94 IQ flyover white with a confederate flag | 2013/04/30 14:30:48

"[States] live off financial engineering. Ergo ethno-nationalism is not going to happen. QED." Financial engineering is looking so, so solid these days

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/04/30 19:56:42

Indeed. We'll see what happens. Fascism doesn't look likely though.

reply

⊖ Scharlach | 2013/04/30 17:31:18

Like you, I have a soft spot for ethno-nationalism, but the reality is, that unless a state is already an ethno-nationalist state (e.g., Liechtenstein), then any attempts to create one will just result in an "ethnic bunker"--see Orania:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orania,_Northern_Cape And that's just no fun at all.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/01 04:44:12

Elon Musk isn't in Orania, he's in California. nuff said.

reply

⊖ Simon | 2013/04/30 18:27:20

What's your search for truth in regard to, Spandrell?

reply

⊖ Simon | 2013/04/30 18:36:23

For instance, I assume you're familiar with Modbug's **reservationism**? Beatrice is Moldbug's euphemism for God. Quite obviously with regard to man, the search for truth would necessarily have to begin with what God says we are, what our purpose is, etc. And the only place you will find that is in some sort of religion. Or am I missing something?

reply

⊖ Simon | 2013/04/30 19:27:01

I also have to apologise for my past behaviour on here, I forget these blogs have a much larger audience than I think. I imagine it is just me yelling obscenities at you while jim pops his head in now and then whilst taking a pull on his crack pipe.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Randoms | Foseti** | 2013/04/30 19:12:22

[...] Lots of good stuff on the dark [...]

[reply](#)

⊖ **RS** | 2013/04/30 20:13:24

> It is a particular historical phenomenon where modern polities acquired the means to fool their subjects into believing they were part of the same tribe. Uh, they are, I mean their DNA is intercorrelated and so is their nature. This gives them a basis for common understanding and cooperation, whether there is any significant group selection or not. I know I'm not telling you anything you don't know. But if you want to claim that those forces are weak in the grand scheme, just do that, rather than virtually state categorically that such forces don't exist. It would be much clearer. > Nations were artificially made through massive state propagandaagain and again, for thousands of years. Pretty much everywhere and always, except where people decided to make something more like empires instead. It's a strain to describe that as a "particular historical phenomenon" when such a phrase clearly implies "rather delimited" historical phenomenon. I would strongly distinguish between biotechno futurism and AI futurism. Your 'exciting' news report is to me only a certain amount more comprehensible than the Sokal hoax. Maybe I'm not smart enough ; I am a lot weaker quantitatively than verbally. But I'd be fucking amazed if you could draw a tight and clear technical case that strong AI is possible. That doesn't make it unworthy

of contemplating ; heck, I even contemplate God frequently, and I don't expect to resolve that question. I just think ontological humility demands we not indulge in what are (IMO) mostly just strong hunches about strong AI being possible. I don't think we know what consciousness is ; we may sort of know what 'intelligence' is but I the ground feels much less firm if you substitute the term 'creative insight'. If you happen to find strong AI way more interesting a possibility than God, hey, feel free, let a thousand flowers bloom. My taste runs more toward God, but whatever. I acknowledge that contemplating strong AI is probably far more practical, since it might * up or improve our world, whereas if God is evil then we are all * anyway and nothing would be availing, and if he is good he is interminably unclear about what he wants, means, or is willing to help out with. It seems far more likely that he is beyond good and evil if he exists, and I will just never understand him. As a pastime, then, he is downright transcendently impractical to contemplate, transfinutely more impractical than any other use of time could possibly be. I never claim to be a fundamentally practical guy. In contrast to AI, biotechno futurism is obviously possible based from known principles that can (with dilligence) be imparted clearly to IQ 120 minds, and it might end up more or less superseding ethnonationalism. (By 'possible' I mean the strong possibility that bio-transhumanism might advance sufficiently to largely transcend/revolutionize goals and meanings as we understand them now.) I am too honest to just what, completely lie about that fact? On the other hand, as noted above, Europids seem to have some special relationship with tech innovation, and it may be wise to have multiple civs in case one or more of them degenerate. There could be lots of not so per se reasons for nationalisms.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/04/30 20:25:43

"Uh, they are, I mean their DNA is intercorrelated and so is their nature" Bullshit. Where do you draw the lines? Are Marsellians closer to Parisians than to Piedmontese? Galicians closer to Andalusians than to Portuguese? How did Nizzardos became French? Where's the DNA discontinuity in Scandinavians? DNA

goes in a regional continuum, state lines are arbitrary. When you stop the cohesive propaganda, the real, old regional borders flare up again, and you see every region in Europe hating their compatriots. I agree that a genetic singularity is more exciting than a computational one (I wrote that before). Getting upgraded is better than being dominated by Skynet. But what gives, it's not our choice really. As for contemplating God, well, be my guest. As you say it's a pretty unproductive pastime. But don't tell us to be humble please. Humility is good as a personal virtue, but society-wise it just produces boring stasis.

reply

⊖ **Greying Wanderer** | 2013/04/30 23:59:04

"DNA goes in a regional continuum, state lines are arbitrary." Not entirely - geographic boundaries like the Alps and Pyrenees create marriage inclines and national boundaries tend to follow those geographic fault-lines. I think you'd need a very clearly demarcated and *small* geographical area for that to be enough on its own - in the usual case it needs cultural reinforcement - but not that much cultural reinforcement. It took a lot less state propaganda to maintain cohesive European nations than it currently takes to maintain PC and multi-culturalism because it was working with the grain.

<http://dienekes.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/geography-and-genetic-structure-in.html>http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_ro2ijOk8JWc/SLs7sALkwoI/AAAAAAAAAATs/sa2Ig1gv31M/s1600-h/novembre.jpg

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 02:51:34

Working with grain my ass. You tell me why there is a dialect continuum across the Pyrenees which is unrelated from anything beyond. And why is central Europe so split? Why are Europe nations splitting just as we speak? The cultural reinforcement was a massive, brutal business. Mass media, mass schooling, mass military draft, all that was unprecedented in scale and

intensity. Multiculturalism of course is using the same channels, but they aren't any more strident than they were 100 years ago. Read some old newspapers. Or come to China and witness nation building right now. My point is that nation building requires state promotion, and states aren't into that business anymore.

reply

⊖ **RS** | 2013/05/01 08:07:56

Sure, Western states are not in that business. And you and I are -- in the business of accepting whatever those states want and do?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 08:16:11

Well it is my opinion that states are not in the nationalist business, not only because of some contingent whim of them, but there are other encompassing reasons for it. Which means there is little we can do about it. So yes I am in the business of accepting reality and doing whatever I can with that knowledge.

reply

⊖ **RS** | 2013/05/01 09:08:40

What you call reality consists primarily of mediocre human minds. Since you're not one of them, try to accept a little less of it each year.

reply

⊖ Greying Wanderer | 2013/05/01 17:29:11

"Working with grain my ass." Relative to diversity is our strength - yes definitely. . "You tell me why there is a dialect continuum across the Pyrenees which is unrelated from anything beyond." Mountains are messy - but they still provide a marriage incline on either side which leads to the patterns shown in those diagrams. Those diagrams are genetic maps which show quite clearly the effect of natural barriers creating naturally distinct populations. . "And why is central Europe so split? Why are Europe nations splitting just as we speak?" 1) Places with fewer distinct natural boundaries will be messier 2) Scale - the natural size of a nation with enough natural cohesion to feel like a nation is small. The main reason those component nations were part of a larger unit was war. Take away war and there's a desire for people to fall into their most natural units. . "My point is that nation building requires state promotion, and states aren't into that business anymore." Sure no-one would dispute that but the main reason for that is the US government. As soon as the US government falls everyone will go back to the old way for reasons of security.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/01 20:58:59

Perhaps, but many nations aren't viable today if they had to defend themselves. And economically also. Look at southern Europe. A collapse of the Pax Americana won't be pretty.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/02 00:35:07

No industrial nation is viable today to defend itself. First, the nations aren't so industrial anymore. Do you think the meat packers and bums are any good in the trenches or in the tank factories? Hm. Second, think about a city like New York or London. It's one big target, strike almost anywhere you want and it will crumble. Boston was locked down for two days by two piddling amateur nail bombs at a *marathon*, for chrissake.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/02 00:45:32

Well some got nukes, don't they? And there's drones and shit. I'm not so sure how the supply chain of new weaponry would withstand a big shock to intercontinental trade though.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/02 01:05:11

Some got nukes, yes. So what? Who's going to use them and on what? Nukes are useless against domestic terrorists (as understood in current usage). Who needs conventional warfare if you can fight on the cheap? Drones are having a heyday for a while, but the US is already discovering how easy they are **to down with a laser** and I suspect other, more low-tech methods will be discovered. Also, you have to find out who to drone first. What if the fighter group has no Twitter account and no Facebook page and is not using iPhones to communicate? Do the security services retain enough expertise and cunning to find it in meatspace?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 01:21:24

I have trouble taking the terrorist threat seriously. Who is going to take over a country and for what purpose? If there is a foreign state sponsor then nukes come in. If there isn't few groups have the capability or the will. Even Al Qaeda uses the internet.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 01:40:10

Come in where? Saudi Arabia is a sponsor if there ever was one. Pakistan is a sponsor. Afghanistan is a sponsor. Didn't get nuked and I doubt it would have made a difference if it did. We all know what actually happened. There is no political will to lob nukes any more than to occupy a country properly. Of course, if their capitals were crippled the Western states could grow a pair all of a sudden. Like Rome did after Alaric's sack.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 02:39:28

They aren't taking over any country, just doing some stupid shit to bother. Orders of magnitude more Afghanis and Pakis have got killed than any terrorist damage they ever did. Saudis of course are greasing Congress. No Muslim army is sacking Washington, or even Paris. Not now nor in a thousand years time. You know that.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 02:57:38

They don't need to. Why bother with conventional warfare if you can take over a country by burning a few cars, shouting Allahu Akbar and screwing?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 03:02:04

That's the sickle-cell report, right? That's about blacks. Those aren't shouting Allahu Akbar. They're just pumping out babies. Won't deny is a problem but it doesn't have much to do with what I was taking about here. I was talking about nationalism and military balance in a post Pax Americana world.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 03:38:09

Oh, have the banlieus converted to the Catholic Church? I guess I haven't noticed. I did notice the halal meat brouhaha. North Africans were defined as a risk group for sickle-cell too, and French Sub-Saharan Africa is **predominantly Muslim**. About ethno-nationalism. Your adopted country is one of the most ethno-nationalistic ones still around. They are strong on technology too (except IT, which is suggestive once you consider it), but on brutish and nasty capitalism, not so much.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 04:35:28

I refuse to accept that black Africans take religion seriously. And they aren't capable of organizing themselves to take over anything. If white France perishes the Africans will starve not soon after. As for my adopted nation, I know, and I like it like that. Although capitalism here is quite nasty as it shows in how they overwork their people. Their science is ok but I wonder how much of that is a function of their privileged relationship with the Empire. Also they seem to be losing their edge. All I read tells me that Japan is slightly moving to techno-commercialism. Agriculture is soon to be corporatized, public utilities will be sold off to multinational corporations
<http://blog.livedoor.jp/genkimaru1/archives/1772372.html> My point is not whether ethno-nationalism is good or not, is whether it has any future. It doesn't look pretty.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 10:24:50

I sure hope LDP loses the senate elections.

[reply](#)

⊖ **RS** | 2013/04/30 20:31:46

I agree we don't seek pleasure alone, though we do seek pleasure -- but do you really think it's "truth"? Truth doesn't exist in any absolute way. It tries damn hard, but no, most of the time it doesn't quite make it. I mean it's certainly a thing among others that exists, it happens... but ... see what I mean? Eudaimonists/virtuists from Heraclitus and Aristotle to Nietzsche, that is to say basically all nonfreudians-nonutilitarians, spent lots of time discussing what we seek. The answer is everything, love, hate, sex, vengeance, forgiveness, discipline, power, suffering, liberation, enhancement, self-respect truth, most certainly, yessir, ver-i-tas meaning (ah, that one is getting close to the mark) -- depth, B's term depth is the best single English predicate for what the eudaimonists have been talking about. Meaning is a close second. But there's no one predicate. Lists of predicates are better than any single predicate, but what's even more closely indicative is things like Zen and art. But that is only a beginning ; to their credit, the eudaimonists have not just sat around mincing predicates, every real eudaimonist has been interested in so much more.

reply

⊖ RS | 2013/05/01 09:04:30

> DNA goes in a regional continuum, state lines are arbitrary. I realize Nizza is not as French as Paris. But you exaggerate much. The continuum is far from smooth. Soon we will have a bunch of autosomal data, and you will probably find it particularly unsmooth across such imaginary lines as the 'Rhine'. > When you stop the cohesive propaganda, the real, old regional borders flare up again, and you see every region in Europe hating their compatriots. You're overrating the propaganda by underrating what took place through common language and culture. I know there were dialects and clines of dialects in Europe. I realize Eastern Ukraine is substantially Russo-unionist even at this hour. But to hear you tell it, people never went around casually using the word Germany for hundreds of years before 1873. Since Koennigsburg and Danzig were part of what they meant, you'll tell me it's a totally different concept. >

You tell me why there is a dialect continuum across the Pyrenees which is unrelated from anything beyond. Have you tried living in a bunch of gigantic snowbound mountains? There doesn't tend to be a lot of communication with those individuals who don't painstakingly clamber through them to reach the irresistible triple-inbred maidens ensconced therein -- which is actually most individuals.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/01 09:18:07

"unsmooth across such imaginary lines as the 'Rhine'." Then why are both side of the Rhine German? Ever heard of Alsace and Lorraine? Oh, they are French now. How did that happen? Sudden DNA change? And the funny thing about Catalan being closer to Occitan than to Castilian, Occitan being closer to Piedmontese than to French. So the Pyrenees and the Alps didn't bother people. I guess there's this thing called the sea that enables movement. Really, ethnicity is a messy business. Nothing natural or easy about it.

reply

⊖ **Greying Wanderer** | 2013/05/01 17:34:23

"So the Pyrenees and the Alps didn't bother people" The diagrams prove they did.

reply

⊖ **Dark Enlightenment News from Around the Web | Occam's Razor** | 2013/05/01 09:11:41

[...] Spandrell on optimizing for truth. [...]

reply

By the way, I merely asserted

Uh, they are, I mean their DNA is intercorrelated and so is their nature. This gives them a basis for common understanding and cooperation, whether there is any significant group selection or not.

This is true even if there were a perfectly smooth genetic continuum and arbitrary borders. Less true, but still true. And it would *still* be true if everyone spoke perfect Esperanto and there was not a single mountain or river in Europe. Just draw any random polygon or closed figure on the map of this flat esperantic Europe (excluding figures with an extremely large perimeter/area ratio). The people inside are more genetically related and have more of a common nature than the people outside, in some other figure 300 miles away. Anyway, I don't care personally about European countries, I am politically pan-Euro and to a smaller extent pan-human. Europe is a peninsula, and really, an island since it used to have an eastern terminus where the steppes and herding-raiding Turkics began. It's the land of hot chicks and the home of the arts and sciences.

[reply](#)

Lol I had thought the Rhine formed like, most of the western bound of Germany. Especially with France, and I envisioned the Franco-German border as rather longer. Well I just checked a map, nobody's perfect. Anyway, sure there is a big ethnic mixup and there's exceptions and conceptual imperfections, etc etc, but Wanderer and I have made our point. Let Wanderer or whoever say more if they like ; I've written enough to outline what I understand.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Dan** | 2013/05/01 09:52:13

Spandrell, you are a fool for discounting traditionalists and religion. Why? They are the only ones who have ever had civilization, as far as I can tell. Religion does not equal civilization, and not all of the religious have had civilization. Nevertheless high civilization has never existed without religion. Were the Victorians fools? No. You cannot build civilization without a really long view that extends beyond your lifespan. Lots of people need to put in more than they take out. Why would anyone do that? You need an optimism that your efforts really matter, that they are part of something and toward a purpose. Communism is really crappy and unsuccessful, but even that weaker level of civilization needs an ideology behind it. Europe lost its religion (mostly) in the last generation and it is rapidly losing its very civilization at present.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 02:50:16

I have made that argument myself:

<http://bloodyshovel.wordpress.com/2011/11/09/we-need-a-new-religion/> I'm not against religion, I just think traditionalists are deluded in thinking we can go back to Christianity. As I say above, techno-commercialism can be constructed as a religion in that it has a sense of purpose built into it.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 22:52:10

There is one important point here, which I have referred to in **an old post**:

I feel [we] make the unconscious mistake of thinking most European population like themselves, whereas in certain important respects this is emphatically not the case. Most alt-righters are too smart to have a natural understanding of the average European, whose IQ is around 100 [...] Not to put too fine a point on it, most alt-righters are too smart and too squeamish to go burn down mosques, but the average European isn't.

A new religion must be intelligible to the masses if it is to be accepted by them, unless you intend to have a go at it without a significant percentage of the masses. For instance, the currently fashionable environmentalism does not fulfil this condition: the masses only really accept the NIMBY principle and not the wishy-washy Gaia stuff that puts Earth far above human purposes. An aspiring religion has to engage people emotionally, it has to speak to human/supranational (e.g. European) archetypes and to have a good story. How is techno-commercialism on these counts? Intelligence maximization, what's that? The French sort of tried it with the cult of Reason and we know how that came out.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 23:02:23

Intelligence maximization isn't about appealing to the masses. It's not about having a healthy society, or good morals. It's about capitalism doing its thing, which is putting people to work in whatever it is the market decides needs doing. And if the market decides the people aren't needed then let them starve. As I said in my original post:

"The point is that you don't need an ethereal sense of societal brotherhood if you let the market work properly. Asabiyyah will grow out of aggregate self-interest. You might believe that's all that's necessary, and be some anarcho-capitalist twat. Or you might believe that the government must ensure that people respond to economic incentives by working against tribalist psychological biases, which is what Singapore does.

China today has no religion, no ideology to pacify the masses. All it gives them is a vague chance of strike it big and become rich. And a ruthless security apparatus to suppress those who oppose the system. It sorta works.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 01:57:28

Hm. As I've mentioned to you before, modern techno-capitalism really *needs* very few people. Most of its existing bulk today is servicing the redundant household sector, connected to the rest by common market. Then you say 'market' 'decides'? That's evading the real question — what are the market participants' preferences and where do they come from. The market as such treats them as exogenous, or tries to create preferences out of base instincts to expand business, but with respect to society as a whole they are not exogenous.

China today has no religion, no ideology to pacify the masses.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but don't the Chinese have an invincible feeling of cultural superiority by virtue of being Chinese? That's one source of asabiyyah. Note that this does not really depend on the transmission of traditional Chinese culture.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/03 02:06:45

what are the market participants' preferences and where do they come from.

Well those are cultural-dependent to some extent, but not that much really. People want what they want, food, sex, status, leisure, brain-chemical highs. I don't think religion plays much of a role here.

but don't the Chinese have an invincible feeling of cultural superiority by virtue of being Chinese?

Hah. Then why does anyone with half a penny run to Vancouver or Sidney? China used to be this vastly superior cultural sphere who looked down on their neighbors. But not anymore, any half educated Chinese has a profound sense of shame towards their "barbaric" culture. I had my blog linked in a Chinese forum by chance, and they all very sadly discussed why China sucks so much if HBD is true.

Both the West and Japan are universally considered superior cultures, and anyone who can tries to emigrate. Of course there's other considerations to emigration (economic security), but migrants to Australia stay, while migrants to Africa usually go back to China. Of course China does have an ideology which they push very noisily. They pacify the proles alternately with hardcore Maoism and hardcore chauvinism. It's all superficial of course, even the government elites have their own families abroad.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 02:43:56

Well those are cultural-dependent to some extent, but not that much really. People want what they want, food, sex, status, leisure, brain-chemical highs. I don't think religion plays much of a role here.

Now I am confused. How does providing what you say above people want, which is conveyed as orders to techno-capitalism through market, jibe with intelligence maximization? If technology development is driven by this process, as is largely the case right now, eventually (and not that far off either, to judge by the observed speed of 'progress') we will completely encyst ourselves in the products of such technology, short-circuiting all instincts and outward impulses. Rather than intelligence maximization, this will be **intelligence nullification**.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 03:19:47

Well that goes back to the first comment on this thread, with Nick Land arguing that market process are the best way of producing technical progress. Even if as a byproduct of spurious human wants, well you can't deny that capitalism has

produced a lot of technical advancements. China is pioneering genetic research, and I have no doubt that they will be selecting embryos for intelligence so families can have a leg up in the competition for elite universities. Of course it may all come to an end when somebody finally invents Soma.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 02:47:55

China used to be this vastly superior cultural sphere who looked down on their neighbors. But not anymore, any half educated Chinese has a profound sense of shame towards their “barbaric” culture.

I see. Japan has a similar case of West-envy, specifically America-envy — doesn't it? — but not as strong to judge by your comment. However, there is one more thing to consider here: what do these Chinese do when they do emigrate? A few decades ago they used to precipitate out into Chinatowns as soon as they reached critical concentration.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 03:22:17

Japan have no envy of the Americans, few Japanese chose to emigrate or even study abroad. Having foreign experience is a net minus for an employee in Japan, while it's almost a requirement for good jobs in China or Korea. I don't know much of recent Chinese migration, but I'm told that Vancouver is a big Chinatown already.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 04:21:55

Of course it may all come to an end when somebody finally invents Soma.

My point is that market incentives drive technology development to exactly this end. Today's social information technology is a kind of pre-Soma, and the market participants are busily making it more and more addictive. The only market constraint on this process is the fact that businesses have to turn a profit somehow, and you can't make much profit out of a 100% Soma-user.

However, with marginal costs per user being lower than ever, and investors looking at market share before profits, this is hardly a strong constraint.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 04:36:02

Japan have no envy of the Americans

Some of the educated ones do, at least the Waseda graduates I spoke with (inb4 not representative). Of course they know next to nothing about the real situation in the West and what have the West's policies resulted in. When I was telling them about it, they were flabbergasted. Two things especially got them: the bastardy rate and those French sickle-cell screening numbers. Try it sometime.

[reply](#)

⊖ **RS** | 2013/05/01 10:09:17

> Tradition depends in meme-transmitting technology. Mass-media and the internet have killed it. It's not coming back. You forgot differential fertility. Twenty push-ups, then try Eric Kaufmann's book or just watch him spiel via internet. Meanwhile 20,000 orthodox Jews out of town on business will be using the same medium to skype their 'charismatic rabbis'. I'm not making fun of it, that's just the phrase often used ; they adhere to particular charismatic rabbis as guides.

reply

⊖ **Dan** | 2013/05/01 10:09:54

Real civilization builders know the value of religion and they uphold it whether they believe or not. I have no doubt that lots of great civilization builders in history did their best with religion because they understood its essential role. Those who tear it down are decivilizers. Some of the most uncivilized behavior in history, and by that I mean large scale killing of good citizens, was tied with hard rejection of religion. Anti-Christian paganism in Nazi Germany, state-enforced atheism surrounding the 100 million premature deaths under Communism. Islam is warlike but even it stops at submission and is far more civilized than the Communists.

reply

⊖ **Saddam Hussein's Whirling Aluminium Tubes** | 2013/05/01 10:19:55

"Nationalism isn't some natural law of human societies. It is a particular historical phenomenon where modern polities acquired the means to fool their subjects into believing they were part of the same tribe." Nationalism isn't a natural law of human societies. But tribalism is. You are correct about the difficulty of objectively determining where France stops and Germany begins or where Europe stops and

West / Central Asia begins and the need for propaganda to establish that. But let's look at the United States again. Whites aren't currently a nation or a tribe, but there are clear and distinct differences between White Americans, Black Americans and Mestizo Hispanics. Other groups that are more difficult to differentiate (Lebanese Christians or something) also happen to be present in much smaller numbers. Arabs in Dearborn Michigan don't represent a significant complication to the big picture, due to their low numbers. Studies indicate that African Americans have a fair amount of white DNA, but White Americans have very little (recent) African DNA, as mixed race individuals were historically assimilated into the black community. Similarly there are a clear biological differences between whites and Mestizo/Indio Hispanics. (True white Hispanics are.... white) There also tend to be relatively distinct cultural differences between African Americans, White Americans and Mestizo/Indio Hispanics. What's more, white people instinctively recognize and act on these differences, even though they don't vocalize that recognition or even admit it to themselves. It's called white flight and it is very, very real. It doesn't just happen in housing either. Think school/college cafeterias. Despite their atomization and their lack of real community or cultural ties... American whites instinctively cluster together. This despite massive state propaganda in favor of integration and laws that prohibit so called "freedom of association". If you turn off that propaganda and make "freedom of association" possible again that segregation starts to look a little bit less de facto and a little bit more de jure. Whether or not some East Asians or rich Indians end up in there as well doesn't really matter all that much, as long as we get a handle on future immigration. Their current numbers aren't high enough to swamp us. This sort of implicit ethnostate / cognitive elitist state doesn't seem particularly unlikely in a scenario where the U.S. dissolves. Many of us already live in de facto ethnostates / cognitive elitist states, the arrangement just needs to be formalized a bit more.

reply

I think the best concrete thing to do initially in the US, both for us and for man, may well be the red-blue Velvet Divorce. Obviously the immediate question is how do you make sure it is and stays velvet (nonviolent). The second question is, is it possible over the opposition of whoever will oppose it.

reply

⊖ John | 2013/05/01 11:57:59

1. Concentration of wealth. At least in the West, and increasingly in the developing world, life has never been so good for the masses. If you think not long ago, the champagne slogan had been "A chicken in every pot". Now, even the very poor has smart phones, car, TV etc. Due to the leverage that is available today, A small number of people are providing extraordinary value to society and are reaping equally extraordinary rewards. That is to say, meritocracy, if carried to its logical conclusion, creates concentration of wealth, but that does not mean incrementally smart person does not also reap their fair share of financial rewards by providing some value to society through companies. 2. Plutocracy. While there are handful of people who holds vast fortunes and have disproportional influence on society, life at the top is still quite dynamic. Extremely smart and driven folks gain vast fortune by providing value to society, their descendants stay wealthy for a few generations, then they come back to earth. I don't sense a permanent hereditary class lording over the rest of us. The fortunes that are made might be bigger nowadays compared to the old generations, but today's self made billionaires are also more enlighten in the sense that they are leaving the vast majority of their fortune for a good cause instead of their heirs.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/02 02:43:06

1. You keep saying that but that's not true. Wages have been falling since the 1970s, it is increasingly hard for a middle class person to form a family in a secure

neighbourhood. But they have Ipads! Boo fucking hoo. The middle class is dying, people breed less and less. Educate yourself: <http://blog.jim.com/economics/us-economic-decline.html><http://socialevolutionforum.com/author/pturchin/> 2. My problem with the plutocrats is that their hunger for cheap labor is changing the demographics of white countries. We've talked about that before. I'm ok with a hereditary lording class as long as it doesn't fuck with the health of the polity. Dude, we call ourselves neoreactionaries. For a reason.

reply

⊖ **John** | 2013/05/07 11:13:45

I have been thinking about your proposition that the plutocrats are responsible for the immigration problems in first world countries. Certainly, there is an active lobbying from the high tech industries etc. I think the problem has more to do with the integration of the world economy. There is no question that this brought a lot of benefits to all sides. However, the flip side is that, there are certain things where entire industries will cease to exist in the first world if immigrants are not brought in. The country, in turn, made a decision to keep these industries in the country by allowing immigrants to come in to work. Take the agricultural industry as an example. there is no argument that the U.S. is the bread basket for the world, endowed with natural resources for agriculture. In certain subset, such as wheat production, where large mechanization allowed the farmers to compete with a higher wage, these industries will survive the world economic integration. In other cases, like fruit production, where cheap labor is still essential for production, entire industry will cease to exist. We are already seeing this in CA. California the golden state, with the special endowment of sun shine and good weather and soil for fruit growingn, is importing fruits from Mexico and Brazil. Post industrialization has robbed the agriculture of the most productive members of the natives. Back breaking work will either be done with foreigners or the entire industries will be moved to Mexico. The high tech industries worked more or less the same

way, but with a different angle. Since we are only picking people from the extreme right side of the bell curve, if the U.S. are not going to import more foreigners, entire industries will simply pick up and move off shores to find these talents. The country, collectively, decided that we want these industries to stay here and are willing to pay the price via immigration. In the end, the plutocrats are an active participant in this process, but only a rather small player. The decision was made by the collective. Since there was no going back on the world economic integration, there is no stopping immigration without HBD being widely disimilated.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/07 20:14:17

Since we are only picking people from the extreme right side of the bell curve, if the U.S. are not going to import more foreigners, entire industries will simply pick up and move off shores to find these talents.

If you really believe this crap, I have nothing else to tell you.

reply

⊖ **john** | 2013/05/08 09:31:49

I am in this industry so have some knowledge. Also it was reported that Bill Gates, while he was still running Microsoft, had the revelation that Goldman Sachs is a competitor of his, in the sense that they are both looking for the limited talents out there.

reply

⊖ **anonymous3349004556** | 2013/05/01 19:46:08

Firstly, I think "liberalism" is more resilient than you think it is, and that it isn't dependent upon egalitarianism being true. If at some point the majority of the educated population comes to accept the position that individuals, racial groups, cultures, genders, religions, nations, civilizations are inherently unequal either due to genetics, internal structure, etc., the ideology of liberalism isn't threatened. Classical liberalism was never dependent upon the belief in human quality, and even bonafide left-progressivism once advocated eugenics. I think what both do in fact advocate is some form of political benevolence or humanitarianism toward the weak and disadvantaged. If inequality comes to be accepted as a permanent condition, the same people who currently advocate a welfare state may well continue to do so, as they'd likely conclude that the members of the underclass still deserve some measure of happiness even if they're incapable of improving themselves -- perhaps, especially because their incapable of improving themselves. Secondly, I don't think that most secular educated middle-class people are either pleasure-seekers or truth-seekers, at least not primarily. They're status-seekers. Their lives have "meaning", when they have a project to work on that allows them to advance their status in relation to others. That could be a self-actualizing career path, but it could just as easily be a commitment to compete in a triathlon, to learn another language, or to take up an ideological cause. If you can't make more money than others or defeat others in a physical contest, there is always the option of competing to see who has the most moral virtue, which doesn't require too much talent. I'm not convinced that the project of "being an intellectual" is primarily a commitment to truth, as much as it is another arena of status competition that allows the intellectually gifted to defeat others who have weaker arguments. It also ties into moral status competition, although with the exception of Christian traditionalists, most self-styled reactionaries do not compete in that arena, as they derive a certain amount of glee from making statements that progressives find to be morally outrageous.

reply

Firstly, well if HBD doesn't damage liberalism, they sure take a lot of trouble to deny it! The quick death of leftist eugenics is a good example of the leftist singularity. Call me when the left stops ostracizing everyone who ever so slightly suggests that genetics matters. Secondly, yes, yes, of course I know that. Optimizing for truth is my way to achieve higher status given that I am incapable of making billions and unwilling to compete in moral virtue. Sure. But so what? We are getting dangerously in relativism here. If you go meta, or start poking inside the brain, then nothing has meaning by definition. Not a productive argument.

reply

⊖ anonymous3349004556 | 2013/05/03 08:31:20

It isn't because there is any inherent philosophical contradiction. Blank-slatism is the establishment view for the time being, and seems to be pushed even as a value that exceeds liberalism. It isn't clear to me that there is anything inherent about the internal dynamics of liberalism that necessitates it though. Also, liberalism \neq leftism. Liberalism is more like a moderated version of libertarianism, that recognizes the existence of externalities and other forms of market failure (while accepting that government can proactively reign it in), while also pushing a "minimum level" of opportunity ("equal opportunity" is obviously a misnomer) out of a sense of recognition that the vast majority of us aren't independently wealthy and are subject to extreme impoverishment absent a safety net.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/02 01:29:04

I posted a comment about this the other day but Wordpress ate it up. The sciencey 'mindblowing shit' you posted links to is just plain shit. The starry-eyed enthusiasm is a dead giveaway. Such articles are written by half-educated 'science journalists' by means of garbling university press releases put out by university PR people, or by interviewing crackpots. They are not written to inform but to 'blow minds'. Gee-whiz, Higgs boson, time crystals, sure sounds impressive! Whee, there goes my toy rocket! Pfui. I strongly advise against reading such articles unless you are competent enough to winnow out the chaff (and have time to waste). Real physics, or any science for that matter, is extremely boring 99% of the time, and the 1% it's not it's still extremely boring to an outsider. It just gets dressed up (or down, depending on which side you look at) to obtain funding.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 02:55:00

Sorry about that, you should have told me. It's back now. I don't usually read that stuff, but hey, are you just denying that any progress is going on at all? The point of my post is describing the techno-commercial argument being that capitalism is brutish and nasty, but it's the only way to make technical progress so we might as well give up and go with it. Ethno-nationalism aka fascism might be nicer for the middle class but it wouldn't produce as much. What's your point anyway.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 03:17:57

No, I don't deny that there is some progress going on, although much less than it lets on. We've been stuck in fundamental physics since the 1970s with no new ideas worth mentioning, biology is a mess now that we've mostly figured out the easy stuff, antibiotics research is bogged down, nuclear is screwed etc. This despite prodigious gobs of money sloshing around Wall Street and in

companies — and the best we get is OK Glass, take a picture! Call me when the space elevator is running.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Nick Land** | 2013/05/02 07:21:31

Did you read any of these three articles? -- The intelligence piece was serious, technical, and mathematical. -- The time crystals guy is absolutely serious, even if this presentation was just a taster. -- The Higgs Boson story was light, unpretentious, accurate, and -- for non-experts -- thought provoking. Your suggestions would lead to a deliberate maximization of scientific ignorance among non-professionals. Is that really what you want to see?

[reply](#)

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 11:14:56

Yes, I did glance through the three articles Spandrell linked to. I wouldn't have posted my opinion otherwise. I also skimmed the original Physical Review Letters article on which the AI-related article was based. Just as I expected, there was nothing in it about AI, SkyNet or any of that garbage. It is interesting, but the ideas in it are hardly novel; Prigogine has been working on similar stuff since the fifties or sixties, admittedly without much success because the mathematics is very difficult. What they did was apply Verlinde's entropic gravity construction to some convenient assumptions and obtained moderately interesting results through numerical modeling. Even worse, the authors referred to the supposedly great results by Monte-Carlo-tree-search-based Go programs which I happen to know is rubbish. I saw the games the program played against a little-known third-tier Korean pro player for money at a large handicap which were touted as revolutionary advance. They are weird Go, the pro should not have lost if he had played seriously.

Your suggestions would lead to a deliberate maximization of scientific ignorance among non-professionals.

No, you are wrong. Scientific ignorance is not ignorance about the Higgs boson or 'time crystals'; these are the merest details and trivia. To read about such stuff without a solid foundation in science is merely to introduce so much garbage information into your mind. Scientific ignorance is ignorance about the character of physical laws, about the character of scientific knowledge and the process of scientific discovery. You *don't* get that kind of knowledge from such articles. I, along with many many other Soviet children around my age, was lucky in this respect; I was raised on popular science books for schoolchildren written by the best Soviet scientists in their fields, not just professors but cutting-edge researchers and heads of advanced studies institutes. This is the so-called 'Kvant library' series. There is practically no gee-whiz spirit and starry eyes in any of these books. There are about 100 of them in the series, covering pretty much all hard science. To my knowledge, nothing equivalent has existed in the English-speaking world — except Feynmann's lectures — since the Victorian period, when Faraday himself did not disdain to give **open lectures on physics and chemistry**.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 11:16:45

To read about such stuff without a solid foundation in science is merely to introduce so much garbage information into your mind. It breeds scientific ignorance rather than enlightening it.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 12:15:33

You don't get that kind of knowledge from such articles.

I might add that you don't get that kind of knowledge from books on philosophy of science either. Very few philosophers of science know enough

science to form an adequate opinion of it. To read them expatiate on quantum theory and the general relativity theory puts one in mind of **Hegel's astonishing discoveries in astronomy (near the bottom of the page)** and other physical sciences.

reply

⊖ Vladimir | 2013/05/02 11:36:12

spandrell, *Well spell it out, what's your point? Progressivism is a memetic virus which hijacks the elites brains' and makes them work against their class interest? The plutocrats will eventually be eaten up by the Cathedral and we'll have a new USSR? What does your theory predict?* The plutocrats *have* been eaten up by the Cathedral for a long time. That's the whole point. They can still play petty rent seeking in ways that the Cathedral doesn't care about, or even mildly frowns upon, but the impact of that is negligible in the big picture. In everything that really matters, business has been incentivized to be a reliable enforcer of the Cathedral's ideology. (It's such a good enforcer that it's one of the main reasons that make state censorship unnecessary to stabilize the regime, because any serious dissent from the Cathedral will screw up your career in private business as well.) "Class interest" is a meaningless term here. Modern society recognizes only three scales of status that really matter: sexual attractiveness, money, and bureaucratic rank in Cathedral institutions. Someone with lots of money obviously wants to rise on these other status scales too, in particular the third one, which means being a good and sanctimonious Cathedral toady. That's all there is to it. It may seem shrewdly cynical, but in reality it's extremely naive, to imagine that he'd promote some sort of "class interest" by asking what would be good for rich people, instead of promoting his own interest by asking how to gain a Cathedral-bestowed status of intellectual, activist, and saint to complement his wealth. And of course that we're already well underway towards a new USSR -- it's just that it's been coming gradually, so we've been getting used to it. I don't think this will necessarily lead to a

cataclysmic left singularity, but to me it seems plainly clear that by the standards of a century ago, we're already more than halfway communized by any reasonable metric -- and the future will be determined by the race between this general Brezhnevization and technological progress that hasn't yet been strangled by it. (Of course, not the least problem are the unpredictable consequences of technology itself.)

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/02 12:20:22

This. I agree vehemently. Are you by any chance the same Vladimir who used to publish at vladimiria.blogspot.com?

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/02 14:31:31

Candide, No, I'm not the same Vladimir. However, I've been commenting on neoreactionary and related blogs under this name for years, so it may well be that you've already read my comments elsewhere. To get back on topic, in addition to the above, one interesting way to dispel the idea of a supposed plutocracy in the modern-age Anglosphere is to read the New Deal era writings, from the time when out-and-out command economy seemed like the inevitable wave of the future, and likely to be brought about in the Anglosphere by a series of ever more expansive New Deals. One thing that strikes the reader is how confidently the writers of this period dismissed the idea that capitalists might offer serious resistance to their dispossession. There were two arguments that made such a claim plausible. First, a capitalist may be a leader and a man of action within the framework of the bourgeois capitalist game, but he's likely to be completely lost and inept outside of it, and will meekly submit before any credible assertion of political authority. ("A genius in the business office... utterly unable outside of it to say boo to a goose," as Schumpeter put it.) Second, capitalists will be more than happy to morph into the managers and priests of the new system instead of resisting it. This may not offer the

opportunity for equally lavish extravagance, but the rewards in status and sanctimony will be on the net only greater, so what's not to like? What happened in the actual history is that the Cathedral's intellectual leadership never went for the downright confiscation of capital, which was one of its few significant compromises with reality, leading to a sort of perpetual NEP that's been in force ever since. This was of course made possible by the fact that the Anglospheric left never cared that much about economics in the first place -- but they understood that they could achieve their key goals even more successfully by incentivizing businesses to enforce and promote their ideology through ideologically tailored regulation, taxation, and tort law. This strategy has been so spectacularly successful, in part, because of the above listed factors. A businessman believes that he's just playing the ordinary capitalist game even when that game has been subverted, since the rules imposed by the political authority are like God-given laws for him. (At most, he'll figure out a way to manipulate the system for gain in some sleazy and petty way -- but such behavior is always only tolerated by the powers-that-be, and never permitted to become a really significant influence.) Moreover, a transformation from a vulgar greedy capitalist to an enlightened benefactor (and maybe even priest!) of the Cathedral is a clear status win for him. Basicall, the smarter (i.e. Fabian/progressive) wing of the 20th century leftism figured out long ago that seduction, rather than rape, is the more promising way to deal with the capitalist class. And it's tragicomic how, ever since, we've been listening to the left propaganda portraying their sniveling bitches as nefarious plutocratic overlords whom they're heroically standing up to.

reply

⊖ Nick B. Steves | 2013/05/02 16:33:16

Hence, neoliberals.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/02 18:23:35

You ex-commies are just no fun. It's always Brezhnev for you fellas. As per Jim's theory there is no way to stop the leftist singularity without a Reign of Terror or Stalinist purge. Although he didn't count with Brazilization.

reply

⊖ Vladimir | 2013/05/02 19:14:31

Well, Brezhnevism is another pretty stable outcome, at least in the medium term -- and the one that, in my opinion, the Cathedral-run Western world has been increasingly resembling for quite a while now. (Brazilization, the great stagnation, anarcho-tyranny, etc. are just names for different aspects of this trend.) The defining feature of Brezhnevism, as I see it, is the total stranglehold over all of society by a bureaucracy that's in charge of implementing a far-left hegemonic ideology that's fundamentally crazed and detached from reality -- but where the entrenched mundane bureaucratic interest makes its members rationalize away the most radical and extreme implications of the ideology, and act in practice as a conservative brake against the positive feedback that would otherwise lead to the leftist singularity as described by Jim. So while the Brezhnevian bureaucracy delivers bad government, implements all kinds of crazy schemes, imposes official mendacity that one is not permitted to challenge, and reigns over an increasingly ugly, dysfunctional, and anomic society, it also prevents a slide into acute leftist insanity, producing only a slow and gradual decay and gloom. Of course, the fatal instability of the historical Soviet Brezhnevism was the one I outlined in [this thread](#) -- namely, that there was a far superior system next door, so the regime couldn't keep the loyalty of its young generation, which as youngsters always do, always strived towards the strongest high-status attractor. Without any such superior foreign example,

however, the modern Cathedral's Brezhnevism can continue into the indefinite future -- either until it has no more social capital to consume (but there's a lot of ruin in a nation!), or until some fundamental disruption happens (e.g. the remaining non-strangled science and industry giving rise to a technological singularity). Absent an external high-status attractor, the youth will pursue careers in the official bureaucracy with genuine fervor and enthusiasm as the very best option available. (By the way, I remember Moldbug once remarked that a commendable accomplishment of the U.S. political system and its New Deal revolution was to reach Brezhnevism without the intervening bloody stage of Stalinism. I think the U.S. has indeed been an exception to Jim's rule in this regard.)

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 20:46:30

I won't dispute the sanctimony/status assignment theory of power. But is the Cathedral bureaucracy that stable though? The greatest factor is Brazilization. Ever greater amounts of third worlders do create a positive feedback loop of idiocracy that doesn't seem very stable. Brezhnev didn't have to deal with that.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/02 21:36:47

That would be a problem only if the system incorporated genuine democratic feedback loops. But it doesn't. The Cathedral already has a well-rehearsed system for assimilating third-world immigrants on two tracks: the ones who become successful and adopt the high-status leftist ideology, and the ones who join the underclass, which the Cathedral knows very well how to handle and use for its ideological purposes. (And insofar as elections remain a significant feature of the system, the left has a reliable system for turning both

these categories into perfectly loyal leftist voting blocks.) After all, if Brazilization really were threatening to their ideological interests, the key Cathedral people would certainly be smart enough to realize it. They may be severely detached from reality in many ways, but when it comes to sniffing out and confronting threats in the ideological war, their instinct is hardly paralleled in human history. (This is also why I see it as spectacularly naive and disgustingly smarmy when conservatives hand-wring about the Muslim immigration, pathetically trying to beat the leftists at their own game by pointing out how Muslims are bringing non-leftist values with them. They don't realize that they're getting it completely backwards who is in fact the useful idiot there, and thereby themselves becoming another chorus of Cathedral's unwitting useful idiots.)

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 21:45:28

Yeah but in purely economical terms, the ever expanding underclass will eventually become too big a drag on the economy. Socialism stops when you run out of other people's money.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 01:36:51

Actually he had, or at least the problem was recognized as impending, with the difference that instead of actual immigration there was internal migration. The Soviet Union was big and nationally diverse. By the end of Soviet rule there were already large disparities in birthrates between Slavic and Central Asiatic/Muslim regions, with the former being far below and the latter far above

replacement, and also wide disparities in cultural capital between the two. I don't know whether any effectual countermeasures were implemented or contemplated. Probably, implementation of any such measures was impossible by that time, both economically and organizationally.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 04:25:18

How bad is it anyway? There's talks of Russian fertility picking up, does anyone have fertility rates by ethnicity?

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 05:10:42

Very bad, especially in Russia proper (Moscow is separate from Russia). Alcoholism and drug use are rampant, no jobs, everything is neglected, prison terms and inmate-derived behavior confer status, everybody listens to music glorifying prison experiences. Imagine black inner cities spread over the Russian hinterland. **Here are some data** on fertility by ethnicity. Fertility results from the 2010 census is not yet available, but the observed rise in births is generally attributed to the fact that the echo-baby-boomers (born around 1980 and a little after) are just now entering peak reproductive age rather than to any intrinsic recovery in Russian TFR. You can look at maps for natural growth by region at Wikipedia; it's not a pretty picture for Russia proper. Russians decreased by 4,5 million between 2002 and 2010, and there is a tendency for children of mixed marriages to be registered as Russian.

⊖ Vladimir | 2013/05/02 18:15:13

I hope our host won't mind another plutocracy-related comment. Below is an excerpt from Schumpeter's "Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy" that, in my opinion, perfectly captures the reasons for the political helplessness of the modern-era rich and the impossibility of any real plutocracy -- i.e. genuine political power commanded by sheer wealth -- in a bourgeois liberal society. In case of the Anglosphere capitalism, the masters that eventually took reins were quite different from what happened in other societies, and their weird and historically unprecedented quasi-theocratic shape and form were beyond Schumpeter's powers of analysis even in his lifetime. Nevertheless, I think his argument against the possibility a liberal bourgeois plutocracy is dead on. (All emphasis mine.)

[A medieval lord's] "profession" not only qualified him admirably for the defense of his own class interest—he was not only able to fight for it physically—but it also cast a halo around him and made of him a ruler of men. The first was important, but more so were the mystic glamour and the lordly attitude—that ability and habit to command and to be obeyed that carried prestige with all classes of society and in every walk of life. [...] Of the industrialist and merchant the opposite is true. There is surely no trace of any mystic glamour about him which is what counts in the ruling of men. [...] We have seen that the industrialist and merchant, as far as they are entrepreneurs, also fill a function of leadership. **But economic leadership of this type does not readily expand**, like the medieval lord's military leadership, into the leadership of nations. [...] [A capitalist] can only use rationalist and unheroic means to defend his position or to bend a nation to his will. He can impress by what people may expect from his economic performance, he can argue his case, he can promise to pay out money or threaten to withhold it, he can hire the treacherous services of a condottiere or politician or journalist. **But that is all and all of it is greatly overrated as to its political value.** Nor are his experiences and habits of life of the kind that develop personal fascination. **A genius in the business office may be, and often is, utterly unable outside of it to say boo to a goose**—both in the drawing room and on the platform. [...] Within a protecting framework not made of bourgeois material, the bourgeoisie may be successful, not only in the political defensive but also in the offensive, especially as an opposition. [...] But without protection by some non-bourgeois group, the bourgeoisie is politically helpless and unable

not only to lead its nation but even to take care of its particular class interest. **Which amounts to saying that it needs a master.**

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 18:38:39

Your host enjoys any thoughtful argument. I'm not that sceptic about the power that plutocrats can use. Of course they can't depend on their own carisma, but a thoughtful use of money can buy a lot of influence. Of course I agree that presently, any plutocrat that, say, openly opposed feminism would get their company destroyed in weeks. I guess the techno-commercialist idea (not really my own) is that the state is increasingly incapable of controlling the plutocrats, Brazilization will only make things worse, and in the middle term the plutocrats will they their own thing through bitcoin, offshoring and whatnot. Exit. It sounds the only plausible way out of the Cathedral, as a reactionary return to Christianity or some Fascist revival doesn't seem likely at all.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/02 22:01:16

On the contrary, I'd say the Cathedral could be smashed in no time if someone just came up with some ideological weapon powerful enough to break its monopoly on bestowing status and sanctimony. It would fold like a paper tiger, just like the Soviet Union did in the late 1980s. Of course, the hard question is not only what this ideological weapon might be, but also what kind of regime could plausibly succeed it. But it could definitely be something radically different, for better or worse. Also, you probably won't be surprised that I disagree about the "plutocrats." They've accepted halfway-communism with barely a whimper; there's no reason why they'll draw any particular line where they'd head for the (ever more difficult) exit rather than work with the system. And technology, insofar as it matters in such things, is on the net only a facilitator of the absolute state.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 22:16:20

"some ideological weapon powerful enough to break its monopoly on bestowing status and sanctimony" Any ideas? I don't think the Cathedral ideology is some contingent conspiracy. I think it's a very finely evolved memetic virus that lives off basic psychological biases. Say, envy and vanity. I can't really think on any ideology that may be more attractive than saying that everyone is a special snowflake with infinite potential and rights.

reply

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/03 17:44:48

Of course it's not a conspiracy in the usual sense of the word, but it's also not an ordinary memetic virus. More like a memetic virus whose special features lead to large-scale coordination and takeover of key social institutions, in a way that's just as effective as a real conspiracy. What's more, the deceit and duplicity of Cathedral's bureaucrats and politicians, and the behind-the-scenes operations of the system that are hidden from the public (or simply never brought up publicly by tacit agreement), can often be fairly described as genuine conspiracies. (Also, I don't think this virus would be anywhere as successful if it hadn't, at some historical point, encounter especially favorable circumstances for its spread and evolution.) Clearly, I have no idea what a lethal anti-Cathedral ideological weapon could look like. It certainly won't arise spontaneously from mere technological and economic factors -- witness the complete defeat in recent years of the once fashionable idea that the internet and the blogosphere would break the Cathedral's iron grip over public discourse. What's necessary is a combination of an effective delivery and an effective message -- but who knows what this message could be, and what non-obvious ideological Achilles heel of the system it

could target? For now, a reasonable course of action seems to be to pursue truth in these online venues and keep developing an intellectual discourse genuinely independent from Cathedral's ideology and Universalist lefter-than-thou moral posturing -- while at the same time steering clear of any bad and delusional contrarian ideas. Who knows, maybe some effective ideological weapons might come out of it eventually.

[reply](#)

⊖ **TD1** | 2013/05/02 19:37:47

I hope I am not being rude to our host, but you totally owned this "plutocracy or no?" subthread.

[reply](#)

⊖ **TD1** | 2013/05/02 19:39:44

I'd not refreshed the page before spandrell's reply above. (Yes, I spent 59 minutes getting through this thread.) Even the "host" usage is a coincidence.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/02 20:35:58

You get to be rude if you spend 59 minutes reading.

[reply](#)

⊖ **Vladimir** | 2013/05/02 22:12:24

Spandrell, *Yeah but in purely economical terms, the ever expanding underclass will eventually become too big a drag on the economy. Socialism stops when you run out of other people's money.* Indeed, but the financial alchemy of fiat money central banking makes these constraints far more flexible than naive accounting would suggest, and the golden goose of high-tech economy is extremely resilient and hard to kill. So while it's impossible to give any hard predictions, the system could plausibly last for many decades into the future.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/02 22:14:41

But... bitcoin!!! Seriously though, I do envision the Cathedral outliving us all. But not much further than that, there's only so much you can do with 300 million third worlders leeching. Given such amount of barbarians around, China might look superior eventually.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/03 04:09:46

That would be a very bad outcome. One feature of the Soviet system was how deeply it damaged and corrupted the people. I think Vladimir will agree with this. It's a burnt-out landscape with a few stumps and green shoots here and there. China's situation is probably similar. If the current situation continues for a long time, and if in addition the Cathedral eats up the remaining enclaves of sanity, it will be extremely difficult to rebuild anything because the requisite material will be lacking.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/03 04:33:18

My point is that market incentives drive technology development to exactly this end. Today's social information technology is a kind of pre-Soma, and the market participants are busily making it more and more addictive.

Well what are you gonna do about it? It's either Soma or Skynet.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 05:18:07

That's the 64,000 dollar question. I don't know yet. I have a hunch that the ideological weapon Vladimir mentioned has to strike heavily at Soma-ization. A kind of Butlerian jihad against it is in order. I'm skeptical of the likelihood of Skynet outcome, by the way. Soma is far easier to develop (the human brain does all the hard work) and the market incentives are much stronger.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 05:34:57

Well it's been a while and I don't see any drug better than was already there in the 1920s. Maybe we get sexbots first, which would be a kind of combined Soma/Skynet. Gotta buy stock of オリエント工業 I think we'll get a real jihad before a Butlerian jihad, but who knows.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 07:07:39

I did not mean a literal drug. Drugs' impact on the brain is too broad to produce targeted experiences. We have specific technologies and technologically-delivered solutions to stimulate specific instincts - pornography, social networks, racing games, shooting games etc. Also onaholes. Some come with a USB interface, and there are datesims that use them.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/03 07:16:07

Lol, yeah I forgot about those. They've taken 10% of men out of the sexual market for sure. I'd love some stats on onahole use. Is it growing? Has it peaked? There's news that facebook use has peaked, so there's some hope. Technical addictions are never as elegant as chemical substances.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/03 12:50:02

Yes, I remember reading that about Facebook. However its use is not declining because people go out in the real world more. Instead, they migrate to different social networking platforms — instagram clones, chat roulettes, private social networks and whatnot. Have no stats on onahole use. It would be easier for you to get them locally, the onahole makers are certain to have relevant numbers.

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/04 00:52:51

Right on cue, addiction to smartphones **on BBC**.

reply

⊖ Spandrell | 2013/05/04 01:06:02

That's why you don't have one?

reply

⊖ Candide III | 2013/05/04 02:21:14

Yup, dumbphone here. How did you guess? Although I have a PC and it's almost as bad.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/04 02:59:35

I remember from the day we met. You can't fight addiction. I'm sure 15k years ago our hunter ancestors were complaining of all these kids hooked up on chewing wheat and drinking fermented stuff.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/04 04:46:38

You can't mean that seriously unless you extend the meaning of 'addiction' past all reason. Suppose a person is addicted to crack, or booze, or gambling, or WoW (how many people have died playing WoW without stopping for a piss, much less a meal?), will you tell him that? Or would you say, hey, whatever floats your boat, no habit is bad in itself?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/04 05:11:04

Of course it's bad. It's awful. Millions of Chinese addicted to lame games. Families destroyed. Imagine your only son hooked to that crap! But what can you do? Besides family pressure.

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/04 08:23:51

That's one task for that ideological weapon, as I was saying. Family pressure is great, but it has to be supplemented by peer pressure and social pressure more generally. On top of that, there should be provision for defection on the one hand (Mormons and Amish manage it fine) and for conversion (taking the Oath, in Stephenson's words). The point here is that conversion is permitted only once. If you defect after you converted (not if you were born into the caste/whatever), that's it, you can't go back ever.

reply

⊖ **Baker** | 2013/05/03 05:39:05

What's Soma?

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 05:42:37

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=soma>

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 05:58:05

If you haven't read Brave New World stop what you're doing and get to it fast.

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/03 04:43:11

Waseda is known as a leftist hotbed, what exactly were they envious about? 'Freedom'?
The American Dream? Or feminism?

reply

⊖ **Candide III** | 2013/05/03 05:19:47

Individualism.

reply

⊖ **John** | 2013/05/03 15:01:41

Check this out...the Dark Enlightenment on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/DarkEnlighten/status/330397227006705665> ...

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/04 03:00:09

Is that you?

reply

⊖ **RS** | 2013/05/04 06:26:30

> Of course I agree that presently, any plutocrat that, say, openly opposed feminism
would get their company destroyed in weeks. P Theil? If only we had a hundred of em.

reply

⊖ RS | 2013/05/04 06:40:38

> Real civilization builders know the value of religion and they uphold it whether they believe or not. I have no doubt that lots of great civilization builders in history did their best with religion because they understood its essential role. Those who tear it down are decivilizers. Agree, just can't tolerate christianity in particular. The lame shall enter first, the first shall be last. We know there was some sentiment against resisting pitiless barbarians (I won't claim to know how salient it was in Rome's downfall), and I think it's plausible that the whole system was workable for a time only because common people lost access to the scriptures for ~1,000 years.

reply

⊖ RS | 2013/05/04 07:16:05

> However, there is one more thing to consider here: what do these Chinese do when they do emigrate? A few decades ago they used to precipitate out into Chinatowns as soon as they reached critical concentration. I believe you are asking, partly-non-rhetorically, how they behave in North America. NEAs agglomerate quite substantially in both elite and common American universities. But no, they don't really form their own firms or residential zones all that much -- nor, to my knowledge, contemplate the Chuang-tze at higher rates than Europid hipsters do. So by and large they are pretty integrated, with some soft and mostly early-adult self-segregation. I haven't been to Vancouver though, nor spent time in San Fran/ Berkeley except in the summer. I've spent lots of time where they are quite concentrated, but have never been where they are hyperconcentrated.

reply

> Hm. As I've mentioned to you before, modern techno-capitalism really needs very few people. Most of its existing bulk today is servicing the redundant household sector, connected to the rest by common market. This seems key. Explain it a little better, would you be so kind? It clearly bears on the Span v. Vladimir question of whether sickle-cell France and America can persist for X decades because of the resilient golden goose of capitalism. I'm inclined to deny or greatly moderate the view that we 'need very few people'. I'm a cheapster, so my car is a cheap but durable one from NEA. Almost everything I buy is from the grocery store, or Walmart (NEA). The food is domestic, I don't think it can be produced as well by NAMs. My car obviously could not be made economically with substantial NAM labor, that's why I got it from NEA. The domestic distribution/infrastructure networks that get me the food and NEA goods cannot be run equally well as %NAM rises. The army that, via the \$ / control of oil (???), forces NEA to send me stuff at a discount, cannot be run by NAM officers and arms engineers and arms factory guys. Vladimir has convinced me to take one of my favorite sources of doom-porn, namely Kyle Bass on debt, less seriously. It's all paper after all. It's a quite serious affair, yet a paper affair. 'Things' *may* go 'completely crazy' over that paper (eg, EU ends), but I guess I have been won over to the view that they won't *necessarily*. I'm a firm skeptic on electro-soma. I mean it exists, bigtime, but I think it will prove self-limiting. I've had girls of high and low desirability, according to my much-shifting status. They are all a lot more fun than onanism, both sexually and to go skiing with. I've played video games, not much (thanks be to God). I doubt it will compare well with bowhunting, which I've been meaning to try. I've done plenty of drink and drugs -- only ever been psychologically addicted to one, grass, -- it ended in apparently-permanent partial desensitization to the drug, but it beat the hell out of electro-soma. Even alcohol beats it handily, and I never was that crazy about it -- not enough so to be itching to get high on it often. Of course if I were NEA I'd probably enjoy it even less, due to genetic adaptation, and electro-soma would be relatively more attractive at least v. booze.

reply

⊖ RS | 2013/05/04 08:52:51

One thing I never believed in was Bass' view that major war is almost inevitable and almost totally predictable as a function of US, EU, and Japanese (and years later, Chinese) indebtedness. That is just *terribly* reductive -- it's just too much, and I think shows the limits of Bass' otherwise superb mind. I'm not denying the possibility, just the inevitability.

reply

⊖ RS | 2013/05/04 08:45:39

Vladimir you sound very convincing indeed, here and at Land's. And you make all the proper caveats. I probably wouldn't add a single caveat, yet I seem to weight them two, three, five times heavier than you do. And so I wind up denying your conclusion that there is some core group of true sophisticates and freethinkers in the ruling memplex that actually understands what they are doing. I think such sophisticates exist, but I'm guessing they are about as paltry in number as highly sophisticated dissenters like us, and due to their modest numbers, they can't really do much to control the system. As I put it here some weeks ago, the Hand of Power is TED, not Edge. At TED we find some great stuff, almost all by narrow specialists. The broad-scope stuff is 98% pieties. At Edge we find plenty of silliness, but also some serious futurism, and some of the latter is even by people with academic or academoid posts -- but they aren't prominent.

reply

⊖ me | 2013/05/22 09:35:49

Wife. Children. Family. Clan. LAND OWNERSHIP. Resource. Labor. Food production. Farming. Animal husbandry. Self-governance. Anti-usury. Education. Skills. Technology. Science. Economic freedom. Tribe. Culture. Loyalty. Defense. Nation. Closed borders. All the rest is mental masturbation. To start a viable 'movement', you first and foremost have to decide what is crucial to your value system. What is most important to you? Do you know what you want? Do you know what you don't want? Are you willing to put in the effort, sacrifice, and energy to make it happen? Can you maintain your 'utopia' without sliding into corruption, power grabs, or infighting? From a purely biological standpoint, our primary function is to perpetuate the race. "Be fruitful and multiply". Our family. Our tribe. Our clan. Our culture. Our blood. Is this important to you? Do you see anything wrong with assimilation? Are all people of equal worth? Who will be allowed in your inner circle? Can you speak other languages? Do you have a plan? Do you have a moral compass? Do you have ideals, goals, or something worth dying for? Do you have social skills that are necessary to be a leader? Can you sacrifice to obtain a desired result? From a practical, survivalist standpoint, you need land to grow food and livestock. You need a roof over your head. Can you fish, hunt, or grow a garden? Can you butcher a deer? Can you preserve your food? Do you know how to cook? Do you rely on the skill of others too much? Do you live in the city? Will you survive there? Do you have any practical skills? Can you build a bookshelf, a crib, or a house? Can you change a tire on a car? Can you fix a car engine? Do you spend your time productively? Do you buy wisely? Do you know anything about usury and the credit system? Do you invest in your security? Do you own a firearm? Can you shoot a gun? Have you ever been in a physical altercation? Are you healthy? Do you eat a lot of garbage? From a cultural standpoint, do you like your culture? What is your value system? How does it compare with other value systems? Art, music, literature--what do you value? Are you moral? Do you value all cultures equally? Are other cultures superior or inferior--are they worth preserving? Do you know how to write a poem? Play a musical instrument? Why not? Do you have an education? Do you continue your education by yourself? Do you have any spiritual beliefs? Why? Why not? Are you politically active? Why not?

Why? Do you put time and energy into a cause, or do you just blog? Do you donate money to charity? Do you work to make your community stronger? Do you volunteer your time and energy into something you believe in? Are you a leader or a follower? Do you have the courage to stand by your convictions? Do you want to change the world? Are you willing to see it through to the end? Have you ever been forced to save yourself from harm? Have you saved others from harm? Do you think this is a game? Do you take this seriously? Are you a keyboard warrior, or someone who's active in the real world? Do you have any idea of how to organize a 'movement'? Do you think that this will lead anywhere? Do you have a plan? Can you defeat the 'Cathedral'? Can you replace it with something better? New movement? Nope. New name? Yup. Will anything change? Dunno.....

reply

⊖ **Spandrell** | 2013/05/22 18:03:49

Relax dude. You aren't gonna change the world either.

reply

⊖ **2.8 Heroes of the Dark Enlightenment | Radish** | 2013/05/25 05:00:09

[...] 30: Nick Land sketches the boundaries of broad agreement among the new reactionaries, while Spandrell expounds on his now-famous [...]

reply

⊖ **An interpretation of FWD.us | Suspiria de Profundis** | 2013/06/02 07:57:21

[...] also recently encountered this quote from Schumpeter's Capitalism, Socialism and [...]

reply

⊖ **The 2013 Anti-Progress Report | Radish** | 2013/12/31 22:00:40

[...] Spandrell expounds on his trichotomy. [...]

[reply](#)

⊖ **Truth | Bloody shovel** | 2015/12/28 12:43:36

[...] just have a bad model. Not that I'm innocent of that mistake. I'm known of chanting how the truth will always prevail, even when most people obviously prefer bullshit, and have always done so. I, like Mencken, like [...]

[reply](#)

⊖ **Tricotomia – Outlandish** | 2016/07/22 16:33:48

[...] assim que for compilada. Entre os marcadores de caminho mais óbvios são este, este, este, este e este. Dada a necessidade de se referir a este complexo de maneira sucinta, eu confio que abreviá-lo [...]

[reply](#)