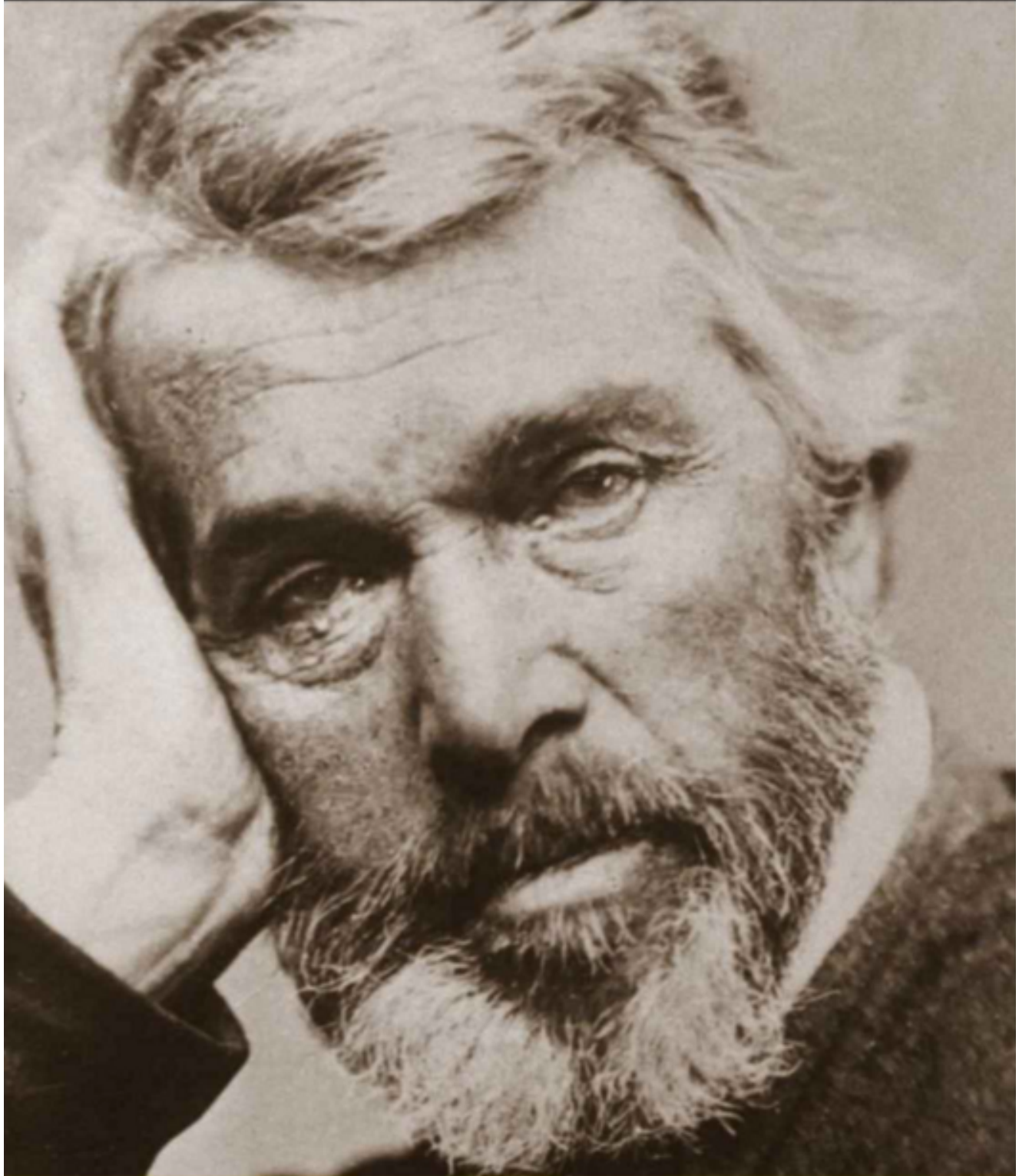


MENCIUS MOLDBUG



MOLDBUG ON
CARLYLE

Moldbug on Carlyle

Mencius Moldbug

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Foreword

Moldbug on Carlyle is a lightly edited compilation of three essays by Mencius Moldbug on Thomas Carlyle, appearing in 2009 and 2010 on the blog [Unqualified Reservations](#). Moldbug released the first essay, “From Mises to Carlyle: My Sick Journey to the Dark Side of the Force,” in February 2010, making it the most recent of the three, but it is logically prior to the others and hence makes a better introduction. Moldbug released the other two essays, “Why Carlyle Matters” and “Carlyle in the 20th Century: Fascism and Socialism,” in consecutive weeks in July 2009; together they form a natural sequel to “From Mises to Carlyle.”

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

From Mises to Carlyle: My Sick Journey to the Dark Side of the Force

I often get requests for a one-word label. I generally go with *royalist*.

So here you are in the year 2010, reading royalist samizdat on the Internet. And here I am in that same year, writing it. *Quelle strange!* Especially for those of us with perfectly crisp memories of 1979.

Royalist is almost always the start of a conversation, not the end. It's a *tabula rasa*—it does not associate you with anyone else's propaganda. Hardly anyone else goes by "royalist" today (unlike "monarchist," which connotes a reverence for the present, ceremonial or "constitutional" institution—there are few ideologies more disproven than constitutional monarchism). And if anyone gives you any grief, you can just step up to *neoroyalist*.

Of course, any such label just means you've drunk the Kool-Aid here at [Unqualified Reservations](#). That's the whole point. But why broadcast it, eh? The libations will make their way in time. Frankly, turning people on to this kind of subversive material is like turning your literary friends on to acid in 1964. Is so-and-so hip? No? Oh, that's too bad. Make sure he gets a cup from the *blue* pitcher.

By 1974, of course, so-and-so is calling himself "Bhang Raj" and teaching

yoga in Big Sur. So if *royalism* sounds exciting to you, it should. Especially if you don't remember 1964. Or 1984. Actually, Socrates also had a fine old time corrupting the youth of Athens, and what was he corrupting them with? Not what you think, pervert. In a word: hatefacts and crimethink. (Specifically, Socrates was [spreading seditious lies about democracy](#).)

But let's face it: "royalist" is challenging. It's punk—punk in 1976. You can be for it or against it. You can't be indifferent. Well, as it happens, the punk future of 1976 did not come true. Which is probably for the better. But it indicates that one can be *too* punk.

Therefore, I have an alternative label. I am a *Carlylean*. I'm a Carlylean more or less the way a Marxist is a Marxist. My worship of Thomas Carlyle, the Victorian Jesus, is no adolescent passion—but the conscious choice of a mature adult. I will always be a Carlylean, just the way a Marxist will always be a Marxist. And it is not too late for you to join us yourself! It's a big tent, this cult of Carlyle. The only problem is that since Carlyle is dead, you can't sell your possessions and give them all to Carlyle. No—you'll have to think of some other worthy recipient.

But wait. Who the fuck is Carlyle?

Well, perhaps you saw that recent classic of the silver screen—[Sherlock Holmes](#). As you may or may not know, ignorant Earthling, this was actually based on a [book](#). In this book, some dead old white guy [writes](#) (1887):

His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary literature, philosophy, and politics he appeared to know next to nothing. Upon my quoting Thomas Carlyle, he inquired in the naïvest way who he might be and what he had done.

My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory and of the composition of the Solar System. That any civilized human being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth travelled round the sun appeared to be to me such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

To be fair, "he" is Sherlock Holmes himself. Holmes is entirely ignorant of Carlyle, however, only because he is entirely ignorant of both politics and literature.

Since not one man in a thousand today knows anything of Carlyle, and that man is almost surely misinformed (*please* read Carlyle before you read *about* Carlyle), the slate is—once again—blank. Are you, too, entirely ignorant of both politics and literature? We can't *all* be Sherlock Holmes.

This Presbyterian [Balrog](#) was locked in the stacks for a century. [Sergey and Larry](#), blissed-out on whatever blissful techno-hippie whim, [scanned those stacks in bulk](#); and sprung his ass. If you are familiar with the Copernican Theory, yet ignorant of Carlyle, read him! You can! He lies naked at your feet—albeit in ancient, blurry scans, often with a picture of someone's finger on the page. (How appropriate it is to see Carlyle restored by intern slave labor.)

Now, I will admit that the [Sage of Ecclefechan](#) had his off days. He did live in the 19th century. He shaved with a straight razor, if he shaved at all. His crystal ball was a delicate analog instrument. Often, Carlyle understands the 20th century better than anyone *in* the 20th century. Sometimes, there is some kind of disturbance in the Force, and he's just picking up Pluto. Carlyle is not to be taken without salt, tuning and calibration; and would want no less. But properly tuned and restored, he is Messiah enough for any grown man. Hey, man, we all need a Jesus.

Carlyle, one of the few 19th-century writers to predict the impending [Siglo de Muerte](#), includes all the ideologies of the 20th. However you think government should be carried on, you'll find it in Carlyle. For instance, if you must have an introduction to Carlyle, try Edwin Mims in [this 1918 edition](#) of *Past and Present*. You will meet Carlyle, the royalist Progressive. There is also Carlyle, the royalist [fascist](#). And I even discern—albeit with tender eye—Carlyle, the royalist libertarian. (For instance, “red tape” as a metonym for bureaucracy is a Carlyleism.)

Which brings us to the meat of today's episode. As it so happens, before I became a royalist or a Carlylean or whatever, I was a libertarian. Specifically, a [Misesian](#). (And before that, I was an [Instapundit](#) reader. Teh Internets radicalized me. Now, lets dem radicalize u. Cast off the snares of the Jedi Council. Surrender to my Sith powers—and those of my Master! And pleez u cn send more moneys in teh mail.)

I don't think I've read everything [Mises](#) ever wrote, but I certainly have [Theory and History](#), [Omnipotent Government](#), and other less-trafficked Mis-

esia, on my shelves. My gaps in Rothbard studies are more pronounced—for instance, I have never read the *History of Economic Thought*. Nonetheless, I have been through Mises and Rothbard more or less from ass to elbow, and my judgment on the two remains unchanged. Mises is a titan; Rothbard is a giant.

Carlyle is the greatest of all, however, because his vision is the broadest. The analytic power of Mises is much greater; when Mises and Carlyle disagree, Mises is usually right. Mises is almost never wrong. No one could possibly describe Carlyle as “almost never wrong.” Carlyle is frequently wrong. His strokes are big. He excavates with a pick, not a dental drill. But there is really nothing in Mises’ philosophy that is not in Carlyle; and the converse is not the case.

The problem with Mises as guru is that Misesian classical liberalism (or Rothbardian libertarianism) is like Newtonian physics. It is basically correct within its operating envelope. Under unusual conditions it breaks down, and a more general model is needed. The equation has another term, the ordinary value of which is zero. Without this term, the equation is wrong. Normally this is no problem; but if the term is *not* zero, the error becomes visible.

Just as Newtonian rules only make sense at low speeds, Misesian rules only make sense in a secure order. Mises himself once wished for a *praxeology of war*, which is fairly good evidence that he didn’t have one. Carlyle was not a place he would have looked. Carlyle was taken—Carlyle, the statist, the royalist fascist and the royalist progressive, was the prophet of those (on both sides of the Atlantic) who had no place for Mises. To say the least!

Einstein once said: a theory should be as simple as possible, but *no simpler*. As a Carlylean libertarian, I would say: government should be as small as possible, but *no smaller*.

You’ll notice, for instance, that, Mises is almost never *normative*. He will never tell you that the fashionable interventionist policies of his era are *bad*. He will tell you that they will not produce the results purportedly intended, or that they will have some other unadvertised effect. He will tell you, in other words, that the *political reasoning* behind them is bad. And as always, Mises will be right. But he does not prove that the *policies* are bad—just supported by *bad reasons*.

So, for instance, Mises will tell you that mercantilist policies such as high

tariffs or exchange-rate manipulation do not just reward exporters, but also punish consumers. Mises will not, however, tell you whether such a policy is *good* or *bad* for a country containing both exporters and consumers. (Rothbard will. But Rothbard often goes too far.) By Misesian theory itself, there is no such index of economic good, no quantitative means by which one man's advantage can balance another's disadvantage.

Mises will tell you that policies such as these cannot be *calculated*. Mises is right: they cannot be calculated. As Carlyle says in his *Chartism*: government cannot be carried on by steam. Rather, its interventions (if intervene it must) can be calculated only by *judgment*.¹

In any responsible position, no formula or computer (given present technology) can replace human decisions, because no formula can exhibit *wisdom* or exercise *judgment*. These essentially human qualities are essential for any responsible position, but most of all in the most responsible position of all: sovereign command.

And all organizations, big or small, public or private, military or civilian, are managed best when managed by a single executive. Hence: *royalism*. However he or she is selected, the title of such an executive, in a sovereign capacity, is *King* or *Queen*—or, at least, anything else is a euphemism.² And why trade in euphemisms? Whose dogs are we?

Mises, being a liberal, is operating whether he likes it or not in the *Benthamite* tradition. He does not tell you that central planning is impossible; he tells you that central planning by *objective process*, i.e., *public policy* in the modern American sense, is impossible. The alternative of *human judgment* is one that he does not consider—both because this alternative is ideologically repugnant to him, and because his own generation had an extremely bad experience with it. (Question: who sold the Continent on blood-and-soil ethnic

¹The relevant quote in *Chartism* appears in the context of statistics:

Statistics is a science which ought to be honorable, the basis of many most important sciences; but it is not to be carried on by steam, this science, any more than others are. A wise head is requisite for carrying it on.

The extension of this logic to government is straightforward.

²As discussed briefly later in this chapter, Moldbug generally favors a model based on a *joint-stock company* in which the “King” is a replaceable CEO. For a more detailed discussion of this model, see [Chapter 4](#) of *A Gentle Introduction to Unqualified Reservations* and *Patchwork: A Political System for the 21st Century*.

nationalism? Answer: well, it certainly wasn't the bloody *Tories*. More below.)

So, for instance, a typical neo-Benthamite public-policy construction needs a measure of national utility, such as “GDP” (roughly, net business-to-consumer sales). *Both* Mises and Carlyle will tell you (a) that there is no conceivable quantification of national utility, and (b) this measure, or any other, is of no use whatsoever. A policy that decreases GDP may be good; one that increases it, evil.

To a Carlylean, any such policy of government-by-steam is a simple declaration of surrender to Satan, like leaving [port 23](#) open on your e-commerce server. For instance, America has built an enormous debt by consuming beyond its income—thus maximizing GDP. Oops.

Good does not tolerate evil, but drives it out entirely. If you see a process inviting further evil, it may well be compromised itself. Chaos breeds more chaos; order must extirpate it entirely, or surrender to it. So again, Carlyle and Mises get the same results. If in very different ways.

When I went from Misesian to Carlylean, my vision of the ideal state *did not change*. I, and others like me, want to live and should be able to live in a liberal regime of spontaneous order, which is not planned from above but emerges through the natural, uncontrolled interaction of free human atoms. Hayek in particular, though no Mises, is eloquent here.

What my conversion to the cult of Carlyle has changed—completely—is my understanding of the *means* by which this free society must be achieved. If it exists, it must be preserved: by any means necessary (as Malcolm X used to [put it](#)). If it does not exist? [Bueller? Bueller?](#)

It is easy to see that libertarians have trouble with the *means* part, because they have never come anywhere close to succeeding. There is a reason for this.

Modern libertarianism is an invention of Rothbard's, consisting entirely of Rothbardianism either [straight](#), [diluted](#) or [adulterated](#). Like Wicca, it may continue the beliefs of an older movement (classical liberalism), but its social links with that generation are tenuous at best. Mises himself is one such exception; he is, obviously, a rarity.

For the most part, Rothbard created libertarianism by resurrecting a 19th-century political phenomenon, that of [Manchester liberalism](#). Absent Mises himself, this incredible fossil of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Rothbard could

have worked “just from the books”—as of course I do with Carlyle. Absent Mises, he probably would have.

Rothbard was always a practical fellow—or, at least, a pragmatic one. He knew his doctrines were right, and had earned the right to rule. So he tagged along on any coach he thought would get him there—from the [Black Panthers](#) to [Pat Buchanan](#). In a similar spirit, he revived Manchester liberalism—the political rhetoric of [Cobden](#) and [Bright](#).

History is yet young, of course, but none of these strategies strikes me as showing any real sign of working. (Lew Rockwell, Rothbard’s organizational heir, has reversed course again and is back working the Left, along with HIV deniers, etc. Every scholar-dynasty finds its [Commodus](#).)

Why hasn’t libertarianism worked? One thing we notice about Manchester liberalism is that, in its time, this movement was a *left-wing* cause. In that era, the terms left and right were used, as they are now, to mean *liberal* and *conservative*; which axes had exactly the same *social* and *cultural* connotations they do now. Nonetheless, even though the policies of 19th-century Manchester liberalism are exactly the same as those of 20th-century Rothbardian libertarians, libertarianism in 2010 is normally identified as a *right-wing* movement. At least, by everyone except libertarians.

If Rothbardian libertarians understood this reversal of polarities, they would understand why their *means* is not, and cannot be, successful. As a democratic platform, Manchester liberalism is effective from the left, but not from the right. Most tactics (as [James O’Keefe](#) is finding out) that are effective from the left, are not effective from the right. There is no such thing as effective right-wing [Alinskyism](#)—at least, not in the United States in 2010. Again, we see a missing variable in the equation. Symmetry is not guaranteed.

The libertarian has a characteristic problem in explaining his tyranny-versus-freedom political axis. The problem is that most people, when they inspect history, *do* see a clear political axis. The axis they see, however, is not *tyranny versus freedom*, or even *big versus little government*. It is *left versus right*.

Moreover, it is not just most people who appear to see the left–right axis. It appears across the spectrum, even to rightists. Rightists may mistake other rightists for leftists, or even if sufficiently misguided present themselves as

such. It makes no difference. Leftists do not mistake rightists for leftists—at least, not systematically. They just don’t have that [ant smell](#).

Right is right; left is left. The axis is real. Jonah Goldberg can [call Hitler a leftist](#); Hitler, indeed, called Hitler a leftist, at least in the sense that he called his party a Socialist Workers’ Party. But Hitler, while a very bad rightist, was a rightist. Not to mention a lying bastard. And anyone in the ’30s with a dime’s worth of brains on a dollar knew him as such. And this includes rightists with brains, leftists with brains, and centrists with brains.

You can change the definition of the word, of course. But the *phenomenon* remains recognizable. Being otherwise abstract and meaningless, the terms *left* and *right* are perfect. Why try to flip them over? No good reason, I fear.

I see this Hitler-was-a-liberal trope catching on all over the right. Of course, it is a leftist trope—in two senses. First, the tactic of tarring all political adversaries with some abstruse connection to fascism in general, and Hitler in particular, is of course a characteristic tactic of the Left. Second, the tactic of disseminating a palpable misreading of history, for political purposes—etc.

To a Carlylean, Satan is the Lord of Chaos and the Father of Lies. When you lie—intentionally or unintentionally—you *sacrifice a kitten to Satan*. Satan loves you for this! And, since he is not uninfluential on this earth, he does what he can for you. Which is sometimes quite a bit.

The Carlylean technique accepts only *absolute veracity* as the basis for any political strategy. The fact is: by sacrificing the occasional kitten or two, by twisting the truth a bit for the sake of this quarter’s sales, libertarians and other rightists get nowhere. Their enemies are (a) in power today, and (b) operating an assembly-line rhinoceros abattoir for the sole benefit of His Satanic Majesty. Surely, sir, you had not thought to out-scoundrel such a bunch of scoundrels.

To a Misesian, the struggle of good and evil (so plainly displayed by history) is the struggle between tyranny and freedom. Evil is tyranny; good is freedom. As we have seen, there are problems with this perspective.

Its main problem, however, is that it must obscure the difference between left and right, which is clearly significant and qualitative. If the left–right axis does not exist, why does everyone see it? If it does exist, the up–down axis gets scraped right off by Occam’s razor. With one axis, do we need two?

To a Carlylean, the main event is the struggle between left and right. Which

is the struggle between good and evil. Which is the struggle between order and chaos. Evil is chaos; good is order. Evil is left; good is right. Evil is fiction; good is truth. Gentlemen, there is no other road! The facts, it's true, are stones between our teeth. Shall we chew these stones? If not now, when?

Note that if we find a way to make this theory work, we completely explain the Misesian perspective. Mises becomes, as promised, a subset of Carlyle. Freedom is good, because freedom is fundamentally *orderly*—i.e., right-wing. Tyranny is evil, because tyranny is *chaotic*—i.e., left-wing.

Tyranny is one form of chaos; freedom is one form of order. There are others of each, however. And order is always preferred to chaos. Thus, to a Carlylean, the fatal error of libertarianism is the confusion of anarchy and freedom. Not only are they not the same thing; they are opposite poles of the political spectrum. Freedom—spontaneous order—is the ultimate form of order. Anarchy is the ultimate form of disorder.

To a Carlylean, anarchy and tyranny are fundamentally and essentially allied and indivisible. And again: the apparent affinity between anarchy and freedom is *wholly illusory*. In fact: to maximize freedom, eradicate anarchy. To achieve spontaneous order: first, achieve ordinary, down-to-earth, nonspontaneous order. Then, wait a while. Then, start to relax.

Here is the Carlylean roadmap for the Misesian goal. Spontaneous order, also known as *freedom*, is the highest level of a political [pyramid of needs](#). These needs are: *peace*, *security*, *law*, and *freedom*. To advance order, always work for the next step—without skipping steps. In a state of war, advance toward peace; in a state of insecurity, advance toward security; in a state of security, advance toward law; in a state of law, advance toward freedom.

The Newtonian envelope of libertarianism is the last of these stages. Once the state of lawful government is reached, that state can generally improve itself by minimizing its interventions and applying a policy of *laissez-faire*—advancing from enforced to spontaneous order. With the caveat, of course, that this policy not jeopardize the more important achievements of peace, security, and law.

When a state finds itself *outside* this Newtonian window, however, Mises and Rothbard are of no assistance whatsoever in helping it get back in. Worse: Rothbardian libertarianism can be a positive hindrance to the Carlylean road-

map.

Consider the first stage of restoring order: *peace*. In war, advance to peace. Now, in any war, while it may be quite difficult to identify the aggressor in a *moral* sense, it is generally easy to identify the aggressor in a *military* sense. This is the party taking the offensive—the party that would not consent to ending the war on the basis of *uti possidetis*, the status quo on the ground. In English: in any war, there is a party that would be happy to stop, and a party that wants more.

For a state “with the ball and moving it,” peace is easy. It can be achieved by mere forbearance. For a state on the defensive, however, there are only two means to peace: surrender, or victory.

Surrender comes in two forms: *unconditional*, or *incremental*. If unconditional surrender is necessary, it should by all means be pursued. If incremental surrender is effective, it may be pursued, but it is generally not effective. A predator will come back for more, knowing that he can get it. Incremental surrender may be associated with effective deterrence, but this is rare.

Therefore, in many cases peace can be achieved only in the Roman way: by *victory*. As with all military objectives, victory is achieved by any means necessary. Including artillery. Clearly, if the enemy uses artillery and you don’t, your chances of victory are greatly reduced.

But the libertarian artillery officer faces a serious moral dilemma. Does artillery violate the natural rights of the target? I would say: the entire *purpose* of artillery is to violate the natural rights of the target. Clearly, if you could get your hands on the people your artillery is pointed at, and subject them to a full and fair judicial trial for whatever their offenses may be, you would have no need at all for artillery. Since you have no means by which to achieve this, you subject them to a 120-mm shell instead. Hence violating their natural rights—with both blast and shrapnel. When they may have committed no offenses at all. Boom! Hey, man, that hurt.

This is war: *inter arma silent leges*. Or so the Romans believed. One can, of course, reverse this axiom—just as Einstein himself, on so many *bumper stickers*, reversed *si vis pacem, para bellum*. When reversing millennium-old proverbs, be sure to expect the reverse results. Perhaps they won’t happen; in that case, you’ll be pleasantly surprised.

Similarly, once outright military conflict is ended, peace is established. But mere peace is a low state of order. In peace, the state must work toward *security*.

A state is secure if it maintains a monopoly of coercion. Security does not mean the absolute absence of crime, i.e., private coercion; this is unachievable, because crime cannot be universally preempted. Security does mean the absolute absence of systematic or *organized* crime, as well as the absence of any other systematic resistance to state authority—from banditry to tax protest, terrorism to “civil disobedience.”

And how does this resistance become “absent?” Well, of course, it does not do so on its own. Oh, no! *Au contraire, mon frère!* In certain rare instances, systematic crime can be legalized, and thus become orderly. Indeed, if the state’s orders are physically unenforceable, it should reconsider them. It cannot outlaw the moon. Marijuana laws are perhaps a case of this—not due to the harmlessness of the drug, but the hardness of the plant.

Otherwise, alas. Security is achieved when resistance is *crushed*. The use of artillery in this process should be unnecessary. If you need artillery, you are probably still working on the peace stage. On the other hand, the assumption that all security problems, in all cases, can be resolved by the use of rights-preserving judicial procedures, is *entirely unwarranted*.

Here we meet a good old friend, *martial law*—yet another traditional attribute of sovereignty recognized for millennia, yet strangely forgotten in the late 20th century. Martial law is no law at all, of course, but the arbitrary will of a military commander. It is really martial *order*. And there are countries in the world—quite a few, in fact—that need martial order, the way a camel that’s just walked across Libya needs a glass of water.

Just like artillery, martial order is an essential step in the journey from military chaos to libertarian order. A state that can win its wars with artillery, but not enforce the result with martial law, is a state whose subjects can never feel secure. Have you ever lived in a fully secure society? It’s an experience most of us can barely imagine.

But martial order is, by its nature, only temporary. As soon as it is achieved, it is time to move on to the next step: law. Once the state has suppressed all resistance to its will, it must render its own actions consistent and predictable. This result is produced by the institution of *law*.

Authorities differ on the merits of codified law, in the Continental style, and case law, in the Anglo-American style. While not a lawyer, or even a student of comparative law, I am inclined to be sympathetic to those who think of common law as simply a medieval abuse—a consequence of England’s unfortunate failure to distill and codify its body of precedent. Clearly, justice in the common-law system is neither especially fast, nor especially cheap, nor especially fair. It may have other advantages, but these have not revealed themselves to me.

Once again, attempts to achieve law before security simply disrupt the task of achieving security. Once security is achieved, however, law provides the inestimable boon of safety from state actors, as well as independent bandits. If official actions are lawful, they are predictable. If they are predictable, a rational person can predict them, and thus avoid infringing them. Martial “law,” by its very nature, can provide no such guarantee.

Finally, once the rule of law is achieved, the government can relax its sphincter, let down its hair, slouch a little, have a beer, and let people do what they want. It can replace enforced order with spontaneous order. It can minimize its intrusions and interventions—since it knows there is no danger that freedom will develop into disorder.

Thus applying libertarian principles of natural rights, outside the Newtonian envelope, moves a state not toward the libertarian goal of spontaneous order, but away from it—i.e., toward chaos, defeat, and destruction. Because its enemies use artillery, and it doesn’t. Its enemies do not bother with trials, and it does. Etc. Therefore it is weak, and cannot produce any order at all, spontaneous or otherwise.

Whereas to a libertarian, freedom is no more than the absence of tyranny. To achieve freedom, defeat tyranny—i.e., any government that violates natural rights. You can see how this rule, while virtuous in some cases, in others becomes a spanner in the Carlylean works, because a Carlylean artillerist may violate quite a few natural rights on his way to order.

Thus, to a libertarian of particularly anarchist bent (for instance, a strict Rothbardian [anarcho-capitalist](#)), an illusory method for producing this genuine desideratum, spontaneous order, turns traitor and serves instead as a form of chaos. Thus libertarianism can be advertised to chaotic forces, and even attract

some energy from them. Frankly, young male humans are instinctively attracted to anything which reeks of chaos. It's just a character flaw in the species.

True chaos knows its own, however. There is an [anarchist bookstore](#) a few blocks from my house. They don't carry Rothbard, or any other "anarcho-capitalist." They know the difference between left and right. The support base may blend at some low level, but this level is well below the liability line. More supporters is not always better.

There is actually a very easy means by which a Misesian can go past libertarianism. The means has a name: [Hans-Hermann Hoppe](#). Professor Hoppe's *Democracy: The God That Failed* is still one of the best anti-democracy tracts I've read, and it was most certainly the first. Professor Hoppe is no Mises, perhaps even no Rothbard, but he is certainly the leading Rothbardian scholar of the post-Rothbard era.

To remain within the Newtonian envelope, Professor Hoppe executes a stylish double-axel of libertarian [ketman](#):

Despite the comparatively favorable portrait presented of monarchy, I am not a monarchist and the following is not a defense of monarchy. Instead, the position taken toward monarchy is this: If one must have a state, defined as an agency that exercises a compulsory territorial monopoly of ultimate decision-making (jurisdiction) and of taxation, then it is economically and ethically advantageous to choose monarchy over democracy. But this leaves the question open whether or not a state is necessary, i.e., if there exists an alternative to both, monarchy and democracy. History again cannot provide an answer to this question.

History also cannot provide an answer to the question of whether there are any blue dragons on Neptune—only that none, so far, have been observed.

It can also tell us that our species has been operating on the basis of geographic monopolies of sovereignty for roughly the last 56 million years, i.e., since the first tree-rat pissed on the first tree-branch. Perhaps we could hire some chimpanzees to experiment with multiple, overlapping protection agencies, and get back to us on that. Or we could hire the blue dragons from Neptune.

Again, we see *anarchism*—the pure toxin of chaos—popping up on the right. Why is that? Does it make the right more effective, or less effective? Is an anarchist right more, or less, likely to prevail, than a non-anarchist right? Will it do better, or worse, once in office?

Well, if we generalize to the history of the *leftist* right—that is, the right perverted to wield the weapons of the left—what we see is... well... Hitler. Left-flavored rightism *is* fascism. And easily recognizable as such. Fascism, in 2010, is not without enemies. So (a) it probably doesn't work, and (b) if it works, it produces... Hitler.

Now, a little anarchism does not make Professor Hoppe into Hitler. What it does, however, is to make him much less effective. It entirely dissuades him from leaving the envelope and exploring this strange Einsteinian area, royalism. Instead, he falls back on Rothbard's blue dragons from Neptune—competing protection agencies. We shall have neither democracy, nor anything else!

As a basically innocent person, thoroughly educated by our fine institutions of learning, having attained to hardcore, Misesian libertarianism I had attained a strangely Mohammed-esque position—halfway out of the official reality. Torso fully extruded from the great net of lies; hips still stuck.

I was ready to give up on the Jedi Council. I did not yet see the only alternative: a return to the old way of the Sith. In darkness, all roads are dark! Yet walk we must. Dark it is; and grows not lighter.

I did not see a *contradiction* between libertarianism and democracy. I saw libertarianism as the *culmination* of democracy. In my imaginary future, the obviously correct ideas of libertarianism would spread, by some process, to the minds of the masses; and, for some reason, remain there. And they would elect libertarian politicians, then and forever. Who would govern libertarianly, or whatever the proper adverb is.

I did not actually think these thoughts *explicitly*. Had I thought them *explicitly*, their aqueous character would have been apparent. I thought them *implicitly*, because I was a democratic libertarian. I had never reconsidered democracy. Once I reconsidered democracy, however, I could not help but notice the fundamental dependence of libertarianism on democracy. Without democracy, do we need libertarianism, *per se*? Would we even have thought of it?

Libertarianism is a *formula for government*. As we've seen, there are fun-

damental problems with the idea of any such formula. Mises quite successfully discredited nonlibertarian formulas for government, but he did not show that government by *any* formula is practical—including the libertarian formula.

Moreover, the entire proposition of government by formula appears motivated by a single goal: the need to design a system of government which can be enforced by democracy. Thus, libertarianism is both a *method* of government, and a *means* by which to impose that method. The method is: govern minimally (whatever precisely this may mean). The means is: convince the voting population of the need for minimal government, and ensure that they remain so convinced. Hm.

Another way to see the problem is to examine that shibboleth of libertarians—*limited government*. Now, the frustrated English teacher in me notes an interesting fact about this phrase: it is in the passive voice. Who shall limit the government? And how can we assure that they continue to do so? And if some other party does this limiting, who shall limit them? This is, of course, the old *quis custodiet* problem. To which Rothbard has no better solution than [Juvenal](#).

Libertarians can be classified according to their wrong answers to this question. If you are a *democratic* libertarian, you believe that government should be limited by popular sovereignty. You also probably haven't looked out the window in the last 200 years. If you are a *judicial* libertarian, you believe that government should be limited by *judicial* sovereignty—i.e., by a judiciary committed to Constitutional principles and the Anglo-American common law. And *you* haven't looked out the window in the last 75.

The essential problem with both democratic and judicial libertarianism is that, while we see both these phenomena succeed in history, we see them—once again—succeed only on the left. English and American history is a rich trove, as Rothbard can show you, of both popular resistance to state authority, and judicial resistance to state authority. However, this resistance succeeds only when in the process of undermining some higher order, royal or aristocratic. Once the People themselves are in the saddle, they no longer listen to complaints of this form.

In the democratic system today, to ask either the electorate or the judiciary for libertarian government is to ask an empowered body to *relinquish powers it has*. The People have powers X, Y and Z; they use these powers to vote gov-

ernment services A, B, and C; if you remove these services, you must remove the powers; if you remove the powers, you disempower.

Similarly, we live in the golden age of government by judge. Most significant executive decisions in the modern system of government land, one way in another, in the lap of a judge. This is the direct result of New Deal [Legal-Realist](#) jurisprudence. And you're asking the judiciary, itself, out of mere goodness of heart, to relinquish this fat leg of ham? You and what army?

Whereas when the likes of [Coke](#) contended with the likes of Charles I, judicially-limited government was a no-brainer. Alas, judges are men. If we had angels on this planet, we would long ago have consigned these duties to them.

Thus, again: libertarianism works for the left and fails for the right. Both sovereign electorate and sovereign judiciary are perfectly happy to restrict the powers of others, i.e., the King. Convincing them to restrict their *own* powers is quite a different problem. When democracy is competing against the remnants of the *ancien régime*, it is a force for limited government. Once it defeats and disempowers these remnants, it is a synonym for socialism.

As a post-Misesian, I am a third class of libertarian: a royalist libertarian. Which is to say, a royalist. Going where Professor Hoppe fears to tread, I set myself to the problem of *finding a good King*. And getting him into office—and making sure he stays there. As a royalist, I take it for granted that a good King will pursue libertarian policies, if of course they are called for.

It took me some time to get to this point. My response to reading Hoppe, therefore, was to immediately go out and scour the libraries for *other* works against democracy—libertarian or not. Since I expected these works to violate my sense of common decency, I was prepared for the smell of sulfur. I found quite a few. There are indeed quite a few—though few post-1945. In general, the older the anti-democracy treatise, the better, although the High Victorians are a brilliant exception.

Thus I found Carlyle. Who smells of sulfur, indeed. He speaks what he sees in a sulfurous world. Which, as he predicted and as indeed came true, would get a lot more sulfurous. Once Carlyle shows you the Devil, you are not long unconscious of his presence!

Here is a simple Carlylean puzzle for Misesians. Answer the following

questions:

1. Do you live in a city? If not, why not?
2. If so, can you safely walk anywhere in that city, at any time of day?
3. If not, what authority is restricting your freedom?

Your answers will reveal that either (a) the planet you live in is not Earth as we know it, or (b) your natural rights are most directly and saliently threatened not by official forces, but *unofficial* forces. I.e.: not by the police, but by criminals. Duh.

Note the enormous explosion in crime over the period of leftist ascendancy—as Carlylean theory would suspect, and as Carlyle himself in fact predicted. For example, if we go back to *A Study in Scarlet*, we see Holmes with an [interesting complaint](#):

“There are no crimes and no criminals in these days,” he said, querulously. “What is the use of having brains in our profession? I know well that I have it in me to make my name famous. No man lives or has ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done. And what is the result? There is no crime to detect, or at most some bungling villany with a motive so transparent that even a Scotland Yard official can see through it.”

[Official statistics](#) confirm that crime in England has increased roughly by a *factor of 50* since Conan Doyle wrote. His Holmes stories, of course, were set in the real world of his present—indeed, their success depended on their close attention to detail.

So we see that an English government of the Victorian era—without DNA testing or closed-circuit TV—managed to largely abolish crime. We also see that the present-day government of England (and of other places governed in the same way) pretends to *want* to abolish crime—but to be *unable* to do so. Are we inclined to doubt this pretence? We are. Are we entitled to doubt it? We *certainly* are.

But if this pretence is indeed a pretence, if crime can indeed be abolished by enforcement, we accuse the present regime of something very serious. It becomes an *accessory* to this crime, which it could have abolished but chose not to. Furthermore, rather than admitting to this (somewhat) unprecedented abuse, it chose to deny the fact, and plead an obviously farcical incompetence. Certainly, when the SS removed police protection from the Jews of Riga, the SS made itself morally responsible for the subsequent pogrom by the Latvians of Riga. Even if all the *Obersturmführers* were on their lunch break, or whatever.

Therefore, the simplest way for a libertarian to support natural rights in his own society is to support a *savage police crackdown on crime*. For instance, by reimposing the standards and practices of the Victorian law-enforcement system, certainly both available and practical.

Inevitably some mistakes will be made; some innocent heads will be cracked. However, as a libertarian in America, exercising your libertarian rights, your goal is to minimize the number of natural-rights violations in America—whoever may be committing them, and in whatever uniform. Hence, you should generally support the police against criminals. The former violate natural rights only by accident and/or malfeasance, whereas the latter do so as a matter of regular procedure. In practice, it is not hard to know who is the cop, and who the criminal.

Unleash the blue wave! As Travis Bickle [put it](#), someday a real rain will wash all the scum off these streets. That rain is on the way. Its name is *President Brown*. “You will croak, you little clown / When you [mess with President Brown!](#)” And after that rain, preventive-detention facilities will spring up like puffballs, as America’s streets are scrubbed clean as diamonds and left as safe as the White House lawn.

This is, of course, one version of Rothbard—the Rothbard of the [Rothbard-Rockwell Report](#), somewhat exaggerated but not absurdly so. There are various libertarian excuses as to why this natural elaboration of libertarian principles is inappropriate, I know. But I have never seen one worthy of remembering.

The details of this “blue-wave libertarianism” are not important. What’s important is that the Rothbardian theory contradicts itself. Applying strictly Rothbardian methods—the sovereign should restrict itself to the task of minimizing natural-rights violations—we have reached a remarkably non-Rothbardian re-

sult. From the aprioristic praxeology of human action, we deduce [Joe Arpaio](#). There may be nothing wrong with this answer—but it seems strange. At least, from a Misesian perspective.

When encountering this formula, *right is right and left is wrong*, first popularized by the great Austrian reactionary [Kuehnelt-Leddihn](#) (who, by the way, is a good read after Professor Hoppe; if nothing else, they host his books at [LvMI](#), so they must approve), great care is necessary.

Yes. I do believe this: right is right and left is wrong. But only the pure article. Right, pure right, is right and left is wrong. As for any mixture of the two—only the Devil knows. The two great totalitarian tyrannies of the 20th century are both mixtures of right and left, order and chaos—in which both strains are prominent. If it is possible to be more Satanic than mere anarchy alone, these mixtures proved it.

For instance, if right is right and left is wrong, must we side with the right in all the major political and military struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries? If so, we find ourselves siding with not only the Nazis, but also the Kaiser, the Sultan, and the Confederates. Which may be correct—but again, suggests an additional self-test is necessary.

The answer is that where we see atrocities of the right, we tend to see a right-wing system whose order is seriously contaminated with some fundamentally chaotic element. For example, out of many reactionary elements in the late Weimar Republic, the Nazis emerged triumphant. Why?

Because, National Socialism was best-adapted to succeeding in the democratic system of Weimar. For instance, because of its anti-Semitism (an unsophisticated, lower-class prejudice), it could offer up the scapegoat of “organized Jewry.” It could set the majority, like dogs, on the minority. Fresh meat! The [Tatkreis](#) crowd, for instance, had no such bait to fling the mob. We have no idea what the [national conservatives](#) of Germany would have done after Weimar. Weimar could never have elected them, and they had no way of overthrowing it.

Furthermore, we again see the use of leftist tropes by a rightist movement. How did Hitler come by German nationalism? Where did this bug come from? Well, perhaps it came over the Alps from Italian nationalism. Or across the Danube from Hungarian nationalism. Or...

With the notable exception of (later) German and (sometimes) French nationalisms, all the nationalist movements in Europe are pet projects of the British (and American) liberal. (Yes, that same Manchester liberal—mostly, though not entirely.) [Mazzini](#), [Garibaldi](#), [Kossuth](#), etc., etc., etc.: all cheered by great crowds when they come to London. (Whereas [General Hyaena](#) is lucky to escape with his life.)

It is not obvious that ethnic nationalism makes any sense except in the context of democracy. Thus, we see the two as coinfections, like [Kaposi's sarcoma](#) and AIDS. The Nazis, fighting against democracy, pick up this Kaposi's sarcoma and use it as a weapon in the opposite direction. Once again, I would recommend *very* strongly against this trick. Not only were the results extraordinarily dire the one time it *did* (sort of) work, it's generally just a way to alert the immune system. Thus again, we see the practical advantage of absolute veracity.

But there is a still greater difference. When proselytizing toward a libertarian or any other [red republican](#), a royalist has another easy question to start with. What is the difference between Frederick the Great and Hitler? Both, after all, exercised absolute personal authority over a country of Germans. Yet refugees fled *from* Hitler's Germany; [to](#) Frederick's Prussia. Was this predictable? If so, how?

Until you understand the difference between a king and a dictator, you will continue to confuse the timeless human institution of monarchy with these monstrous 20th-century abortions. In truth, the dictatorships of the 20th century *were* attempts to restore the vitality of the old regime. The bad ones were just *bad* attempts. Bad is bad; anything can be done badly, monarchy and democracy certainly both included.

Hitler himself was a huge Carlyle fan. But Hitler was also Hitler. If you don't understand the difference between Hitler and Frederick, it is not because you are ignorant of Hitler! The educated person of our time has a remarkably accurate picture of Nazi Germany. Of all the historical periods he understands, he understands the Third Reich best—usually, much better than his own present day. His view of the democratic regime, which survives, is shrouded in democratic euphemism; his view of the Nazi regime, which does not, is free from Nazi cant. And of the *actual* old regime, he knows nothing at all.

There are many differences between Hitler and Frederick, but perhaps the key one is stability. Frederick, while not intrinsically secure from his foreign enemies, was quite secure from any *domestic* opposition. No one was trying to kill him; no one could have accomplished anything by killing him. He was, in short, a monarch. A dead monarch is replaced, automatically, by another monarch—the identity of whom is already known. If the old monarch was assassinated, God forbid, the new monarch is generally *not* the assassin (or his employers).

Not so for a dictator! People were trying to kill Hitler all the time, and it's a Satanic miracle that none of them succeeded. If, say, [Elser's bomb](#) had worked, it would have changed the course of history. There was no Hitler 2.0, or vice-Hitler, or Son of Hitler, waiting in the wings. Hitler, for all his faults, was one of a kind. Thus, the incentive was considerable.

And thus, Hitler—unlike Frederick—has to devote considerable effort to shoring up his sovereignty, which is by no means secure. He has to scapegoat the Jews and fight the Communists, for instance; his sovereignty depends on his popularity, and he is popular because he fights these popular enemies. Otherwise, what's the point of Hitler?

Hitler is also noted for his “two in a box” management style, in which he gives multiple subordinates the same job and lets them fight it out. This is generally not recommended at Harvard Business School. And so on. Thus, irrespective of his (dubious) sanity, Hitler has a *rational motivation* for tyranny. His regime is inherently violent, thus inherently chaotic.

The same, but far worse, is true for Hitler's great adversary—Stalin. One of the most amazing documents of the 20th century is the [Webbs'](#) essay *Is Stalin a Dictator?*. Their answer, of course, is *no*:

Sometimes it is asserted that, whereas the form may be otherwise, the fact is that, whilst the Communist Party controls the whole administration, the Party itself, and thus indirectly the whole state, is governed by the will of a single person, Josef Stalin.

First let it be noted that, unlike Mussolini, Hitler and other modern dictators, Stalin is not invested by law with any authority over his fellow-citizens, and not even over the members of the Party to

which he belongs...

In other words, Stalin is not a dictator because (unlike Hitler) he is not *legally* a dictator. On paper, he is just what his title says he is: general secretary of the CPSU. A purely *clerical* position. As the title, of course, implies.

In real life, of course, Stalin *was* a dictator. Which made his position rather precarious! By the nominal collective, bottom-up, democratic structure of the Communist Party (completely absent, of course, in the Nazi Party), Stalin was a mere clerk. In the actual, unwritten reality, he was a Tsar.

Thus, the capacity of this system to revert from its informal Tsarism, to its formal “democratic centralism,” was on every second of every day latent. Formally, officially, Stalinism is an ultra-democratic, left-wing, bottom-up form of government. Actually, unofficially, it is an ultra-despotic, right-wing, top-down form of government. The contradiction is quite great. Here is our chaos: black and white, sharing a single desk. Stalin has the power of the Tsars, but not the security of the Tsars.

No wonder Stalin killed so many old Communists. He had to. At least, once he started. He was riding the tiger. After Stalin died, Beria tried to take Stalin’s place and hold this system together. A lot of bad things have been said about Beria and no doubt most of them are true, but no one to my knowledge has ever described him as a pussy.

So he lasted surprisingly long: almost four months. After that, of course, he was *shot*. The Soviet Union never had a true dictator again. It did not become a democracy, of course, but an oligarchy. Later general secretaries were strictly *primus inter pares* among the Politburo.

Thus we see the chaos implicit in tyranny. The tyrant is *depraved, on account of he’s deprived*. Regardless of his personal mental stability, the instability of his regime compels him to tyrannize. Of course, if he’s a paranoid sadist, this may compel him as well; and indeed, this tendency may aid him in getting the job. It certainly is not a qualification for monarchy.

Dictatorship, of course, can *evolve* into monarchy. Every historical monarchy has originated as, in some sense, a dictatorship. Caesar’s is a good example. But if a dictatorship is to make this transition, if it is to achieve stability and permanence, it had better be *designed* to do so. 20th-century dictatorships

were designed primarily to fit the needs of the processes that brought them to power. These were ugly processes, with no particular affection for stability and permanence. Hence, they bred tyrants. Only tyrants could harness the evil, chaotic power of these democracies gone wrong.

As a royalist, I favor absolute monarchy in the abstract sense: unconditional personal authority, subject to some responsibility mechanism. I am not an adherent of any particular dynasty, nor do I favor the hereditary principle as a method for royal selection; I prefer another political innovation of the Elizabethan era, the joint-stock company. I feel the State should be operated as a profitable corporation governed proportionally by its beneficiaries.

But given a binary choice between restoring the Stuarts, or sticking with the Anglo-American republican tradition, I would restore the Stuarts. At worst, an absolute President could even be elected by universal suffrage. Though, if you want a Hitler, this is how to get one.

I feel I have done a reasonable job of advertising Carlyle—or, at least, explaining Carlyle. But is my advertising true? And didn't I ask you to read Carlyle, before reading *about* Carlyle? If so, shall we not shit, or get off the pot?

So: enough abstractions of personal government. Let's look at a real example. And let's pick a Carlyle essay which is challenging, yet understandable. You've swallowed the theory. Now, the practice. If you can get this red pill down, you're cured. If not—well, you're probably normal. It's okay. Most people are.

Ill-informed leftist slurs to the contrary, [General Pinochet](#) is not exactly a popular, much-praised figure in libertarian circles. And not one libertarian in a thousand has even heard of his 19th-century Paraguayan counterpart—the subject of Carlyle's magnificent [Dr. Francia](#) (1843).

If you are interested in joining the weird cult of Carlyle, *Dr. Francia* is perhaps the best introduction. For one thing, it is one of the earliest works of Carlyle's later, *politically incorrect* period—which, if you are a busy person, is the only period you need to read. For another, you know even less about the real Dr. Francia than Carlyle did.

Carlyle—no dilettante belletrist, but one of his century's more diligent documentary historians—frankly confesses the utter inadequacy of his sources. It

is unclear that they have improved. Paraguayan Studies is not one of the University's more popular majors. Please read *Dr. Francia* before you go Googling about for the actual Dr. Francia—it is not at all clear to me that Wikipedia's picture is any clearer than that of the aqueous Robertsons' *Letters on Paraguay*. With which it seems so synoptic. But could the Robertsons just be right? Who knows? Ah, the dark past.

And if you *do* read *Dr. Francia*, and are still shocked, there is only one cure. You are shocked because you are considering the matter in itself, on an absolute scale. You are not comparing it to the alternative. So why not have a look at the alternative?

Dear reader: I am proud to recommend the first must-see movie, or at least Internet video, of 2010. This is Shane Smith's *Vice Guide to Liberia*. "We here at *Vice* have been fascinated by Liberia for a long time..." Thus do we learn of the cannibal warlord *General Butt Naked*. So, which would you prefer? Dr. Francia? Or General Butt Naked? Apples to apples, dear reader.

Chapter 2

Why Carlyle Matters

If there is one writer in English whose name can be uttered with Shakespeare's, it is Carlyle.

If we need a third, we can add [Johnson](#). (Chaucer is too foreign.) Shakespeare, Carlyle, and Johnson: do you notice a pattern? If not, you are probably new to UR. If you're not quite sure who Carlyle and Johnson were, much glorious learning awaits you. Fortunately you get to learn Johnson on your own—I know very little about the 18th century.

But you will find precious few who have read all three and will quarrel with this trinity. And all of them are fools. In my view. Then again, I named my daughter after Carlyle. If you are wiser and reserve your judgment, please allow me to etch away one or two of your reservations.

First, it is no daring literary act to exalt Carlyle as superhuman. Like Johnson, he was exalted as superhuman in his own time. Indeed, the proper way to introduce Carlyle is through the eyes of his peers.

Some of whom are still remembered. For example, one American wrote:

The way to test how much he has left his country were to consider, or try to consider, for a moment, the array of British thought, the resultant *ensemble* of the last fifty years as existing today, *but with Carlyle left out*. It would be like an army with no artillery.

That was [Walt Whitman](#), in his [1881 obituary](#). People still read Whitman, but not Carlyle. There's a reason for this. It's not necessarily a good reason.

Because Whitman's point of view—about as close as it comes to NPR *avant la lettre*—is so easy for the good citizen of 2009 to masticate, his introduction to Carlyle may be the best available. You see, the basic reason Carlyle is not in your high-school English reader, whereas Whitman is, is that Carlyle was what, here at UR, we call a *reactionary*. (Whereas Whitman is a *progressive*, or in 19th-century parlance a *radical*.)

A reactionary is not a Republican, a Democrat, or even a libertarian. It is not even a communist, a fascist, or a monarchist. It is something much older, stranger, and more powerful. But if you can describe it as anything, you can describe it as the pure opposite of progressivism. True reaction is long since extinct in the wild, but it lives in Carlyle—whose writings are now and forever available at a click, though they may be illegal in most states and the European Union.

But let Whitman introduce us:

All that is comprehended under the terms republicanism and democracy were distasteful to [Carlyle] from the first, and as he grew older they became hateful and contemptible. For an undoubtedly candid and penetrating faculty such as his, the bearings he persistently ignored were marvellous.

For instance, the promise, nay certainty of the democratic principle, to each and every State of the current world, not so much of helping it to perfect legislators and executives, but as the only effectual method for surely, however slowly, training people on a large scale toward voluntarily ruling and managing themselves (the ultimate aim of political and all other development)—to gradually reduce the fact of *governing* to its minimum, and to subject all its staffs and their doings to the telescopes and microscopes of committees and parties—and greatest of all, to afford (not stagnation and obedient content, which went well enough with the feudalism and ecclesiasticism of the antique and medieval world, but) a vast and sane and recurrent ebb and tide action for those floods of the great deep that have henceforth palpably burst forever their old bounds—seem never to have entered Carlyle's thought.

It was splendid how he refused any compromise to the last. He was curiously antique. In that harsh, picturesque, most potent voice and figure, one seems to be carried back from the present of the British islands more than two thousand years, to the range between Jerusalem and Tarsus. His [fullest best biographer](#) justly says of him:

He was a teacher and a prophet, in the Jewish sense of the word. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah have become a part of the permanent spiritual inheritance of mankind, because events proved that they had interpreted correctly the signs of their own times, and their prophecies were fulfilled. Carlyle, like them, believed that he had a special message to deliver to the present age. Whether he was correct in that belief, and whether his message was a true message, remains to be seen. He has told us that our most cherished ideas of political liberty, with their kindred corollaries, are mere illusions, and that the progress which has seemed to go along with them is a progress towards anarchy and social dissolution. If he was wrong, he has misused his powers. The principles of his teachings are false. He has offered himself as a guide upon a road of which he had no knowledge; and his own desire for himself would be the speediest oblivion both of his person and his works. If, on the other hand, he has been right; if, like his great predecessors, he has read truly the tendencies of this modern age of ours, and his teaching is authenticated by facts, then Carlyle, too, will take his place among the inspired seers.

To which I add an amendment that under no circumstances, and no matter how completely time and events disprove his lurid vaticinations, should the English-speaking world forget this man, nor fail to hold in honor his unsurpassed conscience, his unique method,

and his honest fame. Never were convictions more earnest and genuine. Never was there less of a flunkey or temporizer. Never had political progressivism a foe it could more heartily respect.

[...]

Then I find no better text, (it is always important to have a definite, special, even oppositional, living man to start from), for sending out certain speculations and comparisons for home use. Let us see what they amount to—those reactionary doctrines, fears, scornful analyses of democracy—even from the most erudite and sincere mind of Europe.

We slipped some [Froude](#) (Carlyle's disciple as well as his biographer) in there with the Whitman. But the quote is Whitman's own. Is it not a measure of Whitman's own greatness—the archpoet of Democracy triumphant—that he gives such props to such a pure opponent? If Whitman can worship Carlyle and quote Froude—what Whitmans are there today?

There are two ways to process Carlyle in 2009. One is to buy in with Whitman: of course Carlyle was wrong as a prophet, though we acknowledge his importance as a writer. (Well, actually, most of us don't. But a few professors will always have no choice.) As another [contemporary critic](#) (this one mercifully forgotten) put it:

By common consent, or nearly so, Mr. Carlyle died our *greatest English Man of Letters*. Of this claim on his behalf (which includes of course a recognition of him as a great intellectual and spiritual force) there can scarce, I should say, be much question. But one might very well admire Mr. Carlyle as a *Litterateur* (in this higher and larger sense) yet have only a modified belief in him as a Prophet, and question altogether his title to be called—except in a rather loose and inexact way—a great Thinker and Philosopher.

From this perspective, just as Froude describes, Carlyle misused his vatic powers. On behalf of “[the cultural evils of nineteenth-century Britain](#).” And has suffered that justified oblivion which all false prophets deserve and receive. Evil having since been eradicated in Britain, of course.

If it can be swallowed in the 21st century with a straight face, a task demanding no small strength of gullet, this is a safe antidote which detoxifies Carlyle, and renders him safe for antiseptic scholarship of the [Dryasdust](#) school. Alternatively, one can embrace the dark side and simply study Carlyle, and of course his era, as [the Adversary](#): Satan personified. This is even safer, as the dead do not shoot back.

(But Hell has a carrel and a stipend for everyone who studied the past because he despised it, and a big corner office for those in the actual [business](#) of actual [libel](#). Kids: if you hate your ancestors, hold your tongues. You will not feel like such fools later.)

The trouble with studying 19th-century Britain from the 20th-century American point of view is that no Victorianist can think seriously of a modern career in the field unless he shoots only through one or both of these two orthodox angles, Dryasdust or [Hesperus Fiddlestring](#). Either camera can churn out any amount of scholarly product, and neither can be handled by anyone with an actual soul. The literary value of both together is about that of Marx–Lenin studies, though the former is useful from a strictly clerical standpoint. (Indeed, the Soviet understanding of the Victorians was exactly the same as ours, modulo a little Marx.)

If you did not have a soul, however, you probably would not have found your way to UR. Likewise, a brain. And this brain cannot fail to have had a certain reaction to Mr. Whitman’s argument against Mr. Carlyle. Was that reaction, by any chance, “*um?*”, or “*what?*”, or “*okay,*” or “*sure, I guess?*”

For example, when Whitman castigates Carlyle for not realizing that democracy will “gradually reduce the fact of *governing* to its minimum,” or “perfect legislators and executives,” or (best of all) train its own voting citizens “on a large scale” to be every year wiser and more well-informed, did your soul leap up and shout: “*Very true, Mr. Whitman! And we of 2009 know just how true it is!*”

I actually did not excerpt Whitman’s principal argument against Carlyle. It is two pages of windy [Hegelism](#)—plainly free of content. [Give it a go](#) and see what you think. Whitman always was a sucker for the mystical, a hippie in the wrong century. (He was [not alone](#) in this.) But he was an honest man, not afraid to [tell us](#) “what a foetid gasbag much of modern radicalism is.” The good old

curate's egg—but still, say more, Mr. Whitman! Alas, men have declined, and poets too.

And when Whitman writes:

Carlyle's grim fate was cast to live and dwell in, and largely embody, the parturition agony and qualms of the old order, amid crowded accumulations of ghastly morbidity, giving birth to the new. But conceive of him (or his parents before him) coming to America, recuperated by the cheering realities and activity of our people and country—growing up and delving face-to-face resolutely among us here, especially at the West—inhaling and exhaling our limitless air and eligibilities—devoting his mind to the theories and developments of this Republic amid its practical facts as exemplified in Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, or Louisiana. I say *facts*, and face-to-face confrontings—so different from books, and all those quiddities and mere reports in the libraries, upon which the man (it was wittily said of him at the age of thirty, that there was no one in Scotland who had gleaned so much and seen so little), almost wholly fed, and which even his sturdy and vital mind but reflected at best.

Carlyle, of course, was a historian. Reconstructing other worlds from books was his trade, actual time-tourism not being an option. And his pithy little wisecracks about contemporary America are worth more, a century and a half later, than most present libraries.

But more to the point, I can *rather easily* imagine Carlyle's response to *present-day* Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee or (Lord help us) Louisiana. If those states in 1881 might have shaken Carlyle's faith in the downward course of democracy, a point on which we may defer to Whitman, I can't imagine their present successors would achieve any such result.

In fact, if we could organize a joint tour of their ghosts, I rather imagine that *Whitman himself* would end up siding with Carlyle on many (if not all) points. We have seen Whitman's honesty, and we cannot imagine him arguing for the track record of democracy since he wrote, if only because *all his arguments are*

plainly falsified. If Carlyle ignores these arguments, he ignores them because they are (and thus must always have been) worthy of nothing but ignorance.

Our society, of course, has *its own* mental defenses against the Carlylean position. There is certainly no shortage of arguments for “republicanism and democracy.” They are just all different from Whitman’s arguments. Still, there are enough that most intelligent people consider the case overwhelming—to the point where they have never seriously considered it.

However, if we imagine Whitman dropping his own falsified arguments and picking up the latest and greatest replacements, we imagine a Walt Whitman who is not a poet but a defense lawyer. People have called Whitman many nasty names, but no one to my knowledge ever described him as a reptilian, two-tongued bureaucrat.

This does not tell us that there exist no *correct* arguments for “republicanism and democracy,” against Carlyle and reaction. It merely implies that if Whitman and Carlyle both had a chance to inspect the world of 2009, it is probably Whitman and not Carlyle who would feel chastened, and have to apologize; Whitman who would agree with Carlyle, not vice versa. But Whitman and Carlyle could both be wrong, of course.

Therefore we achieve a strange conclusion in our perspective of Carlyle. We begin to suspect that we should at least consider Froude’s *second* alternative:

If, on the other hand, he has been right; if, like his great predecessors, he has read truly the tendencies of this modern age of ours, and his teaching is authenticated by facts, then Carlyle, too, will take his place among the inspired seers.

But if Froude is right, we have only seen *half* the prophecy unfold. The teaching has been authenticated. The teacher remains unknown. This, dear reader, is why Carlyle matters.

For is this not what Froude should have expected? If democracy triumph—and it has—why should it bother to recall its enemy, Carlyle? Does it run out of friends, of Whitmans, to celebrate? Is it thus forced to sing the praises of its foes? What winner was ever short of friends? Ah, if only victory implied righteousness, and might made right. But there is no principle of which the democrat is more skeptical.

The case of democracy is a case in which the jury has heard only from the defense. Year after year, generation after generation, democracy's lawyers trot out an ever-changing dog's breakfast of alibis, character witnesses and Harvard scientists, all singing one tune: the ironclad innocence and stellar nobility of the defendant, who is no more and no less than Gotham's finest citizen. As for the prosecutor, his corpse has been rotting in the men's room for years. Sometimes the bailiff, who has a ninth-grade education, a Tennessee accent and a drinking problem, picks up a few pages from his brief and reads them out of order.

But is the trial over? It is all but over. The jury is utterly sold. If they could adjourn and assign the defendant the keys to Gotham for life, they would. They are not even aware that there *is* a trial. They think they're deciding whether to award a gold medal or a platinum one. But alas: the verdict of history is never, ever in. Once it does find the truth, though, it tends to stay there.

For it is a terrible thing to see a prophecy come true, but more terrible to see just the first half. Time remains for the rest, and always will. It is never too late to read Carlyle; it has certainly never been easier. And when he takes his place, etc., I promise you: other things will change.

But what exactly is (I claim) authenticated? What did Carlyle believe, what did he foresee, and how does history validate it? And what did he get wrong? For he was not actually a god, of course. It is time to say goodbye to our Whitmans, and see the infernal regions for themselves.

Carlyle did not believe in democracy. But he must have believed in something. What, then, was this something? If you stop believing in democracy, quite a difficult mental step for anyone in 2009—or 1859, in fact, which is much of what made Carlyle unique—what do you believe in instead? Hopefully you will hear a terrible, creaking noise, as your brain stretches to regard the awful answer. It is not my answer, it is Carlyle's, but I take the liberty of translating.

First and foremost, Carlyle is a believer in *order*. To Carlyle, the old order is not “giving birth to the new.” It is rotting slowly into anarchy—or burning fast, as in France or later Russia. The destination is not an order at all, but a blackened waste with clumps of singed ferns. Nor does this observation make the old order good—the *ancien régime* was termite bait and a firetrap. But in Carlyle's mirror, the pattern that the ordinary [Whig historian](#) and his ordinary

student know as steady progress punctuated by brilliant revolutions, becomes a pattern of inexorable decay punctuated by explosions of barbarism.

Here is a characteristic passage, often quoted on this blog, from *Shooting Niagara*—Carlyle’s last great reactionary pamphlet. It cannot be quoted too often:

All the *Millenniums* I ever heard of heretofore were to be preceded by a “chaining of the Devil for a thousand years,”—laying *him* up, tied neck and heels, and put beyond stirring, as the preliminary. You too have been taking preliminary steps, with more and more ardour, for a thirty years back; but they seem to be all in the opposite direction: a cutting asunder of straps and ties, wherever you might find them; pretty indiscriminate of choice in the matter: a general repeal of old regulations, fetters, and restrictions (restrictions on the Devil originally, I believe, for most part, but now fallen slack and ineffectual), which had become unpleasant to many of you,—with loud shouting from the multitude, as strap after strap was cut, “Glory, glory, another strap is gone!”—this, I think, has mainly been the sublime legislative industry of Parliament since it became “*Reform Parliament*,” victoriously successful, and thought sublime and beneficent by some. So that now hardly any limb of the Devil has a thrum, or tatter of rope or leather left upon it:—there needs almost superhuman heroism in you to “whip” a garotter; no *Fenian* taken with the reddest hand is to be meddled with, under penalties; hardly a murderer, never so detestable and hideous, but you find him “insane,” and board him at the public expense, a very peculiar *British Prytaneum* of these days! And in fact, THE DEVIL (he, verily, if you will consider the sense of words) is likewise become an Emancipated Gentleman; lithe of limb as in Adam and Eve’s time, and scarcely a toe or finger of him *tied* any more. And you, my astonishing friends, *you* are certainly getting into a millennium, such as never was before,—hardly even in the dreams of Bedlam.

We speak of prophecy. Well, what became of Britain, in this century of

democracy? This millennium? In which the Devil became an Emancipated Gentleman?

Britain lost her Empire and most of Ireland, and became a political satellite of America. Her industries declined and largely disappeared. Her crime rate rose by a [factor of 50](#)—not 50%. Her aristocracy was decimated by two Continental wars of unparalleled savagery, and permanently destroyed by [punitive taxation](#). Many areas of London and other cities became unsafe by day, and more by night. Her lower classes, generously augmented by the dregs of the late Empire, achieved levels of [squalor, ignorance and degradation](#) perhaps unsurpassed in human history. Meanwhile, the Crown and the Lords disappeared as meaningful political entities, the Commons ceased to be a genuine forum for debate and became a parking lot for party hacks, and political power diffused into a vast, shapeless morass of [Whitehall bureaucrats](#), [Berlaymont](#) Eurocrats, mendacious talking heads, and professors of incompetence.

And worst of all, most appalling of all—Britons *do not feel they have a problem*. Quite the contrary. They have never been better governed. The smarter and more informed they are, the more deeply they thank the 20th century from saving them from the evils of the Victorian age. The educated Englishman of 2009 considers himself the beneficiary of two centuries of steadily improving good government, from [Castlereagh](#) to Gordon Brown.

Indeed, if any faint shadow of anything like a Carlylean view persists anywhere as a living tradition, it is in America herself. Evaluated as pure reaction, American conservatism is the most confused, polluted, and diluted sample conceivable, but so long as we exclude [elderly Chilean generals](#) it is by far the most reactionary thing on earth. There is nothing remotely like a European equivalent. In Europe, especially the Continent, all is Left.

Yet Whitman wrote:

I have deliberately repeated it all, not only in offset to Carlyle's ever-lurking pessimism and world-decadence, but as presenting the most thoroughly *American points of view* I know. In my opinion the above formulas of Hegel are an essential and crowning justification of New World democracy in the creative realms of time and space. There is that about them which only the vastness, the

multiplicity and the vitality of America would seem able to comprehend, to give scope and illustration to, or to be fit for, or even originate. It is strange to me that they were born in Germany, or in the old world at all. While a Carlyle, I should say, is quite the legitimate European product to be expected.

In 2009, of course, warmed-over Walt Whitman is all we get from Europe—Britain with a few [exceptions](#), the Continent without. The “legitimate European product” is not reaction, but socialism. Not Carlyle, but [Pinter](#). Not [Metternich](#), but [Cohn-Bendit](#). Ah, if only might proved right! If only! We could all take another blue pill, and sleep with such sweet smiles.

Here we start to see the prophetic powers of Carlyle. 150 years ago it was unimaginable that American “republicanism and democracy” would eventually triumph, but certainly not that it would eradicate every independent trace of indigenous Continental or even British thought. Carlyle does not even quite predict this. But if anyone could have imagined it, it was he.

Compare the great reactionary to a mere conservative of his time, if no mean one—Queen Victoria herself. Victoria, if you read her letters (which are well worth reading), emerges as no cipher either political or intellectual, and her view of the [disturbances of 1848](#) is much the same as Carlyle’s. And yet in 1851, she [writes](#) to [Leopold I](#) of Belgium:

The position of Princes is no doubt difficult in these times, but it would be much less so if they would behave honourably and straightforwardly, giving the people gradually those privileges which would satisfy all the reasonable and well-intentioned, and would weaken the power of the Red Republicans; instead of that, *reaction* and a return to all the tyranny and oppression is the cry and the principle—and all papers and books are being seized and prohibited, as in the days of Metternich!

In other words: Victoria believes the cure for acute democracy is chronic democracy. [Canning](#) and [Palmerston](#) have spent the entire post-Napoleonic era going around Europe fighting Metternich and all other defenders of the old European

order, promoting British clients (such as [Piedmont](#)) under the banner of constitutional monarchy. Which Victoria, and many like her, consider the cure for “Red Republicanism.”

([Yes, Virginia](#), our own dear Republicans originated as the most left-wing party in the most left-wing country on earth. The name is not at all a coincidence. They were basically socialists, they adored ethnic minorities, and if their party had a color, it was [red](#). How things change!)

Now curiously, *today*, everyone agrees that there is no such thing as constitutional monarchy. Constitutional monarchy in 2009 is a synonym for symbolic monarchy, which is vestigial monarchy if at all—quite indistinguishable in reality from any “Red Republicanism.” Queen Victoria was not at all without actual power. Queen Elizabeth is. This outcome would not have surprised Carlyle. Nor might it have surprised Whitman, to whom all queens were dinosaurs. It would certainly have surprised everyone in between.

Thus the exercise of hindsight devastates the entire political center: liberal, moderate and conservative. Validation is available only to the reactionary and the radical (19th century) or progressive (20th), both of whom hold the only consistent position: the true spirit of democracy is anarchy, dissolution of hierarchical authority. To the radical, this flame, if not snuffed out, cannot be withstood. To the reactionary, the cancer will either kill the patient or be eradicated. To both, no stable compromise is possible or desirable.

How will the center of 2009 hold up in the light of 2159? It is a different center, of course—but this is hardly a promise of durability. Consider how you will react if the center of 2009 turns out to be *to the right* of the center of 2029, following the general pattern of human history. Consider the 20th century’s favorite centrist tract, [The Vital Center](#) (1949), by its favorite court historian, [Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.](#)—a young crony of FDR, an old crony of JFK. Then consider Professor Schlesinger’s last work—[The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society](#) (1991). You can read these books, but do you need to?

Escaping this trap of centrism is the first and most difficult task for those tempted to think outside the democratic box. Faced with the endless, mind-boggling whirl of mass political mania, the assumption that there exists some Goldilocks mean, not too hot or too cold, which *just happens* to correspond

to the average public opinion of the current generation (which is absurdly left-wing in the eyes of the previous generation, and will be absurdly right-wing in the eyes of the next), and which therefore should be correct—or at least a starting point... alas. The more we focus our eyes on it, the more this island of seeming sanity melts and disappears.

We find ourselves in the middle of the ocean. We suddenly realize that we know nothing at all about human politics. We are forced not just to consider the set of theories of government which are popular *now*, but the set which *has ever* been popular. Most have applied their minds only to two theories of republicanism, the liberal and conservative as practiced today, between which there is almost no distance by historical standards.

And then we abandon our centrism, and we are comforted. We read Carlyle, and we see that there are only two logically consistent choices for our political belief. They can be briefly summarized as Carlyle and [Alinsky](#).

What we see instead, from *both* the Carlylean and Alinskyist perspectives, is a *monotonic slope*. This is the *slope of order*. Order slopes up to the right: true right, which is reactionary, is always the direction of increasing order, and true left the direction of increasing disorder. It is especially valuable to have a clear definition of this polarization, which seems to have evolved independently so many times in history. [David Axelrod](#) would surely get along with the [Gracchi](#), and [Pinochet](#) with [Sulla](#).

Since most people do not know the Carlylean theory of order, but most *do* know the Alinskyist theory of disorder (I won't be surprised if my daughter is introduced to "activism" well before kindergarten), there is an obvious temptation here. The temptation is to derive the Carlylean theory by simply *reversing* its equally-uncompromising Alinskyist dual. Thus, everything bad is good, and so on. For example, from this perspective we could reach the absurd conclusion that the ultimate act of good government is to shoot into a mob.

While this approach can be useful in an absolute *emergency*, I would encourage readers to at least be *very careful* with it. The practice of defining the Right by reversing the Left can lead one to idolize persons and practices who, in the *true Carlylean cosmos*, are quite unworthy. It is definitely not for the *apprentice* necromancer or *candidate* Sith Lord.

Indeed the Carlylean theory of order might just as well be stated as *truth*.

Or *justice*. For Carlyle, truth, justice and order are all inseparable and perfectly desirable. There is no such thing as too much truth, too much justice, or too much order; the ideal society is one in which all these qualities are seen to their maximum extent. In the society that is Cosmos, truth, justice and order all pertain. In its opposite, Chaos, we see lies and injustice and disorder.

Indeed, Carlyle is often described as not just a prophet, but a *theologian*. And indeed there are 92 references to the word “God” in the keystone of his political work, the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. You may not believe in God—I don’t—but until you understand Carlyle’s theology, you cannot understand his theory of government. Carlyle was raised a true Scottish Calvinist, an obsolete form of Christianity which actually believed in the concept of sin, and if you have some kind of irrational allergy to Christianity you will never be able to read his books. Sorry.

Order in Carlyle is obedience to the law of God in government, and enforcement of the law of God is the test of good government. And what is the law of God? Does it have anything to do with *mixed fibers*? It does not. It is no more than truth, justice and order—each of which reduces to the other.

While these buzzwords are easy to say, *justice* is a buzzword of the present regime and *truth* is not far behind. *Order* has escaped the owl-droppings, however, unless you live in *Brazil*. Thus it remains the best word with which to describe Carlylean thought.

Let us work up from *order* to Carlyle’s theory of slavery. If you can understand slavery through Carlyle’s eyes—and he is one of the few theoretical defenders of slavery in the last two centuries, the only other I can think of off-hand being *George Fitzhugh*—nothing in Carlyle will shock you.

For once, I will paraphrase, because Carlyle’s essay on the subject, the “Occasional Discourse,” should not be the first Carlyle you read, but the last. A good political education in Carlyle is: first *Chartism*, then the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, then *Shooting Niagara*, then the “Occasional Discourse.” I would hate to spoil this progression. So again, I will not quote Carlyle on slavery.

Order, for Carlyle, is the set of *bonds* between the humans in society. A bond is any promise of importance. It may be a promise of payment, it may be a promise of work, it may be a promise of marriage. Regardless, a society is orderly if it is a society in which promises of significant human value, explicit

or implicit, are *made* and *kept*.

Every promise is an *obligation*. By writing the promise, I compel my future self. If I promise to pay you \$1000 in 2011, I am not exercising my human right of liberty if in 2011 I refuse to pay you. I cannot say: no, man, I would rather be free. By not paying you, man, I am exercising my human right to be free.

Consider the difference between the society in which I can get away with this hippie shit, and the society in which I can't. The society in which obligations can be broken is the society in which loans are either risky, expensive and hard to get, or do not exist at all. Thus we see clearly that the society in which promises are made and kept, the society of *order*, is more civilized and humane. It is a better society. Once again, there is no Goldilocks effect, no golden mean.

We thus see that the *enforcement* of promises is a critical aspect of human society. Certain promises are self-enforcing: they are fulfilled because the promiser wants to fulfill them. Marriage, in the ideal, is such a promise. In most cases, however, a loan is not. A society that contains an impartial and *irresistible* enforcer of contracts is thus preferable to one which does not—although no contract with the enforcer itself can be enforced by definition.

So far the enterprising libertarian will go with you, although he will certainly quibble at the last. A society is richer if each individual in it has the right to bind her future actions by agreed obligations, in return for which others may exchange other consideration. Would this bother Ayn Rand? I'm afraid I've never read Ayn Rand. I know—it's terrible—I should. It would certainly bother [Rothbard](#), but sometimes this is a virtue.

Once we get this far, we are almost all the way to Carlyle on slavery. We have not agreed that a man can be born a slave, but we agree that he can *sell* himself into slavery. That is: he can sign a contract with a master in which the slave agrees unconditionally to obey and work for the master, and the master agrees unconditionally to protect and support the slave.

Moreover, this contract need not be a mere expression of sentiment. It can and should be enforced by the State, just as a loan is. If the slave changes his mind and runs away, the State will capture and return him, billing the master for the expense. Or at least, these are reasonable terms under which two parties might agree on the permanent relationship of master and slave.

Such terms could also be agreed on a non-permanent basis, yielding the

relationship of [indentured servitude](#)—familiar to all American high-school students. The laws of early America and England were indeed both more flexible, and more orderly, than our own in permitting and enforcing this form of order. (The relationship of flexibility to order, and sclerosis to disorder, is a common one in Carlylean analysis.)

This still does not get us to classic Anglo-American slavery in the Southern or West Indian style, or of course the classic Greek or Roman forms. Most human societies, and in particular most civilized societies, have had some form of slavery or bondage. And typically this is *involuntary* slavery, not at all the nice libertarian type.

To despise these societies as a class is an anthropological solecism. Those who consider slave societies intrinsically *evil*, a word the 20th century would be well advised to keep well away from its tongue, would quickly change their tunes if forced, like [this man](#), to function in an actual slave society. We are all [Horatios](#); this world is not in our philosophy. When we judge it without seeing it or knowing anything about it, we only reveal ourselves as fools.

It is only a short step from seeing the State as an enforcer of voluntary and binding obligations, to an enforcer of involuntary and arbitrary obligations. No society can possibly exist without uncontracted obligations.

For example, *property* and in particular real estate represent a class of obligations behind which there is no principle but historical accident. I am obliged not to trespass on your land. I did not agree not to trespass on your land, but I am obliged nonetheless. And why is it your land, rather than my land? Because it is.

Everyone is born into a web of involuntary obligations: the family. No one gets to pick their parents. Moreover, every family is part of a human society and thus accepts the obligations of that society. You do not need to go to Carlyle for an explanation of the relationship between slavery, family, and community, for you can find it in [Aristotle](#). Indeed, the definition of *family* in most times and places has included slaves.

In Aristotle's view, the relationship of master and slave is a natural human relationship: that of patron and client. Like true familial relationships, these essentially feudal structures are bidirectional. The client must obey and serve the patron; the patron must care for and protect the client. On one side of the

relationship is always authority; on the other side, always dependency. Either side may violate its obligations, resulting in state intervention.

In the most ordered and flexible feudal societies, the relationship of patron and client becomes a true governance relationship. The patron is personally responsible for all offenses of the client against society—this is a core tenet of Roman law, applying both to slaves and children. In return, the patron holds the power of the magistrate over his clients. In the old days of the Roman Republic, a father could order the execution of his son on his own word alone. This is even a bit extreme for me, but it demonstrates the concept.

We see the most palatable relatives of hereditary slavery in the feudal European societies, where we have not slavery in the antique sense but serfdom, slavery *adscripti glebae*—peasants bound to the soil. The 20th-century historian will generally describe this system as if it were something like the Gulag, or possibly even Auschwitz, or maybe just the [Angola Penitentiary](#), and everyone was just biding their time and waiting to be free. This is what it is to be an enemy of the past—you are doomed to walk through life, lying. Try to imagine yourself visiting 13th-century France and recommending the liberation of the serfs.

Thus we see the root of democracy's antipathy to slavery: its antipathy to feudalism. These structures are clearly in the same class. Is there a difference between being born bound to a person, and born bound to the land? There is, but not much of one. In both cases, you are born to obligations. You did not agree to these obligations, yet they are your inescapable burden. Had the luck of your fresh-minted soul been different, you might have been born to privilege instead. And good luck, Carlyle will tell you grimly, in abolishing luck.

But wait: when one is born a serf, bound to the land with obligations, one is bound not to a person but to a *political entity*. In the case of serfdom, assuming the extremity of personal restriction, this is a *small* political entity. This may be a problem if you are a restless fellow and like to get around, but seeing Europe was not the primary concern of most pre-industrial agricultural workers. Moreover, regardless of the size or nature of the entity to which you are born bound, allowing you to stretch your legs is no risk at all so long as that entity has the power to catch you and bring you back. Again, this is true for both serfs and slaves.

Suddenly we see the relationship between slavery and government. Serfdom and slavery can be described as *microgovernment* and *nanogovernment* respectively. In government proper, the normal human role of patron is filled by a giant, impersonal, and often accidentally sadistic bureaucracy, which is sovereign and self-securing. In serfdom, this role is filled by a noble house or other large family business, which in turn is a client of the State, and just as fixed to the land as its serfs. In slavery, mastership is exercised by a mobile individual whose slaves go with him.

(Democracy here appears as simply a mechanism for controlling subjects by deluding them into believing that they control the entire enterprise, a pretense which cannot be maintained in the context of serfdom or slavery. In this role it is certainly unnecessary, as physical enforcement technologies are quite sufficient. The mind-control state is obsolete.)

In all these relationships, the structure of obligation is the same. The subject, serf, or slave is obliged to obey the government, lord, or master, and work for the benefit of same. In return, the government, lord or master must care for and guide the subject, serf, or slave. We see these same relationship parameters emerging whether the relationship of domination originates as a hereditary obligation, or as a voluntary obligation, or in a state outside law such as the state of the newly captured prisoner (the traditional origin of slave status in most eras). This is a pretty good clue that this type of bidirectional hierarchical structure is one to which humans are *biologically adapted*.

Not all humans are born the same, of course, and Carlyle (following Aristotle) takes the view that the innate character and intelligence of some is more suited to mastery than slavery. For others, it is more suited to slavery. And others still are badly suited to either. These characteristics can be expected to group differently in human populations of different origins. Thus, Spaniards and Englishmen in the Americas in the 17th and earlier centuries, whose sense of political correctness was negligible, found that Africans tended to make good slaves and Indians did not.

The discoveries of Charles Darwin (who knew Carlyle personally) suggest that this broad pattern of observation is most parsimoniously explained (at least in part) by biological differences between groups. Indeed, there is no question that biological differences played a role in Europeans' preference for African

over Indian slaves in at least one respect: due to superior genetic resistance, Africans were much less likely to die of introduced tropical diseases like yellow fever and malaria. (Of course, by itself this observation offers no *moral* justification for slavery, and indeed Darwin strongly dissented from Carlyle on this point, [writing in his autobiography](#) that “[Carlyle’s] views about slavery were revolting.”)

From Carlyle’s point of view, a person makes a good slave if he is loyal, patient, and not exceptionally bright or stubborn. But even great intelligence is not necessarily a bar to a good experience in slavery, as the experience of many Greek slave philosophers, such as [Epictetus](#), shows. A slave must carry the unique burden of *personal* dependency and obedience, which we are all used to expressing only toward impersonal government agencies.

One typically does not experience *emotional* bonds with, say, the IRS. Unless they are bonds of hate. There is nonetheless an emotional bond with Washington as a whole, a sense of being part of the team that is your owner and owner of its other subjects. All psychologically normal subjects, serfs, or slaves feel this, so long as their government, lord or master is both sane and competent. Otherwise, any derangement may occur. Of course, the smaller the group, the more intense the feelings—for better or for worse. But in general, the normal case is real affection on both sides.

Moreover, just because the relationship of slavery or serfdom is personal *by default*, does not imply that it cannot be made impersonal, like the relationship of subject to government. If the client is not one of Aristotle’s natural slaves, has an IQ over 90, is an adult, and can provide his or her own personal guidance, the subject–government relationship may be a better fit. The master may maximize his economic benefit by simply allowing the slave to negotiate his own employment and living arrangements, and taxing him. Thus the parallel reemerges.

Conversely, the subject–government relationship easily becomes dysfunctional for clients who *are* natural slaves, i.e., are not capable of guiding themselves to live in a human and humane manner. It is beyond question that such individuals exist, if only as a result of brain damage. And it is easily seen that they thrive under personal guidance, and wilt and grow foul in the arms of bureaucrats. If all long-term welfare cases were transferred from Washington to

the authority of genuine, truly charitable nonprofits, for example, their new human supervisors could intervene on a personal, discretionary basis to compel them to get their acts together. This would be a step toward humanity in our society—and also a step toward slavery.

Probably the closest most Americans have come to idealizing slavery, without of course knowing it, is in the good press that large Japanese corporations once got for maintaining a policy of lifetime employment. Lifetime employment and slavery are, of course, practically synonyms, and indeed the same phenomena of reciprocal loyalty and dependency were said—repeatedly, in my memory, in the '90s on NPR—to emerge. Right down to the company uniform and song. This, too, is a Carlylean bond, although a rather weird one to the Western eye.

We thus observe the Carlylean (and Aristotelian) view that slavery is a natural human relationship, like marriage. Of course, like marriage, slavery is not without its abuses. When we think of the word “slavery,” we think of these abuses. Thus, Carlyle would argue, by defining the word as intrinsically abusive, like marriages in which one party beats the other, we conveniently define away all the instances of slavery in which the relationship is functional.

Carlyle is in fact ready to be as indignant as anyone over these abuses. He reasons: since slavery is a natural human relationship, this bond will exist regardless of whether you abolish the word. And it does—if only in broken and surreptitious forms. However, if you are a genuine humanitarian and your interest is in abolishing the abuses, the best way to do so is to—abolish the abuses. So, for example, Carlyle proposes reforms such as stronger supervision of slave-owners, a standard price by which slaves can buy their freedom, etc., etc.

In this extreme example, we see the general pattern of Carlylean order. Again, order is about the bonds between members of society, which consist of obligations voluntary and involuntary, which are promises made and kept, and enforced by law where law is needed to enforce them. Especially critical to Carlyle is the *hierarchical* bond, the relationship of command, which is one critical form of social glue without which large organizations cannot function. Carlyle, who is not perfect, slightly neglects another important class of obligation, the *financial*. Financial obligations are more likely to be voluntary, but also more dependent on enforcement.

One of my own personal great moments of Carlylean enlightenment came not from Carlyle himself, but from his disciple Froude, also a great historian. (To add to the fun, “Froude” is pronounced just the way Keanu Reeves says “Freud” in *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*.) Someday I will read all of Froude’s twelve-volume history of England from Henry VIII through Elizabeth I, but I have only read a bit of the [first volume](#). That bit was so impressive and stunning that I thought I might want to wait a year or two before taking in any more.

Froude describes a Tudor society which is completely ordered—which consists, from top to bottom, king to knave, of these relationships of mutual obligation. They are relationships of family, of feudalism, of guild traditions such as apprenticeship, of the Church, of political patronage, of commercial patronage and monopoly, and of course of law and government. It was impossible to live a normal human life outside this tapestry, and nor is it at all clear why anyone would have wanted to.

Misfits, screwups and parasites constantly fell out of the fabric, the era being after all primitive, and every arm of government was charged with eradicating this human bilge. If Tudor England, or any European sovereign of the era, had tolerated vagrants, beggars and the idle, it would have been inundated with a mountain of them in a second. As it was, it seems there were quite a few. The difficulty of operating in these primitive conditions demanded a social fabric at which the 21st century can only stare in amazement, like a general contractor contemplating a cathedral. And these people, indeed, built cathedrals. They were not libertarian cathedrals.

Thus order turns out to equal both truth and justice, because all three equate to promises made and kept. We have seen the reactionary end of the slope of order: Henry VIII. We then look at the radical end of the slope, for which we will accept three symbols: Haiti, Afghanistan, and San Francisco.

In Haiti, we see one aspect of life without promises made and kept: poverty, corruption, violence and filth. In a word: anarchy. Haiti is the product of the persistence of human anarchy, and an excellent symbol because it symbolized exactly the same thing to Carlyle and Froude. The latter visited; his observations are recorded in his travelogue of the trip, *The English in the West Indies; Or, the Bow of Ulysses*. Haiti is far more anarchic now than it was in 1888,

of course, whose Port-au-Prince is a paradise next to today's. Froude gets all enraged because he sees a ditch full of garbage. The 19th century's Haiti is the 21st's whole Third World.

If you are interested in the general subject of anarchy in the Third World, perhaps you have read Robert Kaplan's famous 1994 essay in the Atlantic, "[The Coming Anarchy](#)." Kaplan spends most of it berating the reader with a completely fictitious set of causes of this anarchy. The real cause, of course, is [de-colonialization](#). The cause of that was progressivism, i.e., Carlyle deficiency. Of course Kaplan's little anarchies would not surprise Carlyle for a moment.

Moreover, as Kaplan does not tell you but Carlyle would, the anarchy is indeed coming—to you. Because every year, the border between the Third World and the First is a little more porous. Here indeed are the seeds of true [Ate](#), though this thorough and Biblical ruin (already taking place in South Africa) may well run another century. No one has yet shown me a magic pill that turns a Third Worlder into a First Worlder.

But at least most of the Third World is not an active physical danger to the lives of Americans. This cannot be said of Afghanistan, where Americans (and other Europeans, and yes, Afghans too) are dying every day for lack of Carlyle. More precisely, they are dying because America, the democratic nation, is and will always be completely incapable of doing the one thing it must do to succeed in Afghanistan, which is to *rule the country*.

Oh, no, you see. Americans are in Afghanistan to *advise* the self-governing Afghan people. Ruling is the last thing they could think of doing. America is just helping the independent government of Afghanistan, which of course it created lock, stock and barrel, to stand on its own two feet. But why should it? Do you think these people want America to go away, and all America's dollars with it?

[James Mill](#) once wrote:

The two important discoveries for conquering India were, 1st: the weakness of the native armies against European discipline; 2dly, the facility of imparting that discipline to natives in the European service.

But America has no Afghans in its service. Except for a few interpreters, for

whom necessity finds a way, the bond of command between American and Afghan is strictly forbidden. It is too Carlylean. Nothing like the [Philippine Scouts](#), for instance, could be tolerated. As a result, Americans are running around screaming, quite ineffectually to the sight of any experienced parent or manager, at “their” Afghan soldiers, that they shouldn’t smoke hash before going on patrol. It doesn’t appear to be working.

Thus, Afghans are privileged to receive the full Orwellian force of the 21st century. They suffer the pains of not only anarchy but also civil war, for an indefinite time period in the future, for the *sake of their own human rights*. Is this a noble martyrdom, or what? If there is any justice in the world, the Afghans may very well inherit it. I’m not sure they will be too nice if they do.

The Afghan experience hits a couple of huge Carlylean hot buttons. Not only is it a clear case of *anarchy*, but it is also a *sham*. The civil war in Afghanistan continues because of the fraud, clearly palpable to all and defended by none, that the Karzai government is in some sense “independent.” It could only be more dependent if it were attached to Capitol Hill by an actual, physical umbilical cord. And yet, because Washington cannot summon the strength of reality needed to couple authority with dependency—the classic dynamic of mastery—anarchy persists, and so does war. Thus disorder, mendacity and injustice again go hand in hand, as Satan walks to and fro in the earth. Satan is a pretty busy guy these days.

And finally, we come down to San Francisco. This is not Afghanistan, and nor is it Haiti—although the city fathers of fifty years ago might be excused for imagining some relationship. But no, actually. San Francisco is not well-governed by any reasonable standard, but I live there and I can tell you that it’s a pretty nice place to live.

Still, however, the tapestry of promises looks like a moth attack at a dental-floss convention. About the only strong human bonds in San Francisco today are familial bonds, and there are precious few of those. (Although the birth rate is up about 50% in the last 10 years, in my zip code—a thing which makes one think there may be some turning of the tide.) Extended families are a rarity. Clans and tribes are found only among the primitive. There are no guilds, there are no real churches, there are no genuine, multigenerational neighborhood communal organizations. There are plenty of sexual bonds, friendships,

affinity groups, and employment relationships, of course. But everything is casual.

Whereas fifty years ago, this city was an American Catholic city, full of Irish and Italians. It had community in spades. So did the entire country. America was in fact famous for her social cohesion. If you read Tocqueville's [actual American journals](#), he goes around America marvelling at the social fabric, marvelling at the strict discipline in the prisons, and being amazed that both can coexist with democracy—whose destructive side, being French, he knows well. It was a tough fabric, and took more than another century to totally decay.

But now, of course, it has—as another famous pundit has [pointed out](#). (The same professor has, much against his will, even observed one of the [causes](#).) American society is atomized and structureless. All decisions are as procedural and collective as can be made. The only exception is in the corporate, military and law-enforcement worlds, each its own little bitter holdouts of rationalized reaction. These are stubborn. But when they go, commerce and security go—and here is the true slide over the [great falls](#).

Oh, and Shakespeare and Johnson? They were reactionaries too, of course. Johnson was a [notorious Jacobite](#). But Shakespeare? Alas. Aside from notorious passages such as [Ulysses' speech on degree](#) (which you are now fully equipped to understand), not to mention notorious plays, such as [Coriolanus](#)—let me simply note that if Shakespeare was a democrat, you'd've heard it.

If you must look further: “I had as [lief](#) be a [Brownist](#) as a politician.” ([Twelfth Night III.ii.28–29](#)). Note that Brownism begat Congregationalism and Congregationalism begat [Universalism](#)—so we are all Brownists now. By memetic genealogy, at least. Remember that the next time NPR chews your ear off about the Bard.

And again, don't let this be your only introduction to Carlyle. To repeat the course: [Chartism](#), then the [Latter-Day Pamphlets](#), then [Shooting Niagara](#), then the “[Occasional Discourse](#).” If this doesn't stretch your skull, nothing will.

Chapter 3

Carlyle in the 20th Century: Fascism and Socialism

I promise that UR will not turn into the Carlyle Channel—all Carlyle, all the time.

However, we have yet to seriously examine Carlyle’s track record as a prophet. The true force of the mad sage emerges only when we compare *his* future to *our* past—and our present. If Carlyle’s predictions are significantly more accurate than those of his more conventional peers, his reputation as a true prophet and general Sith Lord is confirmed. If not, he is just another crazy homeless person in the library.

What we’d really like is Carlyle’s own history of the 20th century. Perhaps [Rick Darby](#) can help out with his ouija board. Until this channel opens, however, we are stuck with Google Books. (Question: does anyone at the Googleplex know they’re serving the “[Occasional Discourse](#)”? Does anyone at the [SPLC](#) read UR? If so, wouldn’t suing Google generate fantastic press? And say—how’s it coming with that [diversity effort](#)?)

Fortunately, it is not too hard to retrospectively construct a Carlylean interpretation of the 20th century. And for those who disagree, there is UR. (I would not be surprised if I’m the only human being who read Carlyle’s *[Frederick the Great](#)* this year.) Just tilt your head and [slip the mollusc in your ear](#).

Carlyle can be quickly identified as a predictor of unusual accuracy by two

major correct predictions about the 20th century. One: the 20th would be a century of democracy, in which the political center moved consistently to the left. Two: it would be a century of murder, misery, tyranny and anarchy, “enormous Megatherions, ugly as were ever born of mud.”

The first prediction was pretty standard. The second was quite unusual. Their combination is distinctively Carlylean and, more broadly, Victorian and British. You will certainly have a hard time finding anyone outside these categories, except a grumpy old Mugwump or two, who believes in both these predictions. They are clearly correct, and they were on paper by 1850.

But why paraphrase? Why not go direct? For I am to Carlyle, as [Saruman](#) to [Morgoth](#). Enter the true palace of darkness! Join in my iron oath to the Master!

Or perhaps Democracy, which we announce as now come, will itself manage it? Democracy, once modelled into suffrages, furnished with ballot-boxes and such like, will itself accomplish the salutary universal change from Delusive to Real, and make a new blessed world of us by and by?—To the great mass of men, I am aware, the matter presents itself quite on this hopeful side. Democracy they consider to be a kind of “Government.” The old model, formed long since, and brought to perfection in England now two hundred years ago, has proclaimed itself to all Nations as the new healing for every woe: “Set up a Parliament,” the Nations everywhere say, when the old King is detected to be a Sham-King, and hunted out or not; “set up a Parliament; let us have suffrages, universal suffrages; and all either at once or by due degrees will be right, and a real Millennium come!” Such is their way of construing the matter.

Such, alas, is by no means my way of construing the matter; if it were, I should have had the happiness of remaining silent, and been without call to speak here. It is because the contrary of all this is deeply manifest to me, and appears to be forgotten by multitudes of my contemporaries, that I have had to undertake addressing a word to them.

The contrary of all this;—and the farther I look into the roots of all

this, the more hateful, ruinous and dismal does the state of mind all this could have originated in appear to me. To examine this recipe of a Parliament, how fit it is for governing Nations, nay how fit it may now be, in these new times, for governing England itself where we are used to it so long: this, too, is an alarming inquiry, to which all thinking men, and good citizens of their country, who have an ear for the small still voices and eternal intimations, across the temporary clamors and loud blaring proclamations, are now solemnly invited. Invited by the rigorous fact itself; which will one day, and that perhaps soon, demand practical decision or redecision of it from us,—with enormous penalty if we decide it wrong! I think we shall all have to consider this question, one day; better perhaps now than later, when the leisure may be less.

If a Parliament, with suffrages and universal or any conceivable kind of suffrages, is the method, then certainly let us set about discovering the kind of suffrages, and rest no moment till we have got them. But it is possible a Parliament may not be the method! Possible the inveterate notions of the English People may have settled it as the method, and the Everlasting Laws of Nature may have settled it as not the method! Not the whole method; nor the method at all, if taken as the whole? If a Parliament with never such suffrages is not the method settled by this latter authority, then it will urgently behoove us to become aware of that fact, and to quit such method;—we may depend upon it, however unanimous we be, every step taken in that direction will, by the Eternal Law of things, be a step from improvement, not towards it.

Not towards it, I say, if so! Unanimity of voting,—that will do nothing for us if so. Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner: the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with adamantine rigor by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote.

If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get round the Cape: if you cannot, the ruffian Winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable Icebergs, dumb privy-councillors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic “admonition;” you will be flung half frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by your iceberg councillors, and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get round Cape Horn at all! Unanimity on board ship;—yes indeed, the ship’s crew may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship’s crew, and to their Phantasm Captain if they have one: but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much!—Ships accordingly do not use the ballot-box at all; and they reject the Phantasm species of Captains: one wishes much some other Entities—since all entities lie under the same rigorous set of laws—could be brought to show as much wisdom, and sense at least of self-preservation, the first command of Nature. Phantasm Captains with unanimous votings: this is considered to be all the law and all the prophets, at present.

If a man could shake out of his mind the universal noise of political doctors in this generation and in the last generation or two, and consider the matter face to face, with his own sincere intelligence looking at it, I venture to say he would find this a very extraordinary method of navigating, whether in the Straits of Magellan or the undiscovered Sea of Time. To prosper in this world, to gain felicity, victory and improvement, either for a man or a nation, there is but one thing requisite, That the man or nation can discern what the true regulations of the Universe are in regard to him and his pursuit, and can faithfully and steadfastly follow these. These will lead him to victory; whoever it may be that sets him in the way of these,—were it Russian Autocrat, Chartist Parliament, Grand Lama, Force of Public Opinion, Archbishop of Canterbury, M’Croudy the Seraphic Doctor with his Last-evangel of Political

Economy,—sets him in the sure way to please the Author of this Universe, and is his friend of friends. And again, whoever does the contrary is, for a like reason, his enemy of enemies. This may be taken as fixed.

And now by what method ascertain the monition of the gods in regard to our affairs? How decipher, with best fidelity, the eternal regulation of the Universe; and read, from amid such confused embroilments of human clamor and folly, what the real Divine Message to us is? A divine message, or eternal regulation of the Universe, there verily is, in regard to every conceivable procedure and affair of man: faithfully following this, said procedure or affair will prosper, and have the whole Universe to second it, and carry it, across the fluctuating contradictions, towards a victorious goal; not following this, mistaking this, disregarding this, destruction and wreck are certain for every affair. How find it?

All the world answers me, “Count heads; ask Universal Suffrage, by the ballot-boxes, and that will tell.” Universal Suffrage, ballot-boxes, count of heads? Well,—I perceive we have got into strange spiritual latitudes indeed. Within the last half-century or so, either the Universe or else the heads of men must have altered very much. Half a century ago, and down from Father Adam’s time till then, the Universe, wherever I could hear tell of it, was wont to be of somewhat abstruse nature; by no means carrying its secret written on its face, legible to every passer-by; on the contrary, obstinately hiding its secret from all foolish, slavish, wicked, insincere persons, and partially disclosing it to the wise and noble-minded alone, whose number was not the majority in my time!

Latter-Day Pamphlets, The Present Time, pp. 18–22.

Of course, this pair of predictions is just an example. Hindsight can easily identify correct predictions in the corpus of any essayist. We cannot consider Carlyle’s actual accuracy in retrospect without counting all his correct and incorrect predictions, then comparing them to those of a contemporary peer. Perhaps this could be a useful exercise for some anomic beaver with a spreadsheet.

We can produce a more interesting effect on the modern mind, however, by presenting ways in which Carlyle understands the 20th century better, in the 1850s, than almost anyone in 2009. Specifically, we can employ Carlyle to teach *you* about the 20th century—and if not you, your uninitiated friends.

Only one simple demonstration is required. You see, for Carlyle the pair of prophecies described earlier—the rise of democracy in the 20th century, and the extraordinary level of political murder in the 20th century—are not independent predictions. They are *causally connected*. The rise of democracy is the *cause* of the Holocaust, etc.

While this proposition seems self-evident to Carlyle, pretty much *no one* believes it today. Will historians eventually conclude that he was right? If so, Carlyle beats them by 150 years—and counting. Counting for a while yet, I suspect.

To the democrat, of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, democracy appears as the *cure* for the 20th-century's political ills. A cure born in serendipitous synchrony to its disease, like the *Monitor for the Merrimack*. It reaches the scene of the crime just in time to try to save the victims. Succeeding for most, sadly failing for some. So you may see some blood on its hands or clothing.

If this alibi were not interesting enough, any exculpation of democracy leaves the tragedies of the 20th century *uncaused*. If the narrators of democratic history were more confident that these events were indeed causeless, random and without pattern, they might be less addicted to the passive voice. Instead you see it every day in the papers: “Three people were killed today in...” Or even better, the false active: “Today, violence killed three people in...” Indeed. Thus in the 20th century, which was also the century of democracy, violence killed hundreds of millions of people.

Of course, neither Carlyle nor I can deny that North America and Europe in 2009 enjoy local peace, at least in the conventional military sense. Recent political violence in these areas has been minimal. But any hegemonic conqueror can and typically does suppress political violence: democracy, or Genghis Khan. This does not help us assess the net total of political violence in a counterfactual universe in which democracy, or Genghis Khan, had decided to mind their own business.

Surely the easiest argument against Carlyle's hypothesis is that most of the atrocities of the 20th century were committed not by democracy, but by its *enemies*—totalitarian states of both the right and left. Again, democracy is at the scene of the crime only in its capacity as an officer of the peace. It is not just the blood of the victims which appears on its hands and clothing, but also that of the real killers.

Again, perfectly true. It is possible to construct a definition of an orthodox democracy, and possible to show that orthodox democracies have by far the cleanest hands in the 20th century's military mass murders—under 21st-century principles of "human rights," for instance, we see only a million or so civilians incinerated by urban firebombing. A peccadillo for the age. Sure.

But clean hands do not exclude causality. The fascist and socialist totalitarian states of the 20th century—Hitler, Mao, and Stalin, basically—existed as exceptions, throwbacks, in the age of rising democracy. Hitler, Mao and Stalin committed the crimes of Hitler, Mao, and Stalin, making them the *proximate* causes of these events. We still may ask: what caused Hitler, Mao, and Stalin? What was the origin and nature of these regimes? If we find the fingerprints of democracy behind them, we may continue to suspect it as the *ultimate* cause.

The argument that democracy *caused* Hitler, etc., may seem an unusual and abstruse one. In the democratic narrative of the 20th century, indeed, it makes very little sense. In the Carlylean narrative it is almost so obvious as to be unworthy of mention, as we'll see.

The Carlylean explanation of Hitler, Stalin and Mao is that fascism and Communism are both, each in a very different way, democratic phenomena. They existed in the century of democracy because they could not have existed without it.

We will make this argument at length, later. It is a subtle point to explain, however. It is easily suspected of sophistry, or (as Carlyle would put it) Jesuitism. An introduction to Carlyle's 20th century can only start with a much less subtle blow to the head.

To demonstrate how easy it is to retell history without changing any of the facts, let us supply a Carlylean reinterpretation of the events by which democracy gained its hegemony—the wars of 1939–1945. The result will attribute ultimate causality for the Holocaust to the democratic movement in general,

and the Roosevelt administration in specific.

First we must remove the existing cloak of hagiography. Beating the Nazis (a feat in which my own grandfather participated, quite enthusiastically) is perhaps the main moral claim to fame of our present democratic overlords. The moral logic is simple. Hitler committed the Holocaust, the Holocaust was evil, FDR fought Hitler and beat him, so FDR must be good.

A saint may fight against a knave. Alternatively, two knaves may fight. A dragon may be slain by St. George, or by another dragon. In the former case you are left with St. George, who deserves a reward for slaying his dragon. In the latter case you are faced with a dragon, which did only what dragons do. He was probably the bigger of the two, and now he is even bigger than that.

Unfortunately, there is no moral system on earth which assigns any points for either (a) the *unintended* consequences of one's actions, especially when (b) these consequences do not *actually happen*. So if (a) America's war had been undertaken, either by its leaders or its masses, with the *intention* of saving the Jews from Hitler, and (b) any significant number of Jews had been *actually saved* by this policy, credit on this count would most certainly be due. And we would see what we want to see—St. George slaying the dragon.

But I am not aware of any historical school which espouses either of these propositions, neither of which has any relationship to reality. In reality, the American authorities were only slightly less eager than their German counterparts to [conceal the Holocaust](#). As any bail bondsman can tell you, this is called being an “accessory.” Not good. As for saving Jews, all contemporary claims that America was fighting a war for the Jews emanate from Berlin, not Washington. Goebbels was known to tell the truth on occasion, but not this occasion.

Moreover, the Roosevelt administration at its highest level knowingly concealed the crimes of its own Russian proxies at [Katyn](#), an atrocity no less horrific in quality if not quantity. America in this war is just as responsible for Russian war crimes as Germany for the work of its Lithuanian special police. Total responsibility for the offenses of one's dependents, clients and proxies is a clear case of natural law, both at the individual and sovereign levels.

One layer of camouflage is seldom sufficient. Lurking beneath the mythical war to save the Jews is the equally mythical Axis plan to conquer the world. Unlike the Holocaust, this is a genuine work of living propaganda—a device of

British Security Coordination, which forged the infamous map in which South America is divided into Nazi *Gaue*. Quite simply, [no such plan existed](#).

Hitler most certainly had a plan to conquer Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe is not the planet, and nor was it in any sense liberated by the war. *Mein Kampf*'s grand strategy was that Germany must expand to the East and remain at peace with the West—especially the British Empire. Hitler's geopolitical fantasy, and the perennial core of his perennial peace plans, was a world in which Germany dominated the Continent with land power, serving as an equal but not a rival to British maritime imperialism. Curiously, the Third Reich and the British Empire are now equally defunct—another coincidence.

Of course, having conquered the East, Hitler or his successors might have developed new appetites, revised said plans, and decided to conquer the West as well. Those requiring the 20th century to constitute the end of history are yet another class of automatic apologist. Of course, after the Anglo-Soviet split, the West in any case faced a ruthless, militaristic Eastern totalitarian state with clear ambitions to world domination. (And actual domination of Eastern Europe.)

We thus begin to see the outline of the foreign policy that Carlyle would propose for America and Britain in the 1930s. A Carlylean judges the quality of a government's actions by comparing them to what that government *should* have done, and he is not shy about using hindsight to construct this alternative.

Or, of course, the prophecies of the master himself. The Carlylean alternative being [simple](#):

When the Continental Nations have once got to the bottom of their Augean Stable, and begun to have real enterprises based on the eternal facts again, our Foreign Office may again have extensive concerns with them. And at all times, and even now, there will remain the question to be sincerely put and wisely answered, What essential concern has the British Nation with them and their enterprises? Any concern at all, except that of handsomely keeping apart from them? If so, what are the methods of best managing it?—At present, as was said, while Red Republic but clashes with foul Bureaucracy; and Nations, sunk in blind ignavia, demand a

universal-suffrage Parliament to heal their wretchedness; and wild Anarchy and Phallus-Worship struggle with Sham-Kingship and extinct or galvanized Catholicism; and in the Cave of the Winds all manner of rotten waifs and wrecks are hurled against each other,—our English interest in the controversy, however huge said controversy grow, is quite trifling; we have only in a handsome manner to say to it: “Tumble and rage along, ye rotten waifs and wrecks; clash and collide as seems fittest to you; and smite each other into annihilation at your own good pleasure. In that huge conflict, dismal but unavoidable, we, thanks to our heroic ancestors, having got so far ahead of you, have now no interest at all. Our decided notion is, the dead ought to bury their dead in such a case: and so we have the honor to be, with distinguished consideration, your entirely devoted, FLIMNAP, SEC. FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.”—I really think Flimnap, till truer times come, ought to treat much of his work in this way: cautious to give offence to his neighbors; resolute not to concern himself in any of their self-annihilating operations whatsoever.

Thus the Carlylean foreign policy for USG and Britain in the 1930s is the same as the Carlylean foreign policy for USG today: abandon, disown and release all foreign protectorates, dependents, “allies,” client states, puppet states, and other “little friends.” Rather, each sovereign nation should just mind its own business for a while and see how that works out.

After a Carlylean reaction, there is no world policeman, no world judge, world parliament, or world anything. Even the traditional practice of exchanging permanent diplomats is obsolete. Governments often have things to say to each other, but they can get used to saying it by email.

And if Bolivia and Paraguay wish to wage war, that war is the business of Bolivia and Paraguay. Washington has no particular interest in which side may be in the wrong. It is certainly either Bolivia, Paraguay, or both. Moreover, if Spain herself *does* pick a side, intervenes in favor of it, and eventually uses this as a pretext for reacquiring *both* Bolivia and Paraguay, the Flimnaps of [Foggy Bottom](#) shall gaze serenely down on the entire affair—requesting, at

most, that all sides avoid weapons which might cause global atmospheric or marine contamination.

Thus, if we imagine this principle applied to Europe in 1933, a Carlylean regime in 1933 disavows all involvement in Continental politics, including the League of Nations and the protection of the various invented states of the [Little Entente](#). All of which were, in 1933, much better-armed than Germany.

If Germany wishes to have a war with Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc., that is the business of these nations. If Czechoslovakia and Poland wish to defend themselves from Germany, they should arm sufficiently and band themselves together for the purpose. If not, they must accept German [suzerainty](#). In the actual event, they behaved as if they were armed, but the arms on which they counted were not their own—but those of Britain and France, which in retrospect were obviously insufficient to defend them.

Meanwhile, of course, if these wars expel valuable refugees—especially a high-value population such as the Ashkenazi Jews—Britain and America will stand ready to snap them up, just as Frederick the Great was happy to snap up French Huguenots expelled by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Thus under this strategy, Nazi Germany (assuming the most aggressive intentions) either enlarges itself to the East, or fails to do so. If populations are displaced, for crazy Nazi reasons or otherwise, they are relocated to the Western Hemisphere. (Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, for one, wanted as many Jews as he could get.) It is possible to construct a global military disaster, genocide, etc., emerging from this counterfactual scenario. But it does not seem *likely*, whereas with the road taken we know it is *certain*. Hindsight is a bitch.

And more damningly, the Carlylean answer answers a question we didn't know we had. Remember: we have eliminated the two most frequently presumed rationales for the Allied side of the war. Roosevelt was not fighting to save the Jews, for he gives no appearance of giving a crap about the Jews. And he is not fighting to thwart the Nazi project of invading Mexico, for he knows there is no such project. What, then, *is* he fighting for? What is the nature of the Allied cause?

There is a three-word answer: “the United Nations.” Basically, the Anglo-American coalition (which in fact [called itself “United Nations”](#) during the war) is fighting for a *vision*, which vision might well be described even better by

the name it now carries: “the international community.” Skeptics will note that this phrase can always be replaced with the term “State Department,” with negligible change to the meaning of the sentence.

More concretely, the fundamental question of the war was: if Germany and Poland disagree, whose business is it? Germany’s answer was: it is the business of Germany and Poland. This answer is roughly coincident with [classical international law](#), in which each nation is the only final judge of its interests. The Anglo-American answer was: it is the business of the international community. And so, in *modern* international law, it is. The Allies having defeated Germany, just as Germany defeated Poland. Might and right always converge in the end.

From the perspective of classical international law, Britain, which has been acting as the sole global hyperpower since 1815, and her new partner in crime America, are essentially asserting suzerainty over the Continent. They, and their stable of satellites, are to make the rules of international affairs henceforth. And indeed there is only one way for Germany to dispute this claim of suzerainty, which like all sovereign claims grows stronger the longer it is not disputed, and establish its status as an independent and equal country: make war, needless to say without permission, on the Anglo-American client states that after the last war were created out of its territory.

Thus, Anglo-American democracy causes the war, and its resulting terrors and destructions, because the nascent system of global suzerainty it set up in 1919 forces Germany to either accept a position which is permanently subordinate to the Anglo-American system or “international community,” effectively sacrificing her independence as a nation, or demonstrate its disobedience by violently attacking that community. The dog has been backed into a corner; it must either cringe and submit, or bite. It probably should have cringed.

But military causality is always a dark and difficult point to argue. This would be Carlyle’s explanation of these events, I think, but it is not his most powerful argument. Not only were Stalin, Hitler and Mao the products of bad democratic foreign policy, but *their own movements* could not have existed without democracy.

Rather, fascism and socialism (including the various Communisms) are *inherently democratic phenomena*. It is thus obvious that they came to exist in the

century of democracy. This argument, too, may strike you as implausible—but wait and see.

Because first, this nasty pair suggests a cheaper, uglier, more banal explanation for Carlyle's seeming success as a prophet. As Wikipedia correctly notes:

[Carlyle's] ideas were influential on the development of [Socialism](#), but—like the opinions of many deep thinkers of the time—are also considered to have influenced the rise of [Fascism](#).

If Carlyle predicts that your house will burn down, and your house burns down, Carlyle is a prophet. But if he was seen on your porch with a can of kerosene, he's an arsonist. The plot thickens.

To understand the 20th century, we have to understand what socialism *is* and fascism *was*. To understand it from a Carlylean perspective, we need to understand the relationship of democracy to each—and to Carlyle himself. To Carlyle, democracy is the ultimate cause of the Holocaust; to democracy (or at least to Wikipedia), Carlyle is that ultimate cause. He is both prosecutor and defendant in the case.

The essential step in understanding socialism and fascism is understanding the *difference* between these Megatherions. They are both Megatherions all right, and both born in mud. Moreover, both muds contain a significant concentration of Carlyle. But they are two very different muds—and mud should not be confused with Carlyle.

While there are no qualitative distinctions in history, the difference between socialism and fascism is about as close as it comes—it's up there with virus versus bacterium. Or perhaps, for a closer medical analogy, liver cancer and lung cancer. Lung cancer can spread to your liver and/or vice versa, but the tumor is always descended from either lung or liver. Similarly, while the *structure, apparatus and practices* of socialism and fascism may in advanced cases converge, the *origin* of the malignancy is always precise and distinct.

Orthodox libertarians and, increasingly, [conservatives](#) have a particularly easy wrong answer available to them on this point. The wrong answer is that socialism and fascism are two forms, with negligible or cosmetic distinction, of one pathology of government—*statism*. Statism being the condition of hav-

ing an enormous government which does all kinds of stupid, useless, and/or counterproductive things.

This clicks naturally with the theory of Carlyle as villain. Carlyle is most certainly a *statist* in the abstract libertarian sense of the word. Libertarianism is in fact a revival of the Manchester liberalism of Carlyle's time—whom the reader may meet as “M'Croudy, the Seraphic Doctor of Political Economy.”

From Carlyle's end, Manchester liberalism is one of the principal symptoms of 19th-century democracy—the other being the philanthropism of [Exeter Hall](#). Note that 21st-century democracy has boosted Exeter Hall to the *n*th degree, but retains some fragments of Manchester liberalism only grudgingly and with contempt. This too must be explained.

But here is Carlyle on M'Croudy—directly following the first passage on Democracy:

Or perhaps the chief end of man being now, in these improved epochs, to make money and spend it, his interests in the Universe have become amazingly simplified of late; capable of being voted on with effect by almost anybody? “To buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest:” truly if that is the summary of his social duties, and the final divine message he has to follow, we may trust him extensively to vote upon that. But if it is not, and never was, or can be? If the Universe will not carry on its divine bosom any commonwealth of mortals that have no higher aim,—being still “a Temple and Hall of Doom,” not a mere Weaving-shop and Cattle-pen? If the unfathomable Universe has decided to reject Human Beavers pretending to be Men; and will abolish, pretty rapidly perhaps, in hideous mud-deluges, their “markets” and them, unless they think of it? In that case it were better to think of it: and the Democracies and Universal Suffrages, I can observe, will require to modify themselves a good deal!

Observant readers will note that Carlyle, the prophet, errs here. He asserts that Manchester liberalism is so simple and obvious that it can be explained to voters, who can (he seems to vaguely imply) be trusted to vote for it. This may have been true in the 1850s. If so, voters have changed—alas.

But let's examine this Carlylean critique of libertarianism. Carlyle says: libertarianism is an epiphenomenon of democracy, because it is or purports to be a *formula* that dictates the actions of a sovereign—i.e., the government *must* do this and *must not* do that. In democratic parlance—a *position, platform* or *ideology*.

Platforms are essential to the conduct of democratic government, because the only legitimate way to rule in a democracy is to construct a *party* which agrees on a platform. Thus, the simpler and more appealing the formula, the better. Thus the existence of libertarianism, from this skeptical and delegitimizing standpoint, is explained. Thus Manchester liberalism got somewhere in mid-19th-century Britain, although libertarians with more or less the same platform got nowhere in late-20th-century America. Simpler and more appealing formulas, such as “hope” and “change,” having since been invented.

Thus, Carlyle helps us explain why libertarianism was a democratic trope in the 1850s, and also why the democracy of 2009 is fundamentally un-libertarian. Anti-democratic libertarians can begin and finish their thesis here. The idea of libertarianism as a fundamental form of government, and non-libertarianism (or “statism”) as an equally fundamental form, is most plausibly explained by the political needs of democracy, not any actual natural phenomenon.

That said, we will accept this category, “statist,” a little longer. Before we look at socialism and fascism independently, we need to observe the shared Carlylean roots around which both are built. In the Carlylean narrative, socialism and fascism are both corruptions of the Carlylean ideal. They combine Carlylean truths with un-Carlylean shams.

Carlyle is a “statist” in that he considers the State to have absolute responsibility for the well-being of the nation it governs, and absolute authority to take any act it considers necessary to optimize that well-being. Quite simply, the Carlylean likes a *strong hand* at the tiller. And a strong tiller, too. This taste he shares with the socialist and the fascist—his fellow enthusiasts of government power.

Here all three part ways with the tradition of classical liberalism, under which so many American and British institutions were founded and re-founded in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and whose central motif is the belief in limited and/or divided government. One cannot be either socialist, fascist, or

Carlylean, without either abandoning this belief or warping it beyond recognition. (Carlyleans and fascists abandon it. Socialists warp it.)

But at the next stop, the Carlylean parts ways with his 20th-century buddies. It is he who stays on the bus, and they who get off. Socialism and fascism produce a mix of substandard and disastrous results, for a simple reason: both originate in democracy, a precancerous growth always pregnant with some malignancy.

In almost every historical case of democracy, factions have arisen which can be arranged along a right–left axis. In the Athenian era, for example, hundreds of city-states developed a factional pattern in which a nominally demotic party competed against a nominally oligarchic party. This pattern must be a consequence of human nature, for it appears in all eras and populations without any apparent structure of transmission.

The socialist one-party state arises through the total victory of a faction, party, or movement of the Left. The fascist one-party state arises through the total victory of a faction, party, or movement of the Right. (Note that victory is victory, by means legal or illegal.)

The stable two-party democracy remains pregnant with both. And its stability is illusory: the same nominal parties remain, but their actual positions shift inexorably toward the Left. Thus we see *chronic* rather than *acute* socialism, which has the same endpoint—sclerotic emphysema of Brezhnev—but slower, and with a lot less drama. Unless it breaks down, of course.

(Note that under this definition, it is impossible to argue that “Hitler was a socialist.” On the Weimar political spectrum, which was no different from ours, the NSDAP was a party of the Right. Thus its total victory can only constitute the condition of fascism. Of course you may use any definition of “socialist” or “fascist” you like, but the above will be found to closely match your intuitive sense of the matter.)

It is these democratic roots which fatally poison both socialism and fascism. Since the origin of the socialist or fascist regime is always a democratic party, achieving power at least partially through democratic tactics, the regime cannot escape democracy as a source of both external legitimacy and internal structure. The mark of Cain is always on it.

Your captain is a strong hand on a strong ship. But he is no Baptist. Will

he round the Horn? Famously, if sober. Otherwise, in the belly of a fish. As an ingredient in government, even just a mixer, democracy is a deliriant—like Jimson weed. Cocaine sends you up, whisky brings you down, acid swings you around. But you never know what a man will do on Jimson weed. You might want to find another captain for the Southern Ocean.

This origin in democracy should not be confused with *genuine* popular sovereignty, or *actual* sailing of the ship by ballot-box. Such a thing is almost unheard of. It is not that socialist or fascist states *actually* extend significant decision-making power to the people at large. This is almost never the case, not even in working democracies with genuine contested elections.

If you look at any government of the 20th century and ask, who helms the ship around the Horn? Who tells the sailors when and how to reef the anchor, swab the mast or jibe the poop deck? Your answer will not be: the people who vote in “American Idol.” Your answer will be: the pros. Public servants. The people who always do it. Which is not to say they do it right.

However, a socialist or fascist state, being by definition the descendant of a democratic movement, (a) cannot cease to adore some mythic construction of popular sovereignty, and (b) cannot afford to lose the actual adoration of its subjects. Both are central to its legitimacy.

And both, as we will see, are central to its insanity—in two very different ways. Because both socialism and fascism must maintain the sham of popular government, they have the seed of mendacity always inside them. That seed always finds fertile soil, and indeed life in a socialist or fascist state always becomes life in a jungle of lies. Which is typically the least of your problems.

Thus in socialism and fascism, we see the worst of both worlds. The state is (or at least may be) *strong*. But it is also *mad*. Thus, sometimes, often or always, its strength is wielded in the service of Chaos and not Cosmos. In short, the 800-pound gorilla is on acid. No wonder the night-watchman state seems like such a tempting idea.

The Carlylean insists: the forces of sovereignty must be mastered. There is no alternative. To limit the State to what it should do, prohibiting it from doing what it should not do, is to commit an act of tautology. Suppose you make it promise? What use are the gorilla’s promises? Either you have mastered him, or not. If not, he will do as he likes. If so, you have taken his place.

Observe the fascist or socialist State again, through the eyes of the orthodox libertarian or classical liberal. We see an 800-pound gorilla on acid, whooping it up at the wheel of a running bulldozer. Your libertarian says: stop that bulldozer! Your Carlylean says: stop that gorilla!

A bulldozer, well-made, well-maintained and well-operated, is a positive force in the world. But only if it is controlled by a *man* and not a gorilla. If you saw a bulldozer driven by a *qualified bulldozer operator*, dear libertarian, would you cry: stop that bulldozer! I think not. You might be amazed at all the good works a qualified bulldozer operator can work with a bulldozer.

Of course, the world at present contains no such thing as a qualified bulldozer operator. Which is hardly the Carlylean's fault. And it still contains *men*, who are not gorillas, and can learn. They can also be drug-tested.

But this analogy, though picturesque, is as far as we can go with the two together. Socialism and fascism are different things. We must examine them apart, each through the Carlylean lens.

Let's do fascism first, because fascism is easy. Fascism is Carlyle, implemented by swine. Thus, you can go through Carlyle, finding Carlylean heroes, and replacing them with swine. The result will be fascism.

This exercise is exceptionally simple for those with a progressive education. Not only do you already know everything about the crimes of fascism, how to recognize it, how to fight it, etc., you cannot conceive of a Carlylean hero who is in fact a hero, and not a swine at all. Your mind rebels against the very thought.

Fortunately, history—which for you is the story of the 20th century, because progressives hate the past—demonstrates that in all cases, swine appear in the position at question. Therefore, the dispute is settled. With this assumption, proven by experience, let's see how Carlyle is a fascist. We might, for instance, choose this passage from *Shooting Niagara*:

I always fancy there might much be done in the way of military drill withal. Beyond all other schooling, and as supplement or even as succedaneum for all other, one often wishes the entire Population could be thoroughly drilled; into co-operative movement, into individual behaviour, correct, precise, and at once habitual and orderly as mathematics, in all or in very many points,—and ultimately in

the point of actual Military Service, should such be required of it! [...]

Soldier-Drill, for fighting purposes, as I have said, would be the last or finishing touch of all these sorts of Drilling processes; and certainly the acknowledged king would reckon it not the least important to him, but even perhaps the most so, in these peculiar times. Anarchic Parliaments and Penny Newspapers might perhaps grow jealous of him; in any case, would he have to be cautious, punctilious, severely correct, and obey to the letter whatever laws and regulations they emitted on the subject. But that done, how could the most anarchic Parliament, or Penny Editor, think of forbidding any fellow-citizen such a manifest improvement on all the human creatures round him? Our wise Hero Aristocrat, or acknowledged king in his own territory, would by no means think of employing his superlative private Field-regiment in levy of war against the most anarchic Parliament: on the contrary, might and would loyally but help said Parliament in warring down much anarchy worse than its own, and so gain steadily new favour from it. From it, and from all men and gods! And would have silently the consciousness, too, that with every new Disciplined Man, he was widening the arena of *Anti-Anarchy*, of God-appointed Order in this world and Nation,—and was looking forward to a day, very distant probably, but certain as Fate.

For I suppose it would in no moment be doubtful to him That, between Anarchy and Anti-ditto, it would have to come to sheer fight at last; and that nothing short of duel to the death could ever void that great quarrel. And he would have his hopes, his assurances, as to how the victory would lie. For everywhere in this universe, and in every nation that is not *divorced* from it and in the act of perishing forever, Anti-Anarchy is silently on the increase, at all moments: Anarchy, not, but contrariwise; having the whole universe for ever set against it; pushing it slowly at all moments towards suicide and annihilation. To Anarchy, however million-headed, there

is no victory possible. Patience, silence, diligence, ye chosen of the world! Slowly or fast in the course of time you will grow to a minority that can actually step forth (sword not yet drawn, but sword ready to be drawn), and say: “Here are we, Sirs; we also are minded to *vote*,—to all lengths, as you may perceive. A company of poor men (as friend [Oliver](#) termed us) who will spend all our blood, if needful!” What are [Beales](#) and his 50,000 [roughs](#) against such; what are the noisiest anarchic Parliaments, in majority of a million to one, against such? Stubble against fire. Fear not, my friend; the issue is very certain when it comes so far as this!

Fortified by your progressive education, which is *at this moment* flashing the red alert, you see instantly that this program, implemented by swine, is fascism. And implemented by non-swine? It has no name—for history has yet to see its like.

And where do the swine come from? In the 20th century? Gosh, in the age of democracy, why would one find a sudden effusion of swine in government? A famous [Hitler campaign poster](#) showed him with [Hindenburg](#), “the Field Marshal and the Corporal.” Traditionally, of course, any such [fraternization](#) would be a military offense.

Again, fascism is fascism because it arises out of democracy. Against the Left of intellectual consensus, universalist philosophy, bureaucratic disinterest, and bohemian disorder, it pits the forces of popular consensus, parochial tradition, vested or corrupt interests, and military order.

Each of the above has its place—both the Athenian perspective of the Left, and the Spartan judgment of the Right. A healthy society can see itself through any of these glasses, or all. But none in recent memory has combined the Athenian and Spartan virtues—it is a difficult merger. Carlylean order does not preclude the bohemian, but the combination is delicate at the least.

But to create this Spartan force in a democracy is to create, essentially, the Nazi Party. Or the Republican Party. If your party is just a theatrical production and has no actual intent of seizing power, it is the latter; if its plan, hopefully not a *secret* plan, is “one man, one vote, one time,” it is the former. Neither is a benefit to humanity, at least as described.

When the NSDAP seized absolute power, what seized absolute power was an organization which was more or less a government in exile, whose leader was a palpable nut, and whose supporters consisted largely of the lower-middle classes—relatively ignorant and ill-informed. This was not a military coup. It was the electoral victory of a democratic political party.

Had Weimar been terminated by a military coup, perhaps under [Captain Ehrhardt](#) or the like, the order that replaced it might have been a *military* order—a complete renunciation of democracy, a return to the Prussian traditions of Frederick the Great. Instead, as a democratic movement, the militarism of the Nazis had a notably *paramilitary* quality. For instance, calling the [SA](#) the SA was rather as if [Youth for Western Civilization](#) were to name its paintball brigade the “Special Forces.” It’s definitely not the way to get the actual Special Forces on your side.

It is this difference—the line between military honor and tradition, and paramilitary brawling and thuggery—that separates men from swine, and Carlyle from fascism.

The trouble is that if you try to modify the Nazi path to power to remove the swine, it is not clear that you *have* a path to power. There were plenty of non-swinish German nationalists competing with the Nazis. Only the Nazis, however, could build an entire party of swine. And even in Germany, enough swine and friends of swine could be found—which is hardly surprising, when you see that the choice was not the Nazis or nothing, but the Nazis or Weimar.

So once the Nazis seize power: power is held by a party of swine. With Hitler at the top. Many have joined the Party because they want to help restore Germany; many have joined it because they want to get ahead; some have joined it because they want to get revenge on the Jews. It is this organization, nominally under Hitler’s absolute rule but in practice more dangerous to him than he is to it, that now rules Germany. And at the bottom, below the Party, is the *Deutsche Volk*—whose opinions are coordinated by the propaganda techniques familiar to all, and coordinated quite successfully too. This too is a relic of democracy: popular sovereignty.

This is the outline of a Mafia state. This pyramid can impose order outside itself, but internally it is not and can never be ordered. Germany is a sea of warring acronymic agencies, increasingly corrupt. The Nazi system is still often

dynamic and successful because it is so new and so young. Had it lived longer, however, the structure of bureaucracy and venality would have ossified, producing a transition not unlike that between the regimes of Louis XIV and Louis XVI. Hitler was certainly no Frederick the Great, and even Frederick's system did not fare well under his [dissolute heir](#).

Thus what we see in fascism is the last gasp of the European *ancien régime*, heavily contaminated by vices implicit in the attempt to restore order by democratic means. Fortunately, the whole question of fascism is of only academic interest in the 21st century, because no such attempt could now succeed. Only the very unusual conditions of postwar Germany and Italy made it possible to construct a successful fascist party, even one constructed with generous helpings of swine. Now and for the foreseeable future, there is no practical democratic politics of the Right—moderate or extreme.

On to socialism.

It is just as easy to find the link from Carlyle to socialism. Walt Whitman will [find it for us](#):

Then the simplicity and amid ostensible frailty the towering strength of this man—a hardy oak knot, you could never wear out—an old farmer dressed in brown clothes, and not handsome—his very foibles fascinating. Who cares that he wrote about [Dr. Francia](#), and “[Shooting Niagara](#)”—and “[the Nigger Question](#),”—and didn't at all admire our United States? (I doubt if he ever thought or said half as bad words about us as we deserve.) How he splashes like leviathan in the seas of modern literature and politics! Doubtless, respecting the latter, one needs first to realize, from actual observation, the squalor, vice and doggedness ingrained in the bulk-population of the British Islands, with the red tape, the fatuity, the flunkeyism everywhere, to understand the last meaning in his pages.

Accordingly, though he was no chartist or radical, I consider Carlyle's by far the most indignant comment or protest about the fruits of feudalism today in Great Britain—the increasing poverty and degradation of the homeless, landless twenty millions, while a few

thousands, or rather a few hundreds, possess the entire soil, the money, and the fat berths. Trade and shipping, and clubs and culture, and prestige, and guns, and a fine select class of gentry and aristocracy, with every modern improvement, cannot begin to salve or defend such stupendous hoggishness.

Whitman is not making any of this up. You will indeed see Carlyle, especially in his early works—before he has entirely rid himself from his old group of Radical friends, to be exact—take just this tack. Much of it is still found in *Chartism* (1840).

Carlyle will: criticize economic inequality; mock laissez-faire economics; deplore the growing dehumanization of the new British proletariat; denounce industrial pollution; call for massive national literacy campaigns; propose that government organize unemployed workers; etc., etc., etc. All these ambitions of the muscular State are distinctively socialist.

Of course, they are not *exclusively* socialist aims, since we see them also under Hitler. Aims alone do not enable us to distinguish socialist and fascist regimes, which are distinguished by *origin* rather than *result*. Over the long run, the two can develop a remarkably similar structure and apparatus—I suspect the Third Reich, had it survived, would have looked rather Brezhnevian by the 1980s. But this is parallel evolution: analogy, not homology.

For a deeper connection between socialism and Carlyle, we need to understand the shared inspiration of the two. Since Carlyle was considerably under the influence of Scottish Calvinism, and the *roots of socialism* run through (Calvinist) Puritanism, the religious connection does not require a great leap of faith. The Carlylean imperative of the State is to discover the laws of God and implement them on earth. This is a dream easily recognized in the progressive of a century ago, a *Herbert Croly* or *Edward Bellamy* or *Benjamin Franklin Trueblood*, none of whom would have had any qualms in describing his utopia as a *New Jerusalem*.

Finally, we need to recognize perhaps the most distinctive and subtle quality of socialism, which is that socialism (again in origin, though this quality disappears in the nasty end stages) is a fundamentally *aristocratic* movement. Moreover, it is aristocratic in the Carlylean sense: the actual meaning of the

word, *rule of the best*. Socialism, always in origin and perpetually in the true democratic state which still contains a competing Right, is the alliance of the smartest, the wealthiest, the most powerful, and the most beautiful.

The Left is the faction of the professors, the scientists and the scholars, the cognitive elite. It is the faction of the true ultra-rich, the old money, the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts and Fords, and their [trustafarian hipster junkie grand-children](#). It is the faction of the journalists and the bureaucrats, the activists and [astroturfers](#)—the wielders of power. And, of course, it is the faction of movie stars and other celebrities, who for all their flaws have climbed a long greasy pole. The closer you get to the top in a democratic society, the more pervasive socialism becomes.

So Carlyle said to his readers: England is going to the dogs. A new aristocracy is needed to replace the old, stultified, dying hereditary caste of land and title. This must be an aristocracy of merit and service—a true nobility. It must cast aside the dogmas of laissez-faire and be unafraid to govern, to garden, to intervene and improve.

And indeed, the Christian Socialism of the Fabians and Progressives, rooted not only in Carlyle but in [Ruskin](#) and [Morris](#) and [Dickens](#), developed precisely along these lines. Its goal was to improve society, both physically and morally, through the energy and nobility of the State. And indeed it outcompeted all major competitors. There is no school of Carlyleans today, but every school that isn't a madrassa in [Qom](#) is a school of progressivism.

And the trouble was: it was all wrong. The results were exactly opposite the original intent. The poor were not morally uplifted and converted into gentlemen; they were degraded and converted into savages. A new underclass of unprecedented human degeneration appeared *below* the proletariat. The New Jerusalem did not arrive. New Babylons, new Haitis, new Armageddons beyond words, enormous Megatherions all, slithered up on their great bellies.

Alas, socialism can be explained in one sentence. Socialism is the last stage of democracy. The process may be fast and bloody, as in the French and Russian Revolutions, or slow and mostly peaceful, as in Britain. But it is not generally reversible by any conventional means.

By pouring their talents into the democratic movement, the new aristocracy of progressivism ensured the following results:

First, that bad ideas would blossom and good ones wither and disappear. Progressivism has become a veritable religion of quack government. Its policies are always counterintuitive: it preaches leniency as the cure for crime, timidity as military genius, profligacy as the acme of economics, “special education” as the heart of pedagogy, indulgence as oversight, appeasement as diplomacy. As it goes from one disaster to the next, progressivism never considers the possibility that the obvious, rather than its opposite, could be the case. [Occam’s Butterknife](#) is the only tool in its kitchen.

So everywhere that socialism or communism triumphs, we see the same phenomena: hypertrophy of the bureaucracy, destruction and/or assimilation of organizations outside the State, expansion and widespread delinquency of the underclass, decimation of the working class, decay and disappearance of manufacturing industries, persecution of upper classes and successful minorities, destruction of old cities and production of hideous totalitarian architecture, ubiquitous depression both economic and psychiatric. These effects are not pleasant to anyone, progressive or otherwise. But their production does not slacken.

Except for the occasional psychopath, a man to be found in all walks of life, this is never the *intent* of the socialist. My own grandfather was a [CPUSA](#) member, and this was certainly not his intent. Nonetheless, they all happened. (And the CPUSA is again [best friends](#) with the White House—just as if it were 1934. Or [South Africa](#).)

But why? What causes this pattern of repeated failure? Why, with its intellectual firepower, can progressivism not self-correct? After all, its public-policy experts are supposed to be *scientists*. They publish *papers*—with *numbers*. Surely this makes them scientists, and science is self-correcting, i.e., always right.

Alas. Not everyone who writes papers with numbers is a scientist. The most you can say is that your subject is either a scientist, or a pseudoscientist. Also, while it is correct to note that science can be self-correcting, it is incorrect to assume that it *must be*, i.e., is incorruptible. Nothing whatsoever is incorruptible—certainly not science.

The Platonic guardians of the socialist state—scientists, planners, bureaucrats, or whatever you call them—persistently prefer bad ideas because of the

organizational structure of the socialist state. Again, democracy is the fundamental and irrecoverable flaw.

Because socialism is democratic, it distrusts, opposes and tends to destroy organizational structures which are built on (a) hierarchical command, (b) personal responsibility, and/or (c) financial interests. Your socialist state will never produce a structure in which a single planner is responsible for, say, North Carolina; can fire whomever he likes in the administration of North Carolina; and gets fired himself, if North Carolina does not blossom into a subtropical Eden. This is an organizational structure that one might find in, say, the British Raj. It is not democratic in nature, nor socialist.

Instead, the socialist state divides power and spreads it as widely as possible—within itself, of course. Its decisions are not personal, but procedural. A procedure is a better procedure if it cuts more *stakeholders* into the loop—if it is a *more open process*. Here we see clearly what the State is doing: it is building a support base from its own employee roster, and it is purchasing support by exchanging it for *power*. The feeling of being in the decision loop produces a remarkable effect of emotional loyalty, no matter how trivial the actual authority may be.

There is just a slight downside to this: when socialism fails, *no one is responsible*. No system of ideas, even, can be responsible—for a system of ideas would be an ideology, and public policy is not determined by ideology. Thus many will tell you that [economics failed](#) in the crisis of 2008, but no one can possibly do anything about it. Certainly, no producer of economic wisdom in the universities, nor consumer in Washington, need feel even slightly threatened. Tenure is tenure, and civil-service protection is civil-service protection. Our masters serve for life.

Moreover, in an environment where failure confers no punishment, we would expect bad policies to outcompete good ones. Much as islands without predators are dominated by flightless birds. Freed from the need to actually succeed, the bad policies can offer everything to everyone—permanently. But alas, no dodo is forever.

Thus the power of socialism to take a perfectly good aristocracy, and corrupt it to the service of lies, incompetence and the Devil. The trouble is that for everyone to get a tiny slice of power's pie, no one can actually do the job

of *ruling*—a concept which conflicts with the entire idea of public policy. A government based on the principle of hierarchical rule simply *does not have enough work* for all the aristocrats who need to feel important. It is too damned efficient. Thus it is abhorred, and shunned, by all.

Second—and worse, to the Carlylean eye—because it embraces democracy only to contradict it completely, socialism has a *permanent core of mendacity*, which breeds new lies the way a clogged birdbath breeds mosquitoes. This *sham* aspect is at the root of all its failures. To the Carlylean, no structure built on lies can be expected to last.

For the progressive does not actually believe in the philosopher's stone of democracy, the instinctive and growing wisdom of the masses, Walt Whitman's wet-dream. He in fact *despises* (often, though not always, rightly) all ideas that flow from the masses up: these are “ideologies,” and their electoral manifestations “politics.” Nothing is so important as keeping government apolitical and non-ideological.

Or to be more precise, nothing is so important as keeping government in the hands of its Platonic guardians—the aforementioned progressive aristocracy. Who alone can round Cape Horn. For everything that the socialist state does—in Moscow then, in Washington now—there is an entire caste of scientists, exquisitely trained and rigorously selected, from whom all apolitical and non-ideological public policies flow. Not since the heyday of the [Board of Rites](#) or the [Logothete of the Course](#) has such intellectual firepower been trained on the problem of government.

The power flow of democracy is simply reversed. Rather than the sovereign People leading and directing their “public servants,” it is the servants who lead and the People who follow. The function of elections and elected officials in a progressive democracy is to educate the electorate, to speak from the “bully pulpit,” to help it become the progressive and enlightened People that it deserves to be. In classic astroturf style.

Thus, elections become simply another propaganda mechanism. If this mechanism fails every now and then, the progressive establishment has more than enough institutional inertia to wait out and defeat any temporary [attack of the primitives](#). No permanent imprint on Washington can be or ever has been left by the post-progressive Right, from McCarthy through Bush. Indeed, in

Europe, there is nothing at all like the Republicans, and daily life in Europe seems more or less the same for it.

So there is a sham here. To be fair, this sham is hardly a socialist invention: it is a staple of democracy in all eras. Robert Michels described it well as the [Iron Law of Oligarchy](#), almost a century ago. It seems easy to excuse progressives for merely finding this natural tactical feature of politics, and taking advantage of it.

And in fact it is. But it is also interesting to examine the result. Lies are always interesting, and those who defend them still more so.

Those with a taste for historical scholarship of less august vintage than we usually prefer, here at UR, may enjoy Edmund S. Morgan's [Inventing the People](#) (1988). In this multi-century survey, winner of the Bancroft Prize, the author—professor emeritus at Yale—repeatedly and deliberately describes the legal and constitutional doctrines of the democratic faction in Anglo-American history as “fictions.” The body of the book is quite well-composed and quite thoroughly damning, to my ear at least.

[Professor Morgan](#), however, wants to make sure we do not take this as any kind of a *criticism*. Rather, he is a cold-eyed believer in what, here at UR, we call “psychological security.” In his introduction, he writes:

Government requires make-believe. Make believe that the king is divine, make believe that he can do no wrong or make believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Make believe that the people *have* a voice or make believe that the representatives of the people *are* the people. Make believe that governors are the servants of the people. Make believe that all men are equal or make believe that they are not.

The political world of make-believe mingles with the real world in strange ways, for the make-believe world may often mold the real one. In order to be viable, in order to serve its purpose, whatever that purpose may be, a fiction must bear some resemblance to fact. If it strays too far from fact, the willing suspension of disbelief collapses. And conversely it may collapse if facts stray too far from the fiction that we want them to resemble. Because fictions

are necessary, because we cannot live without them, we often take pains to prevent their collapse by moving the facts to fit the fiction, by making the world conform more closely to what we want it to be. We sometimes call it, quite appropriately, reform or reformation, when the fiction takes command and reshapes reality.

Although fictions enable the few to govern the many, it is not only the many who are constrained by them. In the strange commingling of political make-believe and reality the governing few no less than the governing many may find themselves limited—we may even say reformed—by the fictions on which their authority depends. Not only authority but liberty too may depend on fictions. Indeed liberty may depend, however deviously, on the very fictions that support authority. That, at least, has been the case in the Anglo-American world, and modern liberty, for better or for worse, was born, or perhaps we should say invented, in that world and continues to be nourished there.

Because it is a little uncomfortable to acknowledge that we rely so heavily on fictions, we generally call them by some more exalted name. We may proclaim them as self-evident truths, and that designation is not inappropriate, for it implies our commitment to them and at the same time protects them from challenge. Among the fictions we accept today as self-evident are those that Thomas Jefferson enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal and that they owe obedience to government only if it is their own agent, deriving its authority from their consent. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to demonstrate these propositions by factual evidence. It might be somewhat easier, by the kind of evidence we usually require for the proof of any debatable proposition, to demonstrate that men are not created equal and that they have not delegated authority to any government. But self-evident propositions are not debatable, and to challenge these would rend the fabric of our society.

It is not the purpose of this book to challenge them, and my use

of the word fiction has no such intention. I have been troubled by the pejorative connotations attached to the word, but I have been unable to find a better one to describe the different phenomena to which I have applied it. I can only hope that the readers who persevere to the end of the book will recognize that the fictional qualities of popular sovereignty sustain rather than threaten the human values associated with it.

To which Carlyle has an answer, and a terrible one. I leave you with [his words](#):

What *is* Democracy; this huge inevitable Product of the Destinies, which is everywhere the portion of our Europe in these latter days? There lies the question for us. Whence comes it, this universal big black Democracy; whither tends it; what is the meaning of it? A meaning it must have, or it would not be here. If we can find the right meaning of it, we may, wisely submitting or wisely resisting and controlling, still hope to live in the midst of it; if we cannot find the right meaning, if we find only the wrong or no meaning in it, to live will not be possible!—The whole social wisdom of the Present Time is summoned, in the name of the Giver of Wisdom, to make clear to itself, and lay deeply to heart with an eye to strenuous valiant practice and effort, what the meaning of this universal revolt of the European Populations, which calls itself Democracy, and decides to continue permanent, may be.

Certainly it is a drama full of action, event fast following event; in which curiosity finds endless scope, and there are interests at stake, enough to rivet the attention of all men, simple and wise. Whereat the idle multitude lift up their voices, gratulating, celebrating sky-high; in rhyme and prose announcement, more than plentiful, that *now* the New Era, and long-expected Year One of Perfect Human Felicity has come. Glorious and immortal people, sublime French citizens, heroic barricades; triumph of civil and religious liberty—O Heaven! one of the inevitablest private miseries, to an earnest man in such circumstances, is this multitudinous efflux of oratory

and psalmody, from the universal foolish human throat; drowning for the moment all reflection whatsoever, except the sorrowful one that you are fallen in an evil, heavy-laden, long-eared age, and must resignedly bear your part in the same.

The front wall of your wretched old crazy dwelling, long denounced by you to no purpose, having at last fairly folded itself over, and fallen prostrate into the street, the floors, as may happen, will still hang on by the mere beam-ends, and coherency of old carpentry, though in a sloping direction, and depend there till certain poor rusty nails and worm-eaten dovetailings give way:—but is it cheering, in such circumstances, that the whole household burst forth into celebrating the new joys of light and ventilation, liberty and picturesqueness of position, and thank God that now they have got a house to their mind? My dear household, cease singing and psalmodying; lay aside your fiddles, take out your work-implements, if you have any; for I can say with confidence the laws of gravitation are still active, and rusty nails, worm-eaten dovetailings, and secret coherency of old carpentry, are not the best basis for a household!—In the lanes of Irish cities, I have heard say, the wretched people are sometimes found living, and perilously boiling their potatoes, on such swing-floors and inclined planes hanging on by the joist-ends; but I did not hear that they sang very much in celebration of such lodging. No, they slid gently about, sat near the back wall, and perilously boiled their potatoes, in silence for most part!—

High shouts of exultation, in every dialect, by every vehicle of speech and writing, rise from far and near over this last avatar of Democracy in 1848: and yet, to wise minds, the first aspect it presents seems rather to be one of boundless misery and sorrow. What can be more miserable than this universal hunting out of the high dignitaries, solemn functionaries, and potent, grave and reverend signiors of the world; this stormful rising-up of the inarticulate dumb masses everywhere, against those who pretended to be

speaking for them and guiding them? These guides, then, were mere blind men only pretending to see? These rulers were not ruling at all; they had merely got on the attributes and clothes of rulers, and were surreptitiously drawing the wages, while the work remained undone? The Kings were Sham-Kings, play-acting as at Drury Lane;—and what were the people withal that took them for real?

It is probably the hugest disclosure of *falsity* in human things that was ever at one time made. These reverend Dignitaries that sat amid their far-shining symbols and long-sounding long-admitted professions, were mere Impostors, then? Not a true thing they were doing, but a false thing. The story they told men was a cunningly devised fable; the gospels they preached to them were *not* an account of man's real position in this world, but an incoherent fabrication, of dead ghosts and unborn shadows, of traditions, cants, indolences, cowardices,—a falsity of falsities, which at last *ceases* to stick together. Wilfully and against their will, these high units of mankind were cheats, then; and the low millions who believed in them were dupes,—a kind of *inverse* cheats, too, or they would not have believed in them so long. A universal *Bankruptcy of Imposture*; that may be the brief definition of it. Imposture everywhere declared once more to be contrary to Nature; nobody will change its word into an act any farther:—fallen insolvent; unable to keep its head up by these false pretences, or make its pot boil any more for the present! A more scandalous phenomenon, wide as Europe, never afflicted the face of the sun. Bankruptcy everywhere; foul ignominy, and the abomination of desolation, in all high places: odious to look upon, as the carnage of a battle-field on the morrow morning;—a massacre not of the innocents; we cannot call it a massacre of the innocents; but a universal tumbling of Impostors and of Impostures into the street!

Such a spectacle, can we call it joyful? There is a joy in it, to the wise man too; yes, but a joy full of awe, and as it were sad-

der than any sorrow,—like the vision of immortality, unattainable except through death and the grave! And yet who would not, in his heart of hearts, feel piously thankful that Imposture has fallen bankrupt? By all means let it fall bankrupt; in the name of God let it do so, with whatever misery to itself and to all of us. Imposture, be it known then,—known it must and shall be,—is hateful, unendurable to God and man. Let it understand this everywhere; and swiftly make ready for departure, wherever it yet lingers; and let it learn never to return, if possible! The eternal voices, very audibly again, are speaking to proclaim this message, from side to side of the world. Not a very cheering message, but a very indispensable one.

Alas, it is sad enough that Anarchy is here; that we are not permitted to regret its being here,—for who that had, for this divine Universe, an eye which was human at all, could wish that Shams of any kind, especially that Sham-Kings should continue? No: at all costs, it is to be prayed by all men that Shams may *cease*. Good Heavens, to what depths have we got, when this to many a man seems strange! Yet strange to many a man it does seem; and to many a solid Englishman, wholesomely digesting his pudding among what are called the cultivated classes, it seems strange exceedingly; a mad ignorant notion, quite heterodox, and big with mere ruin. He has been used to decent forms long since fallen empty of meaning, to plausible modes, solemnities grown ceremonial,—what you in your iconoclast humor call shams, all his life long; never heard that there was any harm in them, that there was any getting on without them. Did not cotton spin itself, beef grow, and groceries and spiceries come in from the East and the West, quite comfortably by the side of shams? Kings reigned, what they were pleased to call reigning; lawyers pleaded, bishops preached, and honorable members perorated; and to crown the whole, as if it were all real and no sham there, did not scrip continue salable, and the banker pay in bullion, or paper with a metallic basis? “The greatest sham, I have

always thought, is he that would destroy shams.”

Even so. To such depth have *I*, the poor knowing person of this epoch, got;—almost below the level of lowest humanity, and down towards the state of apehood and oxhood! For never till in quite recent generations was such a scandalous blasphemy quietly set forth among the sons of Adam; never before did the creature called man believe generally in his heart that lies were the rule in this Earth; that in deliberate long-established lying could there be help or salvation for him, could there be at length other than hindrance and destruction for him. O Heavyside, my solid friend, this is the sorrow of sorrows: what on earth can become of us till this accursed enchantment, the general summary and consecration of delusions, be cast forth from the heart and life of one and all!

Cast forth it will be; it must, or we are tending, at all moments, whitherward I do not like to name. Alas, and the casting of it out, to what heights and what depths will it lead us, in the sad universe mostly of lies and shams and hollow phantasms (grown very ghastly now), in which, as in a safe home, we have lived this century or two! To heights and depths of social and individual *divorce* from delusions,—of ‘reform’ in right sacred earnest, of indispensable amendment, and stern sorrowful abrogation and order to depart,—such as cannot well be spoken at present; as dare scarcely be thought at present; which nevertheless are very inevitable, and perhaps rather imminent several of them! Truly we have a heavy task of work before us; and there is a pressing call that we should seriously begin upon it, before it tumble into an inextricable mass, in which there will be no working, but only suffering and hopelessly perishing!—