

Now *IS* the Time

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# 1 Finding the basement, loosing the house

Meaning in the modern world is lost based upon our own loss of our meaning structure. We saw the basement and now find the house as suspicious, and wna to burn it down. and rightly so. But we have to remeber that then we rebuild. I propose that starting small communities oriented towards specific goals and care is the way to start doing this.

Testing, testing. This following talk is on meaning in the modern world. What it means to lose that and where we might start rebuilding because there may be hope in this entire process.

There were several key points in the history of philosophy at which the West started to question its foundations. Certainly one should go back and understand that there were many foundations to begin with. That the West has been built upon. Greco-Roman philosophy and thought, Judeo-Christian thought and philosophy, the philosophy of other different cultures that were subsumed by Rome, and all manner of thought not only from interactions with the Middle East, and Africa, but also with the East in a limited capacity. It does seem to be the case that all these conglomerations of thoughts have helped form the West. It does appear that essentially in the modern era one of the biggest questions we have had is how we can know anything. We question all of the metaphysical assumptions, which is that God or anything else exists. And hence, we are questioning not only our Judeo-Christian roots, but also anything that has to do with any sort of religion in general. This line of thought seems to come with improved conditions, through elightenment values which have included the delcine of religius thought. It seems to be the case that in a sense this technological boom, as has been called, has also brought with it more questions. As we seem to understand more through science and technological advances we fall deeper into uncertanity. The spotlight of questions now focused upon ourselves. The questioning of our metaphysical assumptions, along with now deep questions about ourselves, and as a consiquence our society have had deep implications. Namely, leading us question all the way down to the "basement".

We find that we have no agreed upon formalized way to defend what it is we are doing. We are just doing things and this does not seem satisfactory to most people. We have found that our previous narratives were not able to sustain us. Indeed it seems to be the case that in a sense we have lost any underlying narrative purpose or meaning in the West, and even though all of us may not have realized this, it is a slow descent into this realization. We have gone into our own house that we have constructed, gone down to the basement, and have observed what we perceive to be a shoddy and not well-built foundation. We have then condemned the house, and perhaps rightly so. A house was constructed before us, and it brought us much material success and shelter. But why was it built in the first place, and what was being accomplished by it? This is the question in our modern era that perplexes everybody. We do not seem to have an answer to yet. It is a good question as well what effect recent catastrophes and other developments that seemed to smack of the same discouragement that was experienced around World War II and the Depression. Given that the modern world at that time seemed to be progressing so fast nobody could really understand or comprehend why all these terrible things were happening. We were advancing humanity into a golden age, or so we thought. The same holds for our current era. Not only are we disillusioned with ourselves and our institutions, we are also disillusioned with the world in general. It seems to be the case that without a grand defining narrative for most people, the world just kind of happens to them. We have ultimately not only lost faith in metaphysical picture, We have lost faith in ourselves. We see all manner of responses to this that are very disparate and seem to grate on each other. Hence, you have the current growing divide in our country between, say, Republicans and Democrats over what is the best path forward. Those who do support or not support this policy or realization or whatever it may be. It seems that underneath all of this there is a drive, a deep drive, for people to have some sort of vision of reality that they can get behind. We are seeking somewhere to place Our faith. What is interesting is that sometimes this does not have to be something that everybody agrees to. Rather pockets of people arising that seem to find ways in which they can agree with at least some people to go forward and do things. Now, this doesn't

always lead to anything productive as these small groups may war with each other and it may be vicious. However, it does seem to be the case that in our modern era, that this actually may be the answer we are seeking or at least the best place to start. It is not the case that we can really go back into the past and recover any point in history. Even if there may be a regression, not only in technology, but in, a societal view, a production capacity, or something else reductions do not lead to the exact same set of circumstances we may wish for. This can be summed up in the famous saying, "history does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme.". In this sense, when we are all struggling to comprehend what is happening around us, as not only technology expands rapidly, but information now floods us from all corners. It is not the case that we can completely shut ourselves off from the world as response. Even if we are to live, so to speak, off a grid, we rely upon society for so many different things that we would need to survive in this capacity. It is only the case that to be an absolute subsistence farmer is to disconnect oneself from society. But as some may find out, connection with the modern world in some way could easily be thrust upon them in all manner of different ways. Essentially, we know there is no guarantee of anything. However, going back to a particular time as a "reset" is not possible. And we know now that looking to our future, hoping that it will provide us something that we can live for is not the answer either. It is the case that both looking to the past and looking to the future is something that we need to do, but something that we need to do on balance with something that we rarely consider in the West, the current moment. Something we seem apt to neglect. Take the idea of the vacation. Instead of, say, the concept on improving the daily quality of your life. Vacations are often billed as a getaway, as an escape, as a reset. not knocking that this may at times be desired. It is indeed enjoyable to do such things. However, the question of why we take vacations in the first place is a good question. Is it truly the case that we actually need, so to speak, vacations? Could our normal lives, if we really set about improving them, so that we actually enjoyed them to the best of our circumstances and our ability allows us? Could this not essentially replace the idea of a vacation? Now, maybe we do need to get away sometimes, or maybe it's just that we have a travel bug. But instead of it being a

deep need, something that essentially we look to, to balance our life, to bring something that we do not have, what if that was already present in our life? How this relates back to what we were talking about is what the current moment represents. In our current circumstances we need to recapture faith in ourselves before we can hope to reclaim hope in anything else. Recapturing the concept of the current moment is one such way, it's all we have to hold onto. The current moment allows us to take stock of both future and past. But the current moment also connects us with ourselves, as we experience the world around us. We could sum up this thought with a simple saying, "now is the time".

Is it not the case that we find ourselves at an interesting junction? We have condemned the house that we live in, and we watch it burn down, but something must be rebuilt in its place. We will not stay in the forest or we will perish, so to speak. In this analogy, the new house we build could absolutely be of our choosing instead of just letting things come along so that we may put them into the structure of the foundation by chance. We could choose what goes in there. And as we consider what kind of house to build, I would submit that it is very important that perhaps instead of building a house from scratch very rapidly, we deliberate while we still have daylight as to what to put into the foundation. It is possible that small communities of people solving individual problems could sum their successes into answers to some of these large questions. I think it is going to be very difficult to come up with a grand sweeping narrative at a point in history where we have walked out that house. Because we cannot know of the absolute truth or falsity of our beliefs, based on the epistemology and constraints that we have upon us, is not something that should keep us from building a new house. Instead, I think it should inspire us to be deliberative and considerate about what it is exactly that we will put in its place. To Continue with our analogy, there is a tension. Of course, we will be staring at the skyline in this analogy with a little bit of angst from time to time, wondering if we will be able to construct anything of value before the sun sets upon us, and we are left out in the forest, the dark forest, at night with all that lurks in it. But the sun is not setting yet. We still have time.

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