



Against Hierarchy (and Hierarchists)

A treatise
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Introduction

Some people believe that the human being derives from the divine; others believe he is a total moron that, through some evolutionary quirk, assumed control of the planet. I am squarely in the latter camp.

If the human being fails as a species he will take the entire planet with him. Many people today express the view that the species is now at that critical point where failure (extinction, death of the planet) is ensured unless rapid changes occur. Will these changes happen? This treatise postulates that they can occur, but only if we recognize the existence of the Hierarchy and Hierarchists, and take the necessary steps to eliminate both.

Change won't occur until we recognize the existence of the Hierarchy. The Hierarchy, basically, is the collection of mechanisms currently in place that prevent recognition of the need for change as well as change itself. The underlying foundation of the Hierarchy is financial in nature. It is not capitalism; it is the widespread belief that free markets are in place and functioning properly while, at the same time, a highly centralized government collects taxes and spends the bulk of the taxes under the direction of failed capitalists who need the money to stay afloat and in power. America is now run by a small group of Hierarchists who use the Hierarchy to stay in power while they deficit spend on war and corporate bailouts to keep the economy afloat (and the people quiet). But the massive amount of debt shall soon come home to roost. In effect, what we have is modern-day fascism, where the ruling party (this is essentially the "Business Party," which has two factions – the Democrats and the Republicans, like the yin and the yang) controls the government and governs in such a way that the Hierarchy is assured of remaining firmly in place.

Underlying the entrenchment of the Hierarchy are the values of the people who believe that the human being derives from the divine. Change won't occur until we recognize the existence of Hierarchists. Hierarchists, by definition, organize their view of the world into hierarchies (sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously). These people usually ignore or disregard "the facts." They are people of *faith* – not people of religion, necessarily, but people who have convictions that cannot be shaken. As Bertrand Russell wrote in 1957 (Russell, 1957, Preface):

...it is thought virtuous to have Faith – that is to say, to have a conviction which cannot be shaken by contrary evidence. Or, if contrary evidence might induce doubt, it is held that contrary evidence must be suppressed. On such grounds, the young are not allowed to hear arguments, in Russia, in favor of capitalism, or, in America, in favor of Communism. This keeps the faith of both intact and ready for internecine war. The conviction that it is important to believe this or that, even if a free inquiry would not support the belief, is one which is common to almost all religions and which inspires all systems of state education.

In the minds of the faithful there are *truth theories* operating that are organizing their views of the world into lots of mini-hierarchies. These mini-hierarchies create a stronger impression in their minds than any empirically obtained, verifiable data derived from the real world ("the facts"). Propaganda that comes from the Hierarchy reinforces these truth theories. The primary truth theories in the minds of the Hierarchists that are leveraged by the Hierarchy are those related to financial matters, and matters of faith and patriotism.

Non-Hierarchists are much less complicated people. They tend to view the world as "flat." They don't buy into truth theories. They are moral Relativists. A moral Relativist believes that any social or moral hierarchy is invalid because it represents an arbitrary ordering of people

or ideas. In this treatise we are thus setting up two opposing philosophical camps: the Hierarchists and the Relativists¹.

Moral relativism is already a well understood term, but I need to clearly define our new term:

Hierarchist – noun. One who believes, explicitly or implicitly, in the value of hierarchies. A hierarchy is a system of ranking and organizing. With the exception of the top element(s), each element of a hierarchy is a subordinate to another element. A Hierarchist believes (consciously or unconsciously) that you can legitimately implement hierarchies in society based on some truth principle. A Hierarchist is the opposite of a Relativist.

The following table shows other dichotomies that relate to the Hierarchist vs. Relativist philosophical camps.

conservative	liberal
veritas	diversitas
heaven	hell
a priori	a posteriori
capitalism	communism
male	female
yin	yang
carnivore	vegetarian
rationalist	empiricist
order	chaos

There are three axioms upon which the Relativist vs. Hierarchist dichotomy is based. To wit:

¹ Many years ago I used the word “absolutist” to refer to a Hierarchist, but that term doesn’t imply the inherent stacking order and associated principles that the Hierarchist cherishes.

1. Truth is relative. There is no truth, there are only truths. Truth is a concept, not an absolute. Beliefs are a way of life, not “correct” or “incorrect” interpretations of life. This is moral relativism. For example, there is no single “correct” religion; there are only religions. For nearly every religion or cult there is a corresponding “messiah” – Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Lao-tse, or even Socrates. Here are the major religions currently at work in the world:

Hinduism	Judaism	Buddhism	Islam	Agnosticism
Mormonism	Taoism	Christianity	Atheism	Confucianism

Religions are more similar to one another than different. It is the concept of religion that should be considered universal. No specific religion itself should be considered the “right” or “true” or “correct” religion. And certainly no unprovoked or preemptive war or other terrorist act can be justified on the basis of religious beliefs. Is there really any difference between the Evangelical Christian who bombs an abortion clinic and the Jihadist who flies an airplane into a building full of people? Even the atheist is religious in his own way, as Ann Coulter displayed in her recent book *Godless*. Coulter provided numerous rock-solid examples of how both the atheist (or “liberal,” in her terminology) and the Christian embrace their core values as a matter of faith rather than reason in exactly the same ways (Coulter, 2006).

2. In places like America, where fundamental growth has already occurred, money is no longer used to build things: it is hoarded by a small number of people who continue to create “vapor” businesses (usually called the “service” economy) to continue to make money for themselves. They then leverage this “service” economy to manipulate the general populace, creating a massive Hierarchy built on the basic moral and philosophical assumptions they do indeed hold. Their beliefs are amplified (or propagandized) through the “service” economy

(primarily via the corporate-owned media) and their power grows. It is this Hierarchy – its fundamental nature, its arbitrariness, and its weaknesses – with which this treatise deals.

3. Some day there will be no money. Money has historically been necessary as a mechanism to facilitate commerce – the building and distribution of things. Eventually everything that humanity needs to sustain itself on the planet indefinitely (with no ongoing destructive environmental impact) will have been built, full distribution systems will be in place, and there will no longer be a need for economic “growth” or money. Humanity will then have moved into a final “maintenance phase” and history for all intents and purposes will end. This is communism (with a small “c”). Society of course will look very different, as I showed in my novel *Sonny’s Utopia* (2002). No longer will there be any place for people who are willing to foist upon others, by violence or manipulation, their particular truths or values. No longer will there be any place for Hierarchists.

The Hierarchy

You poisoned my sweet water.
 You cut down my green trees.
 The food you fed my children
 Was the cause of their disease.

My world is slowly fallin’ down
 And the air’s not good to breathe.
 And those of us who care enough,
 We have to do something...

Your newspapers,
 They just put you on.
 They never tell you
 The whole story.

They just put your
 Young ideas down.
 I was wonderin’ could this be the end

Of your pride and glory?

I work in your factory.
I study in your schools.
I fill your penitentiaries.
And your military too!

And I feel the future trembling,
As the word is passed around.
“If you stand up for what you do believe,
Be prepared to be shot down.”

And I feel like a stranger
In the land where I was born
And I live like an outlaw.
An’ I’m always on the run...

An’ I’m always getting busted
And I got to take a stand...
I believe the revolution
Must be mighty close at hand...

I smoke marijuana
But I can’t get behind your wars.
And most of what I do believe
Is against most of your laws

I’m a fugitive from injustice
But I’m goin’ to be free.
Cause your rules and regulations
They don’t do the thing for me

And I feel like a stranger
In the land where I was born
And I live just like an outlaw.
An’ I’m always on the run.

-Quicksilver Messenger Service, *What About Me?* (1970)

The Hierarchy can largely be defined by what it is not. It is not “the system,” as kids in the 60s and 70s liked to call the status quo. “The system” was really the bureaucracy – the huge

Federal government and military-industrial complex that exploded in size in America during and after World War II (and which President Eisenhower famously warned about on his way out of office). The bureaucracy was powered by technology. America's technological binge brought her out of the Depression. This binge was then followed by another, built on the success of the ramp in military hardware: a massive explosion in electronics and aerospace technologies that created millions of jobs and put a man on the moon. At that moment – when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin first stepped on the moon – the American economy and government became inextricably intertwined, and remain so today. “The system” was firmly in place.

The best example of “the system” was the Vietnam draft. Hundreds of thousands of children, really, were forcibly sent to war – a war waged (and lost) for reasons they did not understand. Vietnam, we now know, was waged merely to further the political and economic successes experienced by America earlier in the century, but at that time the children sent to do the fighting were given vague explanations such as the Domino Theory, whereby Communism would take over the world if it was not stopped. You could avoid the draft if you knew how to work “the system.” “The system” existed in its own reality, and you had to learn how to exist within that reality as well as your own. Most of the people who were drafted (and most that died) were poor; learning how to work “the system” was an upper- and middle-class activity. But even middle class kids, hiding out in school, were not immune to the effects of “the system.” The best example of this was the shooting of thirteen children by the Ohio National Guard on May 4, 1970. Four died. These kids were simply attending an anti-war rally over lunchtime (between classes) on the commons of Kent State University. They posed no significant threat to anyone, yet the actions of the National Guard were fully excused and no one was punished (Michener, 1971).



Nor is the Hierarchy “the institution,” another popular term that the kids used in the 60s and 70s. An institution, unlike a hierarchy, can be perfectly “flat.” An institution – the family, for example – can be hierarchical, but this is not a requirement. The infrastructure around voting can be considered an institution, but it is not necessarily hierarchical. Institutions are benign but critical components of society. They are like the gears of the machine that makes society go. They are not in-and-of themselves dangerous or exploitative.

Today there is still talk of “the system,” “the establishment” (roughly equivalent to “the system”) and “the institution,” but people will roll their eyes because the terms have become clichés. These terms now fall into the category of “conspiracy theories.” But, as the old saying goes, just because you are paranoid doesn’t mean they are not out to get you.

The Hierarchy isn’t a concept born of paranoia: the Hierarchy is a real construction in which the participants don’t view themselves as involved in a conscious exploitation or manipulation of others. They are simply living their lives, and their lives are so thoroughly based on unquestioned assumptions that they don’t see the Hierarchy. The Hierarchy is invisible to them.

Our unquestioned assumptions are the biggest issue standing in the way of human survival and, indeed, the survival of the planet as we know it (and as we inherited it). The media simply reports and the politicians simply rule without either side taking the other to task on the fundamental assumptions of their reporting or legislation. Our press and leaders don't even themselves realize that they are simply operating on assumptions; no one ever challenges the assumptions, so they never think twice about them themselves.

The most extreme of these unquestioned assumptions is the assumption by nearly every human being that humans "own" the Earth and that we can do with it as we wish. Obviously, with overpopulation, threat of nuclear holocaust, rampant destruction of the forests, global warming and unintended elimination of nearly every other species on the planet, we aren't very good owners. But the assumption remains that we may do with the Earth what we like, and that the other species don't matter. This is speciesism. Speciesism is our most egregious assumption and will likely result in extinction not only of every other species on Earth, but the human species as well. The Hierarchy achieves the bulk of its power from – and thrives on – unquestioned assumptions. I discuss the worst (or best, if you are a Hierarchist) of these assumptions in the next section.

Many of us today are basically schizophrenic: we adopt the values and live the life that we are taught, with constant reinforcement from the politics, economics and media in our lives, but truly, inside, we know that something is going horribly wrong and that something must be done.

The reason we let this happen – and why nothing changes – is because we have allowed political, corporate, media and even family hierarchies to develop and become entrenched in our everyday lives. Once the Hierarchy is there, it is very difficult to unseat. The biggest threat to

humanity and the planet is the prospect that these hierarchies – which I collectively refer to as the Hierarchy – will remain in place indefinitely, conditioning the mass of humanity into thinking that life under the umbrella of these artificial behemoths is the only life available to us as humans on Earth. Vast accumulations of wealth, massive abuse of technology, and the fact that we allow ourselves to be satisfied with creature comforts, a preoccupation with sex and mediocre (at best), formulaic entertainment have combined to make us passive. We live our lives vicariously through celebrities while we work insane amounts of time. We are unwilling to change because we think we are happy – or, at least, we aren't in any great pain. The ongoing effects of the Hierarchy and the momentum it has will spell our doom. In addition, the powers-that-be ram it down our throats on a daily basis that we are under attack by someone (in my lifetime it was, first, the Communists, then the Terrorists) and the powers-that-be are careful to point out that our lives are materially better than many other people's on Earth, and that we should somehow be grateful. Showing our appreciation is supposed to take the form of dim-witted conformity, presumably so that things don't change for the worse.

A hierarchy is usually defined by the organizing principle that gives it a hierarchical shape. Usually the person, truth concept, or function at the top represents the purest form of what comes below. In the Catholic Church, the Pope is at the top, because he represents the embodiment on earth of God; he is closest to God, and the rest of the hierarchy falls into place below him. In the military and in government, certain offices or ranks are at the top, and all other offices or ranks fall into place below.

Some hierarchies are purely pragmatic. The pecking order of the rescue team that launches into action is based purely on the practical matter of needing someone in charge. But most hierarchies are based on a truth concept, whereby the person, office, or rank at the top is

there because she/it is qualitatively “better,” “higher,” or more “pure” than what comes below. What comes below is organized relative to this truth principle. It is these latter hierarchies that comprise the Hierarchy with a capital “H.”

Living Inside the Hierarchy

The Hierarchy has caused us all to become Hierarchists, to one degree or another. Even Relativists have adopted assumptions created by the Hierarchy. Americans silently work at their jobs and digest (without any indigestion) the “news” from the corporate news outlets, refusing to see the occasional glimpse of what is actually and in fact happening in the world, largely due to our own actions. Secretly, Americans are afraid to speak against a government that is now controlled by the Business Party, and not in a democratic way; on the contrary, the Republicans and Democrats control the American government in the same way the Fascists in World War II controlled the German government. We must remember that Hitler was elected, fair and square. Under Fascism, it is possible to elect a dictator.

The Hierarchy achieves its power and continues to dominate and grow via our unquestioned assumptions. The Hierarchy uses propaganda to disseminate and reinforce these assumptions. This section discusses the four assumptions that I find most destructive, and supporting of the Hierarchy in America. If we are able to overcome these assumptions, we will be on the road to change.

Assumption: Economic growth is “good.”

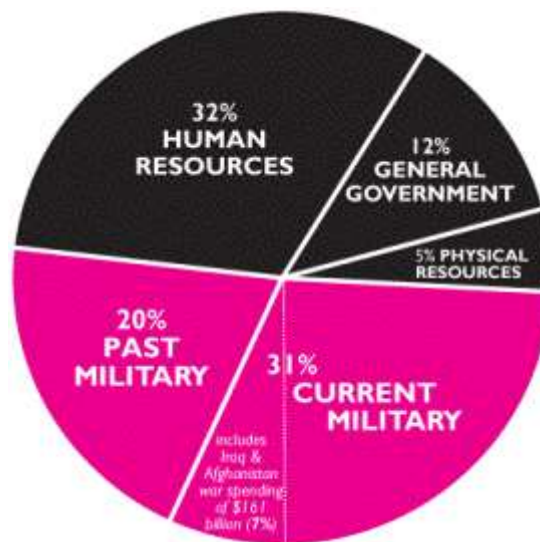
Reality: Economic growth is crushing the planet.

The assumption behind all economic reporting by the media and most other “news” and commentary as well is that growth is “good,” and that we, as consumers, are responsible for keeping the economy growing. To claim that growth is the problem, devastating the environment

and providing the powers-that-be with the continual revenue and wealth creation they require to carry out their agenda of global acquisition, would be heresy. One of the greatest achievements of the Hierarchy is that it has been able to build the assumption that “growth is good” into any public discussion. The need to “encourage economic growth” underlies any serious economic or political discussion in America, as well as everyday conversation. To question the need for “growth” would be equivalent to questioning the need for oxygen.

Assumption: “America stands for free-market capitalism.”

Reality: America's gross domestic product is somewhere in the vicinity of 14 trillion dollars. Nearly a fifth of that is government spending, divided as shown in the following chart:



Source: <http://www.warresisters.org/piechart.htm>

Half of that spending, or a tenth of the economy, is military spending. A large percentage of military spending goes to military contractors, who use the money to develop a variety of technologies. The technologies that “win” – i.e., actually work – are then “productized” by the companies, who make profits from the products. In other words, a significant percentage of America’s gross national product has nothing to do with free markets – it is risk-free capital

given to corporations like Northrop, General Electric, and Lockheed. In fact, if you are willing to go so far as to say that America has become such a corporatocracy and fascist state that the government is basically run by the corporations (which is what this treatise argues), then the fifth of the gross domestic product that is processed by the government is controlled by the corporations. That's hardly free enterprise. As Noam Chomsky, noted linguist and philosophy professor at MIT, has written, "Free enterprise [is] a term that refers, in practice, to a system of public subsidy and private profit, with massive government intervention in the economy to maintain a welfare state for the rich" (Chomsky, 1992, p. 87). We all basically work for the rich, as though America were one big factory. The majority of the fruits of our labors go to American militarism (approximately one-half working day a week for each of us is required), and this trend shows no sign of abating. America continues to be the biggest spender in the world – by far – of dollars on its active military (see table).

Country	Annual active military spending
World	\$1100 billion
Rest-of-world (all but USA)	\$500 billion
United States	\$623 billion
China	\$65.0 billion
Russia	\$50.0 billion
France	\$45.0 billion
United Kingdom	\$42.8 billion
Japan	\$41.75 billion
Germany	\$35.1 billion

Italy	\$28.2 billion
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Source: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/spending.htm>

As for the rest of the economy, it too is hardly a “free market.” Lobbyists and CEOs cause “lasses faire” legislation to be passed to “let the free markets operate,” but as soon as the economy tumbles due to greed and fraud that is the direct result of lack of government oversight, the Federal government rushes in to bail out the rich. The recent (2008) bailout of almost the entire American financial industry with taxpayer dollars provides a great example, where taxes from homeowners who in many cases lost their homes because of the deregulated and unconscionable lending practices of the financial institutions were used to protect the riches of the executives and investors in these failed businesses, leaving people homeless and broke while the rich walked away without so much as a skinned knee, their risky, reckless, and exploitative investments gone bad but having suffered no losses. The excesses of the financial companies put huge rewards into the pockets of the private sector, and when the excesses came home to roost and financial institutions began to collapse, the rich were bailed out by the public sector using public debt to preserve the ill-gotten gains of the investor class. The bailout was pitched as required to save “the people” – if the lending markets were to dry up, they argued, families and small businesses would not be able to borrow money, and the economy would collapse. This brought to mind a famous passage from Marx’s *Das Capital*: “...the usury which sucks the life out of the small producer goes hand in hand with the usury which sucks the rich owner of large estates dry. As soon as the usury of the Roman patricians had completely ruined the Roman plebeians, the small peasants, this form of exploitation had an end and slave economy undisguised took the place of small peasant economy” (Marx, 1894).

The Hierarchy continues to promote the idea that the government should not be involved with individual's finances – that the individual must save and invest on his own to ensure the security of himself and his family. The only legitimate function left for the government then becomes its role in manipulating the economy by the powers-that-be for their own goals. This is not government. This is fascism, pure and simple.

Assumption: "America is a democracy."

Reality: America is a plutocracy. It is ruled by the rich. Again, to quote Noam Chomsky, “According to the common sense meaning [of democracy], a society is democratic to the extent that people can participate in a meaningful way in managing their affairs. But the doctrinal meaning of democracy is different – it refers to a system in which decisions are made by sectors of the business community and related elites. The public are to be only ‘spectators of action,’ not ‘participants,’ as leading democratic theorists (in this case, Walter Lippmann) have explained. They are permitted to ratify the decisions of their betters and to lend their support to one or another of them, but not to interfere with matters – like public policy – that are none of their business” (Chomsky, 1992, p. 86).

In reality, public policy hardly reflects what the public wants. The public has wanted publically funded health care for many years, but the interests of the insurance companies tell us we cannot have it. Americans want energy independence and renewable fuels, but the big oil companies tell us we cannot have them– and if we do, it will be on their terms. And today, as I write, everyone wants out of that mistake called Iraq and definitely no one wants to attack another country like Iran, but our President has other plans for us. And I (and many others) continue to be dismayed that the November, 2006, election, even though there was a loud and undeniable mandate that Americans wanted out of Iraq, actually resulted in an escalation (the

“surge”) of that war. This was exactly the opposite response that should have happened if democracy were in fact our form of government.

Assumption: “America is fighting a global war on terrorism”

Reality: America is one of the greatest terrorist nations in the world.



In many respects, America brought the events of 9-11 onto itself. American foreign policy in the Middle East has been a disaster. The justification for American failed policies in the Middle East has always been that America is “protecting its vital interests” – i.e., oil. The country’s justification for its direct invasion of Iraq – to eliminate bio-chemical and nuclear weapons – was completely specious, especially when one considers that at least some of the bio-chemical weapons used by Iraq over the past several decades were provided by America, including those used by Saddam Hussein to murder the Kurdish people (Goodman & Goodman, 2004, chap. 1; this chapter, titled “Blowback,” includes a description of the famous photograph of Donald Rumsfeld and Saddam Hussein).

There are many clear examples of acts of terrorism conducted by America, though they rarely make the news. America also harbors terrorists (though these people can only be labeled “terrorists” if you take the view of the nations where they committed their crimes, such as Haiti and Cuba). Ronald Reagan’s policies in the Latin America were clearly terrorist in nature – Chomsky doesn’t pull any punches when he calls Reagan’s acts in that part of the world his “terror wars.”

Furthermore, the case can easily be made that:

America = Soviet Union

America today looks suspiciously similar to the Soviet Union of the 1980s. America has a controlled economy run by a single political party, and there is little dissent. We have all been programmed by the media, which is run by the rich. The depth of the propaganda rivals only that of the Soviet-controlled news agency Pravda. We all go about our jobs, mindlessly making money so the powers-that-be can wage their wars. America invaded Iraq, unprovoked, just like the Soviets invaded Afghanistan (the parallels between the U.S. invasion of Vietnam and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are even clearer). We have in essence become our former enemy, but the people are too heavily influenced by the propaganda (the assumptions) to be able to see it for what it is. We have no open markets, no democracy, no freedom to reveal the truth in our press or even question the basic assumptions of our lives. We simply work like slaves to achieve the goals of people we don’t even know.

Again, to quote Chomsky: “...The cold war was a kind of tacit arrangement between the Soviet Union and the United States under which the US conducted its wars against the Third World and controlled its allies in Europe, while the Soviet rulers kept an iron grip on their own

internal empire and their satellites in Eastern Europe – each side using the other to justify repression and violence in its own domains” (Chomsky, 1992, p. 80).

Hierarchist vs. Relativist Litmus Test

The Hierarchist, obviously, is anyone who consciously or unconsciously abides by the Hierarchy. The primary characteristic of the Hierarchist is the inability to “step outside” of the status quo – to be able to see outside of “the box.” The Hierarchist cannot see the “big picture”: the Hierarchist is trapped in the Hierarchy and she doesn’t even know it. Worse still, she doesn’t have the intellectual skills to be able to understand her predicament.

I found what is a fairly simple method of determining whether or not someone is a Hierarchist – or leans in that direction. I received the following “Christmas greeting” last Christmas over the internet. I think it serves as a sort of Rorschach test to determine who is a Hierarchist and who is a Relativist.

If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...You are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...You are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...You are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...You are ahead of 500 million people in the world. If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...You are more blessed than three billion people in the world. If your parents are still alive and still married...You are very rare, even in the United States. If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore...You are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all. You are wished a Merry Christmas!

I was absolutely devastated by this “greeting.” Had the world truly deteriorated to this point? Even worse, were people truly sending this “greeting” to one another over the internet in order to make each other feel good?

I then realized that this e-mail was yet another in a strain of e-mails I had received lately from people who regarded themselves as “the silent majority” in America: the people who were patriotic and grateful for their lives in America, but were wholly unable to see that their “blessing” was merely the result of the coincidence of where they were born. The fact that anyone would celebrate these statistics (questionable though they were) showed that their ethics ran so shallow that the mere flip of a coin could cause them to somehow find holiday meaning in the fact that one side rather than the other happened to come up for them.

What is truly underlying the happiness that the Hierarchist feels from this message is some sort of confirmation that God meant for them to have a better life, probably because of their religion or perhaps their political system or work ethic. This sort of interpretation is based on faith, not analysis, not compassion. I have found that it is almost impossible to change the minds of people whose morality is based purely on faith. Even evidence directly to the contrary of what they believe can do little to get them to shift their perspective. They are stuck. They are locked. They are Hierarchists.

On the other hand, the Relativist is able to step out of his “box.” As a result he is open to new ideas and can empathize with the plight others. Rather than taking joy in the advantages he has and attempting to protect them at every turn, he attempts to understand the problems behind injustice, poverty, war and hate, and wants to fix them. The Hierarchist, however, can’t help himself. Some people, psychologically, simply have trouble seeing beyond the Hierarchy. And the powers in this world of propaganda, exploitation, torture, and greed are great. These people just can’t break free from the Hierarchy that imprisons them.

Unfortunately, most of the horrible circumstances summarized in the Christmas “greeting” are getting worse in America, not better. The Hierarchist in America will tend to

credit his country with his fortunate state of affairs, but he needs to look at what is actually happening. He needs to step out of the status quo and take a fresh look. He doesn't tend to do that.

Characteristics of the Hierarchist

Conformity is death.

-Bertrand Russell

We now look at a few representative Hierarchists. In general, the Hierarchist tends to lack direct experience in the world, where his ideals and beliefs rarely stand the test of real life. He tends to be isolated geographically or in a specific social class or organization. It was no coincidence that the famous rationalist philosopher Immanuel Kant never travelled more than a few miles from his home his whole life. The Hierarchist can be rich or "working class," but he is always isolated and does whatever he can to avoid the need to question, defend, or justify what he believes. He tends to have one set of values for himself and another set for others. He won't feel guilty if he treats others in a way that he would not like to be treated himself. He sees himself as special in this way, but of course this is a very dangerous characteristic, especially for Hierarchists who have a lot of power.

The following examples come from my direct experience in corporations, which are Hierarchist training grounds. I use corporations as the environment from which I extract the following examples, but you could use churches, government, the military or any other of a vast array or organizations where Hierarchism flourishes. The core characteristic found in all Hierarchists is the willingness to conform and put their faith into a pre-defined hierarchy – a hierarchy for which they had no role in creating. I provide three examples.

Hierarchist 1 is the pure conformist. The core of the Hierarchy consists of these folks. This is the person who, if told by someone higher up in the hierarchy to go fuck herself, would certainly try. Everything she says and does toes the company line. She implicitly accepts the authority of the Hierarchy and only feels comfortable when working within the Hierarchy and following its rules. The comic strip Dilbert was made for her: even totally contradictory actions make sense in her twisted world. She is the perfect candidate to fall for Orwellian double-speak. She has been conditioned not to think for herself, and only do what she is told. She is thoroughly amoral. Morality and right and wrong are not even an issue to her. In this she is a relativist, but the behavior she adopts by convention and osmosis is clearly informed by a rigid view of the world, where power, hierarchy and authority are morally right, and weakness is wrong. Hierarchist 1 is convinced that if she only does what she is supposed to (i.e., what those above her in the Hierarchy tell her to do) then she will be safe, her job will be safe, and she will be able to remain secure in the organization, in the world, in life. The organization can do anything and she won't object or question its wisdom.

Hierarchist 2 is an expert at “working” the Hierarchy. She gravitates to power, sucks up to it, sleeps with it, uses it to her advantage. She seeks pockets of power within the organization and aligns herself with them. If she sees something she wants, she follows the power strand “up” and uses leverage to get what that power controls. She realizes that confrontation will get her nowhere, so she does everything clandestinely. She is cowardly in that she works behind the scenes and avoids, at all costs, those whom she is fucking over. Hierarchist 2 is convinced that if she only continues to acquire power and the support of those above her (in her actions), then she will thrive within the organization. Hierarchist 2 tends to be very opinionated, though she is careful about whom she expresses her opinions to.

Hierarchist 3 uses preconceived notions about the ultimate Corporate Man to present himself, even though the majority of what he does, says, and (ultimately) is, is bogus. He gives himself bloated titles, and seeks advanced degrees from fly-by-night organizations, just so he can put “Ph.D.” after his name. All interactions with him are bogus: he will say only what you want to hear. He is never negative. He is constantly on the watch for an advantage. He will use people to move ahead and feel no sense of obligation after using them. He is a plastic person who presents himself to the world as though he were the epitome of the “top” of the organization: educated, concerned, successful, ambitious. But ultimately and thoroughly bogus to the core. Looks nice in a suit. Hierarchist 3 is convinced that if he only presents a successful, dedicated, educated, driven self to the organization, then his advancement and success are guaranteed. He, like the other Hierarchists, never questions the goals or operations of the organization. He just follows along, accepting whatever is thrown his way. He is often promoted and moves up the ladder fast. Most Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are Hierarchist 3’s. This is the most dangerous type of Hierarchist because he blindly acknowledges authority and when he finally achieves a position at the top of the Hierarchy, he becomes the authority himself, and believes in his own truth and goodness, regardless of the fact that he has blindly ascended to a position of absolute power.

I leave it as an exercise to the reader to apply the characteristics displayed by the straw men in these three examples to people they know in all parts of life, and to their business, religious, and political leaders.

Orwellian Double-speak

They are two ways to believe something: you can believe something because you feel it to be correct, or you can believe something because you have thought about it. Hierarchists tend

to believe something is correct because they were raised or brainwashed to believe it is correct. Hierarchists often believe something to be correct because others who they admire believe it to be correct. These other people could be their parents or a powerful member of a political party. Almost always this is someone higher in a hierarchy than the believer. Hierarchies facilitate the blind propagation of belief systems. People are believed simply because they are bosses or civic leaders.

You always know when someone believes something because they feel it to be “right”: one belief usually contradicts another, or the belief makes no sense, often contradicting itself. The best examples of these beliefs were provided by the author George Orwell in his book *1984*. The government, in its attempt to keep the population in line, caused them to intentionally believe things that were self-contradictory. Today we have more examples than ever.

Double-speak Term	Meaning
Compassionate conservative	A conservative thrives by cutting taxes on the rich, exploiting workers, and starting wars that the poor have to fight. A conservative wants only the rich (and those who want to become rich) to survive. How can a conservative be in any way “compassionate”? They see compassion as a weakness, especially if they are already rich.
Financial securities	Security is a centralized world government, run by the people and for the people. The drive toward privatization attempts to remove that, replacing it with corporations. Financial corporations take your money and give you a percentage back, just like a pyramid scheme. (With each “security” sold, the pay of the people “higher” up increases.) The paper or electronic entry in your online financial statement that states what you “own” as a result of giving your

	money to the financial organization is called a “security.” But of course that is exactly the opposite of what it actually is. A “security” is in fact the means by which corporations make you insecure – they give you these and then support legislation to take away your piece of the collective benefits that you have paid in for many years to the centralized, collective government: Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid.
Tax relief	By saying “relief” the assumption is made that taxes are too high. They are too high on the poor, not the rich. There is no relief for the poor, either, as taxes are further lowered on the rich, and the poor have to pay more of their retirement and health care costs.
Fair and balanced	Fox News Channel’s famous moniker, for this most biased, bought, and least fair and balanced of all the corporate media.
Fuel efficiency	American cars have been prevented from becoming fuel efficient by an oil company-owned government that thwarts true efficiency (like alternative fuels and hybrid cars) at every turn.
Layoffs	If you get “laid off” from a company you certainly won’t be returning to it. Let’s just call it like it is: Firing without cause.
Clean coal	The adjective “clean” was attached to the word “coal” by the coal industry, and then marketed. There is nothing clean about the mining and burning of coal, and never will be. The technology can only become slightly less dirty.
Blue Skies initiative	This was a program initiated by the George W. Bush administration aimed at allowing, not preventing, more air pollution.
Department of Defense	Certainly the DoD is not defending the country. The unprovoked invasion of

	Iraq as a “pre-emptive” war was not defensive. The “pre-emptive” nature of the war was shown to be fraudulent, so the invasion of Iraq was aggression, pure and simple.
Pro-life	Actually, given that some 40 million legal abortions (as of 2008) have occurred in the time since abortion was made legal in America, and given the fact that the average American today lives a lifestyle that has such a detrimental impact on the environment that long-term sustainability severely deteriorates with every American born, “pro-life” is actually “pro-death” when you look at the long-term viability of the planet and the possibility that billions more humans could have long and fruitful lives, for an indefinite time period (until the sun turns to a red dwarf, billions of years from now).

Hierarchies are fortresses against innovation and free-thinking. They preserve the past into the future. They create a pre-made world that conformists can be happy in, without thinking. Conformists accept their world in the same way that they accept these examples of double-speak. Unfortunately, the impact on other people in the world and the environment can be devastating, as we are seeing now. The Hierarchy could be the cause for the extinction of the human species unless we learn a way to tear it down. Perhaps we need to build new hierarchies – lots of little hierarchies to thwart the development of the single great big Hierarchy.

Communism

...Marx might be right about how capitalism works or about capitalism’s unjust nature, even if socialism or communism would in fact be worse or even if they are merely utopian dreams that cannot be made real. This is important because of the tendency to think that the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (as well as the unpalatable features of that communism before it collapsed) refutes Marxian theory generally. This is quite untrue. What the collapse of eastern European and Soviet communism refutes is, if

anything, the theories of Lenin and Stalin about how to establish communism. Marx himself said very little about such things, and what he does say generally favors a much more democratic kind of socialism and communism than what Lenin and Stalin managed to bring about.

-Jeffrey Reiman, from *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* (Reiman, 1979, p. 216)

One of the finest ways to turn people off in America is to mention communism in any kind of favorable light.

Which isn't surprising. The Vietnam war was presumably about preventing the countries of the Far East from falling "like dominoes" to communism. Many young American men (and Vietnamese of both sexes and all ages) died in that war. To say anything positive about communism is akin to slapping the relatives of all those folks straight across their faces. Same for the veterans.

But as we have now learned from the war in Iraq, America doesn't go to war for the reasons given by its leaders. America, we now know, went into Iraq in support of the longstanding Carter Doctrine, which states that America has a right to protect its vital national interests, even if this means invading and occupying a sovereign nation without provocation. The vital national interest in this case was, of course, oil. (More specifically, America invaded Iraq so that it could privatize the oil industry. You can't own something unless it is put on "the market." This attempt has proven a horrible failure, with thousands of dead Americans and hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqis.)

Similarly, Vietnam was not about fighting communism. The Vietnam War resulted from longstanding imperialist ambitions of the West in the Far East. "Communism," like WMD, was an excuse to take action, not a reason for action. So when someone mentions communism in a positive light, you can object to it from an economic standpoint, but not from a historical standpoint. There has never been a truly communist nation (see below).

Another piece of popular lore is that President Reagan “defeated” the Communist (with a capital “C”) threat. That simply is not true. The Soviet economy failed, independent of American action (though there is something of a case to be made that we “forced” them to spend on the Cold War, but if that were our intention why then didn’t America’s military spending drop like a rock – or at all! – after the Wall came down?). That was Boris Yeltsin atop that tank, though popular lore would have you believe it was Ronald Reagan. Certain economic principles espoused by Karl Marx were implemented by Lenin, but they didn’t work, creating an environment in which a man like Stalin could come to power (through violence), followed by a series of leaders riding on the repressive Soviet regime. But none of this had anything to do with communism. The ideas taken from Marx were implemented out of context: Marx insisted that a country first move through a stage of pure capitalism, to build up the “means of production.” He never believed a nation could jump from feudalism straight into communism. The Soviet effort was doomed before it ever got underway.

According to Erich Fromm (Fromm, 1961, p. 6) “...Russian Communists appropriated Marx’s theory and tried to convince the world that their practice and theory followed his ideas. Although the opposite is true, the West accepted their propagandistic claims and has come to assume that Marx’s position corresponds to the Russian view and practice.” Similarly, “communism” as it is practiced in China has little to do with Marxism. In fact, China now looks much more like a traditional capitalistic country as it struggles to build its “means of production.” China learned a lot from the collapse of the Soviet Union. If America ever fights a war with China it will not be about communism: on the contrary, it will be about imperialistic control over the Middle East. We can also postulate that the Soviet Union may very well have taken the same direction as China if America had not accepted its challenge to escalate the Cold

War. But the military-industrial complex, in America as in the Soviet Union, was firmly in place after WWII, and the combination of unfettered capitalism and a presumed fight against the spread of “communism” created a “perfect storm” in America, which somehow did not end in global annihilation. Would the Soviets really have launched nuclear weapons from Cuba, knowing that U.S. submarines were sitting off the coast of their homeland, ready to deploy in retaliation? I doubt it. The development of the military-industrial complex served a purpose in creating a stalemate, but then got (and continues to be) out of control.

We haven’t yet seen a nation built on pure communism. We have, however, seen the growth of socialism, and socialism is the step from capitalism to communism. What is happening today in Europe, Latin America and other socialistic areas of the world is exactly what Marx was expecting later in his life. According to Karl Deutsch, author of the standard political science textbook *Politics and Government* (Deutsch, n.d., p. 105) “[Marx had formed his entire vision] before he reached the age of thirty. But in 1875, about a generation later, Marx put down some careful second thoughts. Economic and political development, it turned out, were taking longer than had been expected. The development of capitalism and the path toward socialism and communism seemed far longer and more complex—steeper, more winding, more fogbound—than had been anticipated. The distinction between *socialism*—the expected first stage after capitalism – and *communism* (the later stage) now loomed much larger and more important. Capitalism, Marx now saw, could last a very long time.”

You have to read Marx’s writings before you form views about Marx and communism. My reading of Marx is that he envisioned communism to be a state of pure democracy. True, he didn’t place strong emphasis on the process of voting, but remember that he lived before *electricity*: he didn’t realize how easy it would be to poll an entire population at regular intervals

using technology like the internet. Hegel's ideas, which had a strong influence on Marx, jibe perfectly with more recent concepts of popular democracy. I believe that if Marx were living today he would espouse a state of pure democracy.

A state of pure democracy is based on direct voting. Issues are decided by people going to their computers and casting their votes. A majority or plurality decides law. There are no congressmen or presidents: there are only people living their lives based on pure and simple utilitarianism.

Of course to implement a system such as this in America today would require major amendments to the Constitution, in direct opposition to the efforts of the current "strict constructionists" now unfortunately stacking the Supreme Court. The founding fathers dictated that there be a layer of elected officials between the will of the people and the laws under which the people must live. They didn't trust the collective opinion of the people. They envisioned a republic, not a democracy. Unfortunately, this structure has allowed the rich to gain control of the law; the law and legislation do not represent the will of the people. The law and legislation represent the ambitions and interests of the rich and powerful – of the corporations and private investors. Not until elected officials begin actually using technology like the internet to poll their constituents is the situation likely to change. Before we can move to a state of pure democracy in America we need to ensure that our elected officials do in fact create laws and legislate based on the will of the people, whom they represent.

Against Capitalism

Capitalism is a boon to growing industrial economies. As already discussed, a nation must first go through capitalism to build its economic base before socialism and finally communism can be adopted.

But there are limits to the benefits of capitalism. At some point the benefits of capitalism are outweighed by the negative effects. Capitalism as first described by Adam Smith in the mid-1700s in England has certainly improved the lot of humankind, regardless of the negative effects documented by Charles Dickens in many of his novels and, around the same time, succinctly summarized by Marx.

The Hierarchy is the ultimate expression of the harmful effects of late-stage capitalism and the clear indication that the benefits of capitalism are outweighed by the negative effects. The Hierarchy thrives in late-stage capitalism, as the wealth flows faster and faster to “the top.” The cumulative effects of concentrated wealth “at the top,” which compounds faster and faster as the size of invested capital in the hands of few continues to grow, are all to the benefit of the growth and consolidation of the Hierarchy.

But the most fundamental flaw of capitalism is that the system assumes unending growth. The planet, of course, is finite, so the physical limits of growth must necessarily be reached. Many argue that the growth of the “service economy” can continue forever, but, as we have seen, this simply translates into growth of the Hierarchy, with all the attendant ills.

In theory, capitalism and government are at odds. Indeed, capitalism thrives in the absence of regulation and taxation, but only to a point. The following table shows which classes thrive given the economic system in use and the amount of government encouraged by each of the economic systems.

	Capitalism	Socialism	Communism
The Rich	<i>Thrive the most – No government</i>	<i>Under the Hierarchy, thrive the most – socialized capitalism, fascism –This is what we currently have in</i>	–

		<i>America</i>	
Middle Class	<i>Trickle down from the rich</i>	<i>With limited Hierarchy, government for the people</i>	<i>All government, all thrive, no rich, no poor</i>
Poor	<i>Welfare, charity</i>	<i>Government for the people</i>	–

When capitalism thrives, the rich thrive. Theories that postulate that a rising tide lifts all boats and the “trickle down” rhetoric of the Reagan years have been shown to be absolutely false in a society experiencing the advanced stages of capitalism as the middle class shrinks and the middle class and poor pay for the mistakes of failed capitalists through the taxes and corporate bailout programs levied against them. This is really *false* socialism, or the Hierarchy, where there is a huge government keeping failed, fascist capitalists in power through deficit spending. When true socialism thrives, where the government serves the people rather than the failed capitalists, the bulk of the society thrives. When communism takes hold, the entire population exists on the same footing and everyone thrives.

Today, in America, what is passed for capitalism is in fact socialism where big government is owned by the rich and used by the rich to correct the mistakes made by the failed capitalists who have all the money and intend to keep it. Unfortunately, the rich socialists keep spending money they don’t have (deficit spending on wars and corporate bailouts), hoping the taxpayers will come through in the end. It is a great gig for them; the Hierarchy keeps them in power, even though their policies are completely flawed.

Capitalism would continue to work well on a planet that was somehow ever-growing and resistant to pollution, global warming and overpopulation. Socialism would continue to work well on a planet like this as well, though the planet wouldn’t have to be able to continue to grow

as fast or be as resistant to pollution, global warming and overpopulation. Communism thrives on a planet like Earth, which is finite and whose sensitive environment is destroyed quickly and completely by pollution, global warming and overpopulation.

On planet Earth we have already hits the limits to growth, we are choking on pollution while cancer rates sky-rocket, the effects of global warming are hitting us at a rate even faster than predicted by most scientists, and the world population continues to grow. In those areas of the planet that still profess to be capitalistic, the Hierarchy is firmly in place. Government is allowed to grow, but not to the benefit of the people – the Hierarchy ensures that it grows in accordance with the wishes of the rich. The capitalists are failing at a rapid rate, as demonstrated by the failure of large corporations like Enron and WorldCom, and the bailout of large financial institutions like Bear Stearns and other investment firms, banks and insurance companies. The George W. Bush administration represents the lengths to which the failed capitalists must now go to rescue failing financial institutions, to prop up the largest industries like oil, and to repress and brainwash the citizens into thinking they are living in a democratic society. The Hierarchy is the failed capitalist's best friend. The fact that the George W. Bush administration was re-elected to a second term is testimony to the power of the Hierarchy. But even more it is testimony to the sorry state of the human species on the planet today.

Your Reason

Here alone I, in books form'd of metals,
 Have written the secrets of wisdom,
 The secrets of dark contemplation
 By fightings and conflicts dire
 With terrible monsters Sin-bred,
 Which the bosoms of all inhabit,
 Seven deadly Sins of the soul.

Lo! I unfold my darkness, and on

This rock place with strong hand the Book
Of eternal brass, written in my solitude:

Laws of peace, of love, of unity,
Of pity, compassion, forgiveness.
Let each chuse one habitation,
His ancient infinite mansion.
One command, one joy, one desire,
One curse, one weight, one measure,
One King, one God, one Law.
-Urizen speaks, from *Urizen*, by William Blake

William Blake, 18th Century poet and painter, lived during the so-called scientific revolution, when humanity moved in one gigantic leap away from religious faith as the organizing principle in the universe to reason and science. Blake, however, was skeptical about your reason, as embodied in his character Urizen.

Reason, when applied to a field of data, has done many useful things. Science and technology have prolonged human life and, in general, improved the human condition. Blake didn't give reason its full due in this regard. But today we are seeing the true fallout of too much reason and too much science, so Blake was probably right after all in his skepticism.

The point is often made that, while it is true that humankind has made dramatic advances in science and technology, he hasn't really gotten very far in the ethical realm. Reason hasn't helped out much when it comes to making great societies.

That's because the concept of reason that has been handed down through the centuries is flawed. People think that thinking will provide us with the truth. But that cannot be so. You cannot "reason" about morals. You can reason only about data. Reason is only useful when presented with an extremely rich field of language-independent, objective, "raw" data. Reason finds patterns and helps with the forming of hypotheses. Scientists and other thinkers then try out these hypotheses on the physical world, with experiments, to see if they work. Many have. And

the best hypotheses come from the best data – and the best data comes from the richest “field of data.”

Thus, I postulate, that reason can give us “the answers” to how to build a better society, but it needs a rich set of societies to analyze. The social sciences require lots of “social”: reason needs input.

So how can this data be generated? Obviously, society must be diverse. Society must encourage dissent and nourish creativity. The Hierarchy prevents new societies from forming. As Urizen points out, reason likes monolithic structures. On the other hand, Relativists thrive on chaos and change.

Defending Relativism



Author Ann Coulter, who brilliantly (and without realizing it) made the case for relativism in Godless

The core philosophical problem with relativism is embodied in the primary argument against it: There is an apparent contradiction in that stating that “everything is relative” is itself an absolute statement, and thus self-contradicting and false.

This argument is, however, easily undone. There is a difference between statements that are *instances* and the underlying concept or *object* that is itself the cognitive basis that allows us to postulate the instances themselves. As Scottish philosopher David Hume, the great empiricist, was the first to point out: We can make plenty of statements based on induction, but as to their underlying truth or falsity, as to the underlying operations of the mind and the universe, we must pass over in silence.

The best way of thinking about objects and instances comes from the field of computer science. Object-oriented languages provide a model for how human knowledge itself operates. Underlying all thought are objects that we, as humans, can only speculate about. We can generate sentences, but sentences are merely the *instantiations* of the underlying objects. As for the exact nature of the objects, we must pass over the subject in silence.²

Military Tax Freedom Day

Freedom isn't free.

-Popular bumper sticker

Each year in the late spring, we read about “tax freedom day.” This is the day of the year when a worker’s paycheck becomes all his own: he is done, if you calculate based on every penny earned so far, with paying taxes for the year. Presumably the point is that we pay too

² I realize that these mysterious “objects” sound very Platonic, but they are similar to the Forms in only the most general way. The Forms are more of a poetic concept than hard metaphysical reality.

many taxes. And I agree – but you must consider that nearly half of all taxes go to the military (see chart presented earlier).

Now, if you further refine “tax freedom day” based on this information, you will discover that the average American works more than a month to provide the government with the money it needs to fund the military.

The military has become the dominant American institution. It permeates our society. Much of our national identity is wrapped up with the military. The military culture is very similar to the corporate culture, and now the American culture reflects both – at all levels.

The table below lists various people America has battled since 1776. Personally, I like to think that if we aren’t fighting some nationality, we’re competing with them for jobs, either directly or through outsourcing, or we are fighting among ourselves. In any case, I don’t think we have very good relations with our fellow man.

Country	War
America	Civil War, Native American genocide
Germany	WWI, WWII
Japan	WWII
Russia (Soviets)	Cold War
Korea	Korean War
Vietnam	Vietnam War
Iraq	Iraq War
Italy	WWII
Vietnam, Cambodia, Laotia	Vietnam War

Spain	Spanish-American War
Mexico	Mexican War
El Salvador	Reagan's Covert War
Yugoslavia	Kosovo
Grenada	Grenada War

For some of these, the truly noble ideals of freedom and democracy did suffice as sufficient cause for our actions; unfortunately, now the words freedom and democracy are used to justify selfish and illegal (according to United Nations-recognized international law) wars. The words “freedom” and “democracy” are thrown around like cereal box slogans. Yet today, with totalitarian regimes giving way worldwide to democratically elected governments, we have this huge military and all these government and corporate *welfare recipients* (truly) with a vested interest in keeping the military machine rolling. The War Against Terrorism (TWAT) came along, again, at the perfect time. We were just about out of enemies. (I say “again” because Reagan declared war against the terrorists already, in the 1980s, when things were a bit slow for him as well.)

The Reagan administration was convicted by a United Nations-recognized international court of waging an illegal war in El Salvador. This bit of news never got in the papers, so most Americans don't even know about it. The same basic cast of characters again entered an illegal war in Iraq, which was generally supported by our media. The fact is that America has now become a rogue nation. American hegemony drives all political decisions. America, as already discussed, has become one of the greatest terrorist nations in the world, justifying its actions by claiming that it is protecting its interests. I truly believe we need to recognize Military Tax Freedom Day instead of Veteran's Day. Every war since WWII (with the possible exception of

Kosovo) has been waged under the mantra of protecting U.S. interests, so all veterans in the time since WWII are better labeled “terrorists” than “veterans” (and definitely not “freedom fighters”). Soon all the WWII veterans will be dead, so we can switch to recognition of Military Tax Freedom Day without guilt – without worrying that those who truly fought the just wars that made America great won’t lose any of the recognition that they deserve. As for the veterans of Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc., etc., they should simply receive massive compensation for fighting the imperialist wars of the American rich – especially the Vietnam veterans who were drafted.

Against Hierarchy and Hierarchists

At the top of all hierarchies is the truth, as understood by the Hierarchist. Truths can be economic assumptions (“capitalism is the only economic system that works”), religious assumptions (belief in Jesus Christ or Mohammed brings salvation), racial assumptions (the whiter your skin the smarter you are), and so on, even when these assumptions may be thoroughly contradicted by evidence. All Hierarchists believe in a hierarchy to one degree or another (by definition), but the most pathetic Hierarchists are those who believe in a hierarchy strictly on faith, especially when there is ample evidence showing the truth theories underlying the ordering of the hierarchy to be thoroughly false! Nearly all of the “truths” supporting the Hierarchy wreaking havoc today in America and across the planet have been disproved. Capitalism is destroying the planet, religious fundamentalism and belief in other worlds and a variety of gods are causing untold strife between populations and causing us to neglect the environment (a “world” we all necessarily believe in), and ethnocentricity and speciesism are creating hierarchies isolating us all from one another and causing us to make decisions based purely on the survival prospects of a particular group of people or species.

Because of the existence, persistence, immovability, and almost unstoppable momentum of the Hierarchy, the situation is not improving. The following figure shows the direction in which America has moved during the past forty years. The trend is obvious.



The entrenched Hierarchy will continue the trend unless it is stopped by a grassroots movement that resists it at every turn. The movement right is largely the result of unquestioned acceptance of capitalism as the only realistic economic system. In the 70s, before the Cold War propaganda in America had its full effect, people at least entertained economic systems other than capitalism. Today the assumption is built into American society that capitalism is the only realistic economic system, and thus the large shift right. Just look at college campuses: once the bastion of liberalism, colleges are now rife with students interested in pursuing only those avenues that will give them economic advantage. Applied science and business are overrun with little Hierarchists in training, believing that the only value in living is to make money.

What will happen in the future if the Hierarchists continue to win? Obviously we will:

1. See the divide between the rich and the poor grow ever greater.
2. See more war, most likely waged over religious differences (each side egged on by a different god) and oil.

3. See more capitalism, and the attendant rampant destruction of the planet. This will be a continuation of the operating assumption that “growth is good,” even though logically the planet is finite so growth obviously must stop at some point.
4. Ultimately destroy the planet, and ourselves with it.

On the other hand, if the Relativists win, we will:

1. See true democracy.
2. See the state of the planet improve.
3. Ensure the survival of the species and the planet.
4. Ensure the happiness of future generations.
5. See the adoption of a new view of humans’ place in the world where we are part of the ecosystem. As a species we stop growing and simply maintain, as does the planet in general.

If there are ethical truths in the same way that there are scientific truths, it will take an unbelievably long time to “discover” them – we must wait for them to emerge across many cultures and over many centuries. If utopia is attainable (and I believe it is), it will take an extremely long time to get there.

Utopia would, according to the theories put forth in this treatise, require that the process of voting and the analysis of the votes over an extended period of time (like centuries) yield universals that could be implemented in all of human society. The “verification” or “validation” of these universals would be the working society itself.

I am an empiricist and a relativist, so I think that if such “universals” ever were discovered, they would be situational (even after centuries). They would work well for a specific

observable population over a specific length of time, but not necessarily in all societies in all times in all places.

Thus, as a relativist, I am not shutting the door on the distinct possibility of true human progress in the realm of ethics in that same way we have made progress in the realm of natural sciences. The use of the word “progress” here is problematic, but we will have to take it at face value, and move forward.

People in general are anxious to help others on the planet. Donations to charities help, but the real contributions work like interest accumulating in an account. The small pieces of the planet that you save today will continue to grow and nourish future populations.

Utopian Socialism

Once we are able to see through the Hierarchy and understand its repressive nature, we can begin to entertain the solutions to our problems. Fortunately, years of living with the Hierarchy have given us institutions like big (corporate-owned) government and Wal-Mart, that will be easy to convert to truly democratic and egalitarian institutions (which in fact are the biggest benefits of having gone through intense capitalism for many decades). This is also true on a global basis where, as we saw when all major governments in the world joined together in 2008 to solve the financial crisis, everything is now interconnected electronically.

Here are some of my favorite solutions and courses of action, all of which are entirely plausible; we just have to give them a chance.

95% flat tax rate on unearned income; place salary caps (so we won't end up with CEOs who "take home" most of the company profits)

Everyone must earn their money; labor must be evenly compensated across the spectrum. Accumulated (interest on interest on interest), inherited and concentrated wealth form the

foundation of the Hierarchy and must be eliminated or minimized if the Hierarchy is to be dismantled. Inherited wealth and unearned income are far more destructive than “unemployment” payments.

Carbon tax, refundable at tax time based on income (so only high income earners pay, hopefully forcing them to take mass transportation or carpool)

Carbon emissions must be eliminated immediately. This is the fastest way.

Thirty-hour work week so everyone can have a job

Not only would a thirty-hour work week ensure that everyone has a job, but people could use the extra time to participate in democratic processes. Democracy requires participation, but if everyone is working like crazy all the time, making money to keep the Hierarchy solidly in place, they will never find any time to discuss the alternatives to the Hierarchy and the process that needs to be followed to unseat the Hierarchy for good.

Public funding of all news media, so that it is unbiased; eliminate corporate ownership of media to eliminate propaganda

News media reflects the interests of those who are paying to broadcast, print or post, plain and simple. Media must be paid for by everyone, through taxes. Advertising and – worse yet – corporate ownership of news media must be eliminated in order to eliminate fascist capitalist propaganda.

Remove all geographic borders and no one will be an “illegal immigrant”

Americans blaming immigrants coming into America for their problems is certainly caused by propaganda from the Hierarchy. The Hierarchy caused their problems. The rich CEOs and politicians alike have sought short-term profits by outsourcing jobs or encouraging outsourcing with legislation. American manufacturing jobs would have remained in America if

policymakers and CEOs had simply moved to solutions such as robotics and automated manufacturing rather than seeking cheap labor abroad. Japan kept its jobs at home with robots. Automation drives down the cost of manufacturing and requires high-paid, skilled employees. The only profitable automobile manufacturers still in America are Japanese auto makers who make heavy use of robots.

That same American capital that “seeks” opportunities abroad also crosses borders to buy businesses in other countries, displacing native workers. This is especially true of farming businesses in Latin America. Many of these people have no choice but to migrate north to America to find jobs to replace the jobs they lost. If capital can freely cross borders, then certainly people should be able to as well.

Guarantee every citizen of the world his basic needs (food, housing, medical care, education, job)

Of course this is the mandate of communism. Providing everyone with everything they need “on top” of a mature infrastructure built by capitalism would happen if the Hierarchy were eliminated. The Hierarchy propagates the misconception that everyone would be in lines waiting for their stuff, but these images come from failed Communist states that never went through capitalism and socialism first. Demand and supply can be coordinated as well under communism as it can be under capitalism, assuming there are no marketing forces creating false demand.

Eliminate insurance and banks

Insurance by its very nature should not be a for-profit enterprise, because every claim denied goes straight to the bottom line, which is good business but poor public policy. Insurance in fact is merely the collection of money and the attempt to not redistribute any of it back to customers. Any number of deceptive practices are used to accomplish this goal. Banks are the

source of many types of financial disaster, as seen in the savings and loan crisis of the late 1980s and the global financial crisis of 2008. However, banks can also serve to facilitate the move to socialism, because they can easily be absorbed by government.

Eliminate Congress, go to direct electronic voting on all issues by those affected by the laws

When the system of Congress was first developed, people got around on horses. There were no telephones and there certainly were no computers and telecommunications.

Representative democracy made sense from a purely practical point of view – representatives travelled great distances to get together and discuss the interests of their constituents.

There's no need for any of this anymore. People affected by laws can vote directly on the laws collaboratively from the internet. This is pure democracy. There is no extra layer.

Besides, the extra layer is rife with fraud, influence pedaling, and corruption. The entire political process is under direct control by the Hierarchy. The only laws that are made are those that keep the powerful in power. Have you ever looked at the backgrounds of most politicians? Something about the process encourages the most wretched of the earth to run for public office. The corruption and manipulation attracts a certain type of person – and this certainly isn't the type of person who should be representing the interests of others. I wouldn't want most of these people around my kids, much less representing me in Congress. Let's just go to direct participation on all the issues.

Let out all "victimless crime" prisoners

Prisons are filled with people who have done nothing against society. Unfair drug and "prostitution" laws must come off the books. Law and personal behavior are separate issues. The Hierarchy has labeled various personal behaviors as "good" or "bad," which is farcical.

Establish world government and work to eliminate money altogether

Imagine there's no Heaven
 It's easy if you try
 No hell below us
 Above us only sky
 Imagine all the people
 Living for today

Imagine there's no countries
 It isn't hard to do
 Nothing to kill or die for
 And no religion too
 Imagine all the people
 Living life in peace

You may say that I'm a dreamer
 But I'm not the only one
 I hope someday you'll join us
 And the world will be as one
 -John Lennon, *Imagine* (1970)

Capitalists claim to hate government because it “interferes with free markets.” But it was government that saved capitalism during the worldwide financial meltdown in 2008. Hierarchists tend to hate government except when it helps them maintain the Hierarchy, as with not only bailout programs but use of the military as well, which is certainly a “successful” example of use of a governmental “program.”

Limit the size of corporations; mandate “efficiency” rather than “growth”

Concentration of wealth results in concentration of influence. Destruction of the Hierarchy begins with destruction of the corporation. Large corporations can also be nationalized in early stages of socialism, which can be very helpful, but tends to happen only in times of all-out failure of capitalism.

Use the “Defense” for defense, not to pursue global power by the rich; pursue a foreign policy aimed at global peace rather than the unrelenting pursuit of “American interests” abroad

The military is simply the tool of fascist capitalist nations. Reduction of military costs could result in far more government improvement than the tax cuts and increases that are endlessly debated by politicians seeking to make what are actually tiny fiscal policy distinctions between Democrats and Republicans. Rarely is the “Defense” used to defend a nation. The new ethic is that a nation can use the military to pursue its own interests, and for no other reason. If all nations adopt this ethic, there will be mass war and destruction of the planet will be inevitable.

Rid the planet of nuclear weapons

America is quick to tell the rest of the world to get rid of their nuclear weapons, but America has a larger stockpile of nuclear weapons than any other country on Earth, plus America is the only country that has actually used nuclear weapons on another population – twice. America continues to “improve” and manufacture more nuclear devices. This is insanity – it is not “defense.”

(People are quick to point out that America used nuclear weapons on Japan in a time of war, largely in response to Pearl Harbor. But America could have demonstrated to the Japanese what this new weapon was capable of, before actually using the device. A simple demonstration on a remote island would have convinced the Japanese to surrender. America’s use of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was revenge for Pearl Harbor, plain and simple. But it was not revenge in kind – it was like hitting someone with a sledge hammer after they bounced a tennis ball off your head.)

Don’t join the military

If you are already in the military, quit. Discourage your children from military “service.” Certainly don’t join a mercenary organization like Blackwater, Inc., which exploits war for

financial gain and gives fascist capitalist leaders alternatives to the draft. Most importantly, whenever there is even a hint of re-instituting the draft or compulsory military “service,” do whatever you can to prevent it from happening.

Leave No Trace

Leave no trace.

-Camp counselor

Thus advised my camp counselor each time we proceeded into the pristine wilderness. I continue to follow that advice when I backpack: I leave no trace that I was ever there, except for a few boot marks, which of course disappear with the first heavy rain.

I also follow this advice in my day-to-day life. I know this planet must continue to support life, both human and animal, for eons to come, and that it is my solemn responsibility to leave no trace, to use only those resources that are renewable, and to leave no lasting mark from the choices I make during my life.

Immediately after 9-11, the Hierarchy advised everyone to buy an SUV or engage in other economic activity. This, they reasoned (or propagandized), would stimulate the economy so America would have the strength to bounce back from the attack and live another day to “fight terrorism.” Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, led the charge to push interest rates down by decreasing the prime lending rate in a dramatic increment.

The net effect of America’s reaction to 9-11 was a sort of mini 9-11 itself: in effect, the opposite of “leave no trace” occurred – American flocked to gas-guzzling SUVs and the country embarked on a housing orgy. The reaction was the worst possible reaction to have, but was truly the only reaction the Hierarchy, by its very nature, could have. Five years later the effort to “fight back” collapsed: the SUVs were too expensive to drive due to skyrocketing oil prices, the erratic

weather patterns of global warming intensified with the accelerated carbon emissions, and the economy collapsed as the American financial system collapsed under the weight of housing foreclosures, sending shockwaves through markets across the globe. The Hierarchy bailed itself out yet again with massive deficit spending so *it* could live to fight another day.

The Hierarchy showed, once again, that it was unable to handle crisis and that it will continue to be unable to handle crises. At that point I realized that the only effect I could have on the world would be personal: I must change my life to leave absolutely no trace. In the final analysis the only choice we do have is personal. The Hierarchy is strong and getting stronger. The only way to disarm it is to undermine its power base. Back off consumerism. Let economies collapse. Don't throw anything away. Recycle. Be humble. Give the planet back to the other inhabitants and quietly go on your way. A good human is a quiet, inactive human.

If you must have children, have just one child, or two per couple. That way you simply replace yourself, and don't continue an exponential growth rate in population stemming from your own life. Pass on nothing to your children, except what they need to have a complete life, where they too are able to leave no trace.

Be a vegetarian. Share the planet with other animals; don't kill and eat them. Eat from the "bottom up": grains, vegetables and fruit. Buy food locally so local farming thrives.

Resist participation in the general economy. Work only as much as you have to and save your money. Invest in alternative energy or other "green" investments if you are willing to take moderate risks with your money (and have enough to be able to take risks). Buy locally, if you must buy at all. Happiness is different from material consumption. Ignore advertising. Turn off the T.V., which is the Hierarchy's primary communication mechanism. Vote for more

government – but only independent government that listens to the people, not “government” that serves the rich.

Shrink your carbon footprint. Use alternative energy. Ride your bike. Recycle. Don’t go to the drive-through to buy hamburgers and scarf them down in your car.

And at all costs, avoid participation in the Hierarchy. Be a Relativist. Challenge the Hierarchy and Hierarchists at every turn.

Most people feel powerless to effect change. And they are. The Hierarchy is strong. But it derives its strength from the everyday activities of those who comprise its base. If those who comprise its base ignore it, then it will fall – it will flatten.

And the Relativist shall inherit the Earth.

Afterword

In an unfortunate twist of fate, shortly after I finished writing this treatise I got a new boss at my day job who was a Hierarchist of the most extreme sort. He should have worn a cape with a big “H” on it. Mr. H., as we shall call him, presented identical characteristics to all three of the example Hierarchists I describe about halfway through the treatise. I hate it when I’m right. As you can probably guess, things didn’t turn out well for me. I should have seen what was coming when I saw the photo he provided for the online company employee directory: he was wearing a security badge attached to a lanyard around his neck even though we had no security badges.

Mr. H. was a personal friend of my small company’s CEO. Some employees said the two were romantically involved and had trysts kept secret from the employees. All I know is that the CEO got divorced from his wife right around the time this Hierarchist appeared and Mr. H. really

was a kiss up/kick down type of person who I am sure would have done just about anything the CEO asked him to do to keep his position in the company.

Mr. H. had no experience related to the position the CEO gave him. Mr. H. felt qualified for the job he had been given based strictly on the fact that he had previously, at some point, been a manager in a company Hierarchy. No one else in the company agreed with the hire. Mr. H. was given tremendous power as delegated by the CEO, so I was at a horrible disadvantage right from the start. Immediately he took full advantage of his position over me to make a case against me in any way he could. For the first time in my career I developed an H.R. file full of bad things. To this day I still do not know what it was that caused him to treat me this way; I think in the end it was just a case of a newly hired manager wanting the job responsibilities of one of the people who he inherited when he took the job. And he felt entitled to take them.

Mr. H. forbid me to talk with anyone above him in the organizational Hierarchy. He somehow felt that he “owned” me by virtue of the fact the he was my boss, and in private meetings he said really the most insulting things to me. He controlled who I could send e-mail to within the company, and forbid me to use certain expressions I like, such as “shine it on.” He had no respect for my experience in both my current position and similar positions I had held at other companies. He was secretive, slimy and undermining. He sucked up to the CEO in any way he could and said everything the CEO wanted to hear. He preferred a rigged game. He lied and distorted, and operated mostly behind the scenes. His secrecy was different from a woman’s because at heart it was treachery, not just quiet “soap opera” undermining and backstabbing, though it was those things too. He forwarded private e-mails I sent him to the CEO regardless of the fact that I had asked him not to, and I suspect he doctored them to make me look really bad. What a horrible and destructive experience, and I am still reeling from it today, years later.

His almost fanatical faith in the Hierarchy allowed him to have double standards with regard to the Hierarchy itself without even noticing contradictions. He freely leveraged the power the Hierarchy provided him with to exploit people like me, but at the same time he didn't hold other subordinates to his "standards" because he knew that they held more influence than he did with the CEO. Mr. H. had no foibles, no guilt – he "owned" me because he was above me, and that justified any behavior on his part, no matter how unfair or degrading to me. He was blind to fairness and decency, as most Hierarchists, at heart, truly are.

In the end he freely stole my ideas and either took my responsibilities for himself or gave them to other people, all the while trashing me to the CEO. He took full personal credit for work I did for him and for all of the truly useful direction I provided for him.

You probably wonder what could possibly have kept me there. Well, in almost seven years I had advanced in the company to manager, and had built a strong team that was just hitting its stride. I lived in a small town where there were few other jobs of the type I had. Early on with this guy, however, as I began to see what was coming, I had volunteered to resign, but Mr. H. said he "unequivocally" wanted me to stay. So I stayed. I now know that he needed me "unequivocally" because he still hadn't pulled all the info out of me that he needed to successfully remove all my job responsibilities (to take for himself or give to other people). I was easy prey and he wasn't finished yet. The game was already over – I just didn't realize it. Silly me. He wanted to end things on his own terms. I should have ended things on my own terms, much earlier. And I remember telling myself early that I should do that, but I didn't.

In my final weeks he deflected blame onto me for missed deadlines and, unbelievably, accused me of turning others against him. He truly wanted to fire me but knew he had absolutely no cause, so he helped orchestrate a small layoff in the company and got rid of me that way. He

and others were rewarded with the title of vice president after I left, just before the CEO sold the company and made a fortune. His new title was as good as gold to him, and he immediately published it all over the Internet; it didn't matter that there were just 60 people in the company and almost 10% got vice president titles. The titles were a way of compensating them because the CEO got huge money from the sale, which he mostly kept for himself, though many on his staff were as responsible as he was for the success of the company. Mr. H., it turned out, had been given this job because the CEO needed an unquestioning, conformist fuck with some experience in slippery business dealings to help him implement the sale in secret, so actually Mr. H. was selected for reasons that didn't become apparent to me (and everyone else) until I was already out the door.

What an end to my foray into Hierarchism! Originally I ended this treatise on an optimistic note – I felt the Relativist would ultimately prevail. Now I'm not sure: in the time since I wrote the treatise the 1% has assumed more than half the wealth of the planet. Mr. H. is the perfect type of guy to facilitate their doing this. He worships the Hierarchy and power, and lives an ethic only if it is to his advantage to do so. He can't see outside the Hierarchy and certainly won't take any chances or try something new. He steals situational ethics from the Relativist to justify his actions, forgiving himself for nearly any act because his faith in the Hierarchy is so strong that it allays any transgression against the Hierarchy – like a sinner who sins because knows he can easily be forgiven through faith or confession. He had no truth, and he had no self-esteem outside of his position in the Hierarchy; he had no dignity in anyone's eyes but his own. He totally lacked any spontaneity, and any joy he found in life was what he got from his conceited, bloated self-image, money, power, and ascension of the Hierarchy. The 1% needs him – it has to have people like this to keep their power; they must ensure the 99% will

remain under their thumb and it is people like Mr. H. who are perfectly suited to the task. In my worst moments (of which I have many now) it is Mr. H. and the 1% that shall inherit the Earth. Se la vie.

-Finis-

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