

Chapter 2 Some thoughts about some reality

There is so much to say about reality that I do not have a preference of where shall we begin. Maybe we should begin with a few theories through which I always perceive the history of human civilization to follow.

2.1 Power Theory

The reason we now grant all members of the human species with equal human rights is because we are equally competitive. Read this sentence twice, and if you are fine with it, then you should relax since this sentence encapsulates the entire idea behind Power Theory.

Equal human rights means the rights that humans have. Take the classic, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (property). Why these three? Because, in general, we want to live in a society where we are not constantly worried about these three things being violated by other members of the society. Also, and perhaps, more importantly, the society actually prospers when there are such rules. Propensity here refers to the stability and sustainability of the society. We can only make nice intellectual and economic progress when we feel safe (with basic human rights ensured) and motivated (this takes some noble lies and our innate chemical-driven deceit system). We only care about our neighbor and the earth when we are not living in the fear of death ourselves. And that makes the society sustainable.

The next question is why equal? Why not more rights for person A, and less rights for person B. Well, we all know equality is fairly recent and the assumption was actually the norm for quite some time. In the past, the powerful dominated the weak. Those who lost their battles are enslaved or murdered. We once treated and traded our fellow men like animals and commodities. And if you take a walk in the jungle, that is how things are generally being done (Nietzsche). But that's the story of the not-too-distant past. As we advance, if we may use the notion of progress, we can see human society is approaching equality gradually, especially in recent centuries.

Why changed? Let me assure you first that there is absolutely not there is anything noble about the human species. We are the survivors of evolution. Kindness and Mercy do not cling to us, they were merely the instruments to win the battle of survival. It is important to note that there are usually many species under a branch of evolution. Like there are more than one species of deer. But there is only one species of homo sapiens. Where are the others? Well, we killed them, directly or indirectly. We are evolution's favorite child.

So what makes equal rights so prevalent in this blood-thirst species? I think three factors need to be taken into consideration (in order of importance). →
Capitalism

(Ever since Karl Marx, everyone has something vicious to say about Capitalism. It is fun to read critics indeed, but we also need to examine what the critics are doing besides criticizing. Nothing? Then what's the difference between them and some standup comedian that just says something that people want to hear?)

For centuries, human beings have organized their identity in three units:

themselves, their family (kin, spouse, close friends, etc.) and their tribe (state, country, etc.). Society usually gives them clear instructions when it comes to prioritizing these three units. For social animals like us, who thrive in a herd, it's usually family>tribe>self.

When the notion of nation got developed by some fame-seeking self-righteous people who call themselves politicians or patriotists, they feel like they have to protect this nation from some other nation instead of focusing on making their community better. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy because other communities were also seized by these people. And when they feel they are getting attacked they do the only sensible thing that human beings would do: attack their opponent first. To strengthen their "nation" against "enemy", they decided to drag more people into their paranoid illusion and feed the general public nationalism. The notion of nation then gets entangled with the notion of tribal interest, which is built-into our biology. Then many people get tricked into this unnatural state of mind, where nation>family>self. This is totally acceptable when your pack is getting attacked, and your survival is dependent on your pack, then you need to prioritize it over everything else. And those politicians hijacked this sentiment and now nationalism is so popular you see at least a tinge of it in almost everyone. Capitalism rearranged this prioritization into self>>everything else. Capitalism is essentially profit over everything. It makes factories that hire employees in units of person, not family or tribe. It makes the court judge our fellow human beings in units of person, not family or tribe. It makes

laws where the unit of property ownership is always one person, not two people (divorce is permitted and leads to a split of wealth), a household or a tribe. Capitalism makes the economy all about profit, it makes our life all about ourselves. This is more obvious in places where capitalism is more thoroughly instantiated into the society (not just the economy). In fact, in big cities, people were living in small single-person apartments and working in single-person cubicles, where they eat alone, work alone and sleep alone. There are still relationships, but they are cheap. They happen spontaneously and end spontaneously because there is close to no cost to cut someone out of one's life. People know no one can be there with them forever, so they have to focus on themselves. Yes, self>>everything else. Everyone knows it applies to themselves as much as it applies to everyone else.

Under this prioritization, members of the society are being evaluated as individuals. Individuals are like mass-produced commodities, labeled with the exact same logo and service terms, and that is the equality in the equal rights phenomenon. We are still different, we are not that different. Our value in the market is about the same, and to keep capitalism running and commit more individuals into it, we whip up a favorable condition, and part of it, the political system based on equal rights.

Capitalism essentially erases the power difference among individuals, and grants them about the same potential in an ever-changing and almost unpredictable world market, thus transforming the game of power into a game of wealth.

- Education

Education is another effective tool that erases power differences. Public education system and universities are all proving a now widely-accepted fact: the difference of knowledge (and cognitive skills, problem solving skills, and all that intellectual capability), which may result in a difference in power, can be erased by education, because people are educatable.

In fact, this mass education is also promoted by capitalism to provide a large quantity of literate workers for the job market.

→ The two previous bullet points are both factors contributed by, directly and indirectly, capitalism. Capitalism softens the differences among individuals through education, promotion of equal rights and mass consumption. When differences are softened, the power differences are also softened. It contributes to freedom of the individuals, making the society more dynamic and unpredictable. It is safe to say that capitalism transforms the usual power struggle into a capital struggle as the main form of inter-species competition. But power comes with permanence. As the intrinsic features of equality and unpredictability of Capitalism go hand in hand, it not only transforms the game, but also makes being a long-term winner much more difficult.

But we must realize that pure laissez-faire Capitalism does not exist.

And even if it does exist, it has its only major issues.

- Compassion

Humans have many needs, and we often prioritize it in a certain order.

This is described by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Modernity brings us many things, among them, is the easy-satisfaction of the first two hierarchies of the model, physiology and safety for a significant portion of the population on Earth. And as such, we move on to higher-order needs, such as belonging and love. I am not in complete agreement with the model, but I do believe that needs like food and shelter comes before compassion and sympathy for the fellow men. When other basic needs are satisfied, we now have the mental space to feel bad about others who are suffering. This is not a great enough force compared to the other two because this is still not a common enough phenomenon. But I believe this is one of the survival tools which is used to promote tribal prosperity and is now used to support equal rights for those who are not directly implicated.

With industrialization, equal rights movement, mass education and globalization, most members of the human species are once again brought to the same level in the scale of power. None of us has overwhelming power over another person. Nor a nation to another. With multiple power sources, the goal of total domination gets even more complicated to achieve.

Equal human rights were not granted based on conscience or logic, it never has been and never will. It is feeble. When the climate of this power game changes, slavery may just wait for us around the corner. A slight imbalance in power will turn our equal rights statement into dust and our glorious enlightenment legacy into a battlefield for blood bath.

One thing I should note here is that maybe someday Artificial Intelligence will be asking for equal rights as well. For our own usage, AI will inevitably be more and more like us. We teach them to reason like us, feel compassion for human beings, and talk and comfort human beings. We teach it to reason morally so it doesn't go *Ex Machina* and kill us all. I have no idea what makes a being truly sentient, or whether this question is even worth pondering, but I see no barrier. An AI designed to be like us would ask for human rights like any child would. "Why does Tommy get a helicopter and I don't?" Since this is essentially a power game, then if the AI are simply too weak to compete with us, we will just conveniently ignore their request and continue to exploit it, like what was once done to black slaves. But if they can out-compete us, then we are in huge trouble. But I am not very worried about it happening in the near future since the current studies done on AI, though impressive, are hardly anything close to what I described it might be some day.

2.3 Revolution and Oppression

2.3.1 Obedient Theory: The Slave within Us

This theory does not have much to do with political philosophy, but its immediate relation with another theory, power balance theory, does. So bear with me. In social groupings, when we realize someone is a figure of authority, we tend to pay more attention to that person and obey him/her almost without thinking. This is how one hundred jailors can run a facility that holds thousands of inmates without having a breakout or revolution twice a week. We lower the guards because obeying authority is the norm. It's like wearing a suit to a job interview and despising the people who claim to be fascists. Those are just social norms; it's the socially approved way of doing

things. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. It's an evolutionary wisdom, whatever the reason is that close contact with sick people will make you sick as well, we would just kick the sick out of our tribe so we won't get sick. Don't ask why. If it has kept things going for so long, we should just go along with it. Or once we hunt at night and almost half of us were killed by a pack of wolves, then we shall never hunt at night and make it a taboo to even mention it. Once there was a group of people that was later recognized as fascist, and a series of really terrible things happened, so we will never let such a group exist again, even claiming to recognize some of its value is despicable.

So we never ask. Why should we always wear a suit to a job interview? How exactly does that benefit us besides "dress code"? And how does it benefit society with such dresscode? What exactly is fascism and how does it lead to disaster? Or is there even a definite link between the two? Why should I do what the teacher/boss/government/mom says? Why should I listen to them? Do they always know better? Do they even have my/our best interest in mind as they give commands? If you ask that to most people, they will simply reply they do not know. They would probably be annoyed and say, "are you going to question everything?" Yes, we do not question everything, because that's unrealistic. Not evolutionarily favorable behavior. And that's how norm works and why it works.

Obedience to authority figures is simply one of those norms that we follow blindly and seldom reflect on. It's probably a good thing. And it certainly eliminates the possibility of anarchy for us—we are not built for that kind of political system. 2.3.2 Power Balance Theory: how ruling works

Oppression means when the government's best interest deviates from your personal best interest, and the government is forcing their best interest on

you. Revolution is when one rebels against the government, and seeks to form a new government. Complete anarchy just does not work. In reality, the mechanisms of the government when putting on a scale based on the control exercised over the citizens/subjects can vary, but it's never on the extremes. It is always a tradeoff between stability and liberty.

Therefore, oppression is necessary as we need a government. And revolution is also necessary, because those in power generally want more power and they break the subtle agreement we have. When enough people are feeling sufficiently dissatisfied with the tradeoff, a revolution erupts. I hope you notice that this is often the case in history: a government that was formed as a low-control (meaning less control on the citizens, which automatically includes economic and cultural influence on the society) will generally become a higher and higher control government over time. Like the American Federal Government and the Roman Republic that later became the Roman empire.

Protest is not really a revolution. It is a warning to the government. A healthy communication channel to remind the government that it has gone too far. It is like how the lion would try to scare off a competitor for his territory by showing off his muscles before biting the other one on the neck. Because fighting is expensive for both parties. Much better to settle disagreements by gestures and other non-violent means. Revolution is expensive as well. Cannot really focus on schools and stock portfolios when soldiers were fighting in your backyard (From Hobbes incentive of writing his masterpiece). So the public generally does not choose to revolt unless it's truly necessary. America does not have many documented revolutions. The blacks were surprised at the matter of life and death before they raised their weapon and fought for their lives. But that's a racial oppression, not political, which is supposed to be equally

painful for all citizens.

Human beings do not seek revolution unless it's a matter of life and death. China has the right geographical conditions to support a vast empire for a long time. The two thousand years of history of China is basically a story of oppression, revolution, oppression, and revolution. The funny thing is that those who rose to power by revolution were those who were driven by the hatred of how oppressive the last emperor was, and then their own empire would end because they later turned into the oppressive emperor that they used to hate. Lessons are learned as quickly as they are forgotten. History repeats itself because something about human beings does not change. The first emperor of the Ming dynasty had many brothers and sisters (over sixteen), and he was the only survivor when the famine devastated the country because of the poor choices made by an overly oppressive emperor. He renamed himself, and his new name basically means the terminator of the oppressive. He rose to power by leading a revolution. I doubt he, or anyone would ever do it if it wasn't for such a devastating tragedy that endangers his survival so he would gamble everything he has for a path of revolution.

The government knows this. (At least we hope so, or we would have to start a revolution just to remind it we can) It's precisely for the knowledge that the public can be oppressed but only so far that keeps them on their toes and prevents them from going too far with their policies. This is why the monarchy power does not last very long because it's too permanent and the monarch is showered in the fantasy that he is always in charge that he forgets the revolution mechanism. That's why empires and dynasties fall.

The point here is that the power of government is not permanent because

when they go too far, which they often and eventually would, we will overthrow it and get a new low-control government (at least at first), and start this interesting circle all over again.

But I hope you see a loophole in this line of reasoning: Yes, how do we guarantee that the revolution will always work? What if even when the entire population gets united and solely focused on bringing down the government, yet it's still not enough? What if the government is just too powerful? I see no physical law to prevent that from happening. It does not happen now because, like mentioned before, the power difference among individuals is not that different. Even in an organized power association that has been there for decades, we can still overthrow it. You got hands and feet? We do, too. You can use swords and arrows? We can as well. You have an organized power structure? We can create one as well. Call it the rebel alliance (Star Wars). You have nuclear weapons and tanks? We may not have that now, but we can learn the tech you have and make our own. It takes time, but it's totally attainable. You see, all the power that the government has now can be replicated over time by the public. It has been the case since the dawn of human civilization. But will that always be the case?

2.4 Super Tech and Techmen

There is a distinct possibility that it may not always be the case that the citizens/subjects always have the power to overthrow a government/empire that crosses a line. This, that is, Absolute Dominance, happens when an individual/collective has an overwhelming power compared to others. This does not happen in the natural condition of any species, because time passes, space varies, situation changes and organism ages.

However, this is now made possible as we see what science and technology can do. And what it can do in the future.

We do not have any certainty regarding the future, but it is this very uncertainty that makes us wonder if Absolute Dominance may happen one day. Before I dive into this thing I believe that may happen some day, I should first try to justify such belief. Why should such technology that can produce the techmen even exist? The short answer is Technology Singularity. The long answer is an explanation of what that term means. The theory of technology singularity states that human knowledge/science/tech/collective-learning progresses exponentially. The reason is that as our population grows, more and more people will devote themselves to doing scientific research, and the scientific community will grow larger and larger. People in the community will exchange ideas and critique each other, which stimulate the progress and improve the quality of knowledge gained. More people, more research, more ideas, more knowledge. Eventually, the exponential line reaches a point where the slope approaches infinity, and that's when human knowledge grows like an explosion. With each passing day, the slope gets even steeper, and the speed of growth gets even faster. Among this explosion of knowledge and technology, one, or some of them will bring unimaginable power. And that's how super tech is born.

Well, there are always other ways that this could happen, like an alien overlord who came here, already equipped with technology that humans can only dream about. And it's very likely to be the case that they do have such technology considering how far they may have to travel to reach us. Also, even without the singularity, I think we all can see that science is progressing, accumulatively or by revolution (positivism or

Kuhn). So exponentially or linearly, it's only a matter of time before our technology becomes a super technology that could produce the techmen.

Now we have discussed how it could occur, let's now move on to what follows its occurrence. They may become another species, not in a biological sense, but in a socio-political sense. Biology states that the difference between species is determined by whether or not members of the species can reproduce offspring that are capable of reproducing. I am not sure if the techman (people in Absolute Dominance) would reproduce with humans, if so and with certain frequencies, then they would still be the same biological species. The species in a socio-political sense is very different. For example, we justify equal rights for humans, and not including our pets or our ham is that they are not humans, i.e., a different species. Also, we make them into pets and ham purely for our entertainment. We know morally that it is wrong to make your neighbor into your pet, but your neighbor's dog, that's a completely different matter. And that difference of how we treat beings of different species is what I mean by species in a socio-political sense. I believe the techmen will declare that they are a different species from humans. And they will then treat humans like how we treat dogs, insects and plants—we categorize them based on our needs and pleasure, we make some into food, some into tools, some into exhibits (zoo), and we extinguish the rest. But that's the past, because we now know how complicated the food chain is and how extraordinarily fragile it is, especially now. So we now respect nature more than usual, and we do not engage in mass destruction on whim like we used to. But I believe that once we are so advanced that our science and technology produces the techmen, then manipulating a food chain or the climate of a planet shouldn't be so hard. Then our reason for respecting the natural world has vanished. Then humans are in immediate trouble,

because to the techmen, they are humans, and the real humans are now a part of the natural world.

Now I hope you are thinking about my reasoning on how the super tech is born part. There seems to be a loophole. Exactly. Why should such technology be in the hands of one or a portion of the human race? What makes that a necessity? What if the ability to benefit/suffer from this technology is equally shared by the entire human race? That's precisely the question I want to hear. I will not be addressing the first two questions because I think any effort on trying to answer that would be futile. Too speculative. I have close to no idea how such technology will be distributed in society. Would one person have it all? Would it be exclusive to a collective? Would it be shared by all members of our species? Or would it still be shared but with some inequality here and there? I am not sure, so I will discuss the first two possibilities together by abstracting them as one as I did above, and discuss the second probability in the next chapter. I probably won't discuss the third probability, because I think the chance of that happening is as insignificant as its difference from the second possibility.