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### The Self and Society

Before one begins to even conceptualize the self one must acknowledge existence precedes essence. Thus the social structures, hegemonic social scripts, ideological state structures and apparatuses and their swift and strategic reinforcement of propaganda interwoven into everyday life such as media and factory style educational curriculums, the politically and culturally manufactured consent of the common man built on a social contract which terms and conditions predated his existence—together—create and inspire a macro level conformity disguised to be for the purpose of giving modern man equality of opportunity. These structures cemented and endless and in "our" institutional rigidity, are unforgiving and condemning to those who experiment with self-authorship or transcend mediocrity by aspiring to excellence. Yet there is existential hope after all. This hope finds itself in internal and external alignment. The self is only ever accurately analyzed, examined, and presented as divided—a divided self. This suggests that an internal reality is not the only factor that can sustain the self—contrary to popular belief—platitudes such as "trust yourself" or "love yourself" are not entirely individual but societal and exist within—are influenced by—the prescribed social hierarchy and its dictations whether cultural, ethical, or behavioral. In the most crude examination you can partition the self into internal and external—similar to Goffman's front stage and backstage but not necessarily with a performative element as this can dilute or distort the internal coherency of the individual when an external performance is anticipated—thus the application of his conceptualization can only be observational and not prescriptive. The internal drive of the individual encompasses all of the freedoms one wishes to obtain, realistic or unrealistic, revolutionary and innovative, or destructive. Social structures provide a guideline—in its historically partial benevolence, society provides an infrastructure to selected demographics and based on the demographic more or less support is received—for these potentially destructive tendencies man has the capacity to embody and in other cases it provides a muzzle for the truly revolutionary and innovative thinkers—as collective society and the preexisting social hierarchy value stability over optimization. In an effort to expand on the aforementioned duality of internal and external, the multiplicity and

dynamism of this dichotomy in human experience must be elucidated—this will be demonstrated first at the individual level and extended outward to the societal level—then the existential individualism integrated with externality advocated in this examination will be contrasted with socially palatable doctrines to illuminate how exigencies such as hunger or shelter are packaged and manipulatively pressurized in the crucible of collectivism for the sake of a dystopian utilitarianism (similar to the great equalization present in *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut) that is metaphysically and psychologically incompatible with the individual.

Within the individual—the self—is a complex, perceptive, and self driven consciousness. This consciousness is inherently egocentric and prioritizes self-preservation—or in anomalous cases such as the symbolic denial of death (i.e. a soldier sacrificing himself for man and country) the self utilizes abstract forms of meaning to protest against the external by sacrificing itself in a last ditch attempt to self-actualize its individuality. This illustrates that even in the rare and extreme cases the antecedent to what could be perceived as altruism is truly an egoism that aligns an internal intentionality with an external demand. Externality is simply a force, an obstacle, or a circumstance and unfortunately for those who put social coherency above individual coherency, this externality is navigated by the conscious will of man to actualize his intention. Thus man cannot in any sustainable way be forced, man will overcome any obstacle even if he must sacrifice his life, and every circumstance will be navigated—exclusively and only on the basis of self expression, self authorship, and self actualization.

An example familiar to all humans finds itself in the developmental psychology of infants and children. At first the infant is at the mercy of every external demand as it cannot navigate any of them alone. Any power the infant has is delegated by its guardian (parents or siblings) and the ability for the infant to survive is determined by the ability of its guardian. It should be noted that the delegation of power unearned creates a unique narcissism required for early human self-preservation which creates the pretext for its group identification—but this will be expanded on later. In a conscious sense an infant only has the most rudimentary precepts (raw, reactionary, and fleeting perceptions of their environment—the world known to them) of their temporally limited existence and the lack of cognitive development provides no foundation for conceptual development such as object permanence. As a toddler these precepts—in tandem with their

cognitive development—form and contextualize their conceptual reality. This determines the efficacy of their logical acuity and their acuity determines their ability to interact with the world. By "the world" this is to mean other humans, objects in immediate proximity, and future states of affairs—this is the basis for which man's internality mediates externality.

Mentioned prior was the egocentricity and stable narcissism adopted through unearned (delegated) power and how it is the fundamental element of group association. In order to survive the immediate threat of hunger the infant or toddler cries or screams and the parents come to their aid. Thus in a sense they dictate their reality by primitive verbal commands and their distress is revered—this reverence is seen in the distress of the parents and is cured by gratification. This dynamic is necessary as it is the only one that can exist due to the physical and mental limitations of infants and toddlers. However, this pattern of commanding the environment through expressions of distress create a god-complex—as they are the center and commandant of their entire world—that must be reconditioned later in life but is never entirely abandoned. Parents become self-objects—not seen for their individuality but only in the context of the support they provide. Only the healthy narcissism of believing one is unique and special could defy the statistical reality that there are billions of people on earth and the probability of one being truly unique or special is statistically improbable. Yet, it is this protest against nihilism that not only sustains but defines the self. It is this foundational delusion that gives the self an internal environment where one can have the self-esteem to navigate adversity—against the odds. It is also what allows them to approach and interact with foreign entities (other people, foreign places) without fear, as the self believes from the most primordial state of its existence—it can control the outcome of its desire and satisfy its need.

It is only with this narcissism (internally constructed self concept) that the self can associate with another to form a group. For the self has to internally identify and externally align with another and vice versa to create the reciprocal recognition of "I am with and for you" while the other also believes "I am with and for you" so the group believes "we are with and for each other." The pretext for the involvement with group association is self-preservation, as there are strength in numbers. An evolutionary example of this is empathy. Empathy is a cognitive feature that allows the individual to assess the health of the group that it is apart of, the group that offers

the individual protection from the external—from scarcity—and allows it to engage in the reciprocal management of the health of the group.

Contrary to popular belief, empathy is not altruistic, it is egoistic. It is a selfishness that aligns with another person's selfishness—in other words it is the main tool that allows one to navigate and benefit from social dependence if the individual is not self-sufficient. However, it is not manipulative or machiavellian in any natural way, it is simply contractual. It is not the instrumental use of another person—as an instrumental use of another person would not be contractual, it would be transactional—it is the alignment of two individuals to share a partition of their existence for each other's mutual benefit. The colloquial conceptions of selfishness and ego simply do not apply as their logical application is inadequate and incongruent in any reasonable sense when analyzing human interaction—especially with the intention of preservation and its long-term sustainability. A person would have to prescribe to the nonsensical to believe that this selfishness and this egoism is not essential to individual preservation and group preservation. Thus a pure altruism is incompatible with reality as all appearances of altruism have an underlying egoism. A pure altruism would defy this entirely—bringing self-sacrifice into the picture.

A person asking for altruism would be asking other humans to deny themselves entirely, forego the foundation of their self-esteem, and become enslaved to the desire of another for their own purposes—they would then argue that this is morally appropriate—in this sense, altruism is a doctrine that advocates slavery as morality. Altruism is the complete objectification and condemnation of humanity as a tool for production and protection against the external demands of being-in-the-world. Historically this has been demonstrated numerous times—most intensely in theocratic monarchies—as the king or pharaoh not only governed the people but also their religious belief. The religious aspect exploited the internal reality of the people—casting self as servitude and self as state at the same time by creating an insurmountable external demand and reinforcing the internal identification with a sabotaged internal drive. In other words, the appearance and the actuality of the individual's freedom was so limited that societally and culturally the mode of altruism was able to become the ethic en vogue. Characterized by dominance and force—not prestige and aspiration—it was such a horrifically ingenious and

persuasive tactic administered by the elite class that it has been institutionally and culturally enforced as the primary ethical standard for eons and is at present the common mans ethical vocation religiously, societally, traditionally, and culturally — albeit hap hazardously as it is an entirely ego-dissociated practice that disintegrates the vitality and expression of the individual. In other words, it is entirely counterproductive to the formation of a healthy society as it is definitively dystopian given that the fountainhead of society is the individual. Its utopian appearance is simply an appearance, its substance is incongruent with human psychology and existential development.

So if this is the contradictory state of affairs the individual finds themselves in, what exactly is the self? Is it an externally mandated manifestation of historical practices and cultural rigidity? Or is it the pure will toward the power and freedom of existential self-authorship? The self is the mediation between its internal drive and the external demand of its environment born out its facticity (the unchosen aspects of existence). It shapes its environment and its environment shapes it. This interaction can, as demonstrated, be quite unforgiving. However, overcoming the adversities within external reality exist as a central drive of human psychology. So the individual must understand what external reality is composed of — the basics of sociological dynamics and systems.

To consider a sociological system that exists in the world we must consider the world for its multidimensionality and parallelism — not to mention the content these qualities produce. The aforementioned content are the existent systems and structures found being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. Being-in-the-midst-of-the-world is the consequence of being human. It is a complexity defined by the balancing act between our physicality and consciousness. This act serves to condemn internal or subjective human behavior to the mediation of this dynamic — the responsibility of living with freedom or with choice. Through this free responsibility, this free choice to be, we must act, we must decide, and these decisions are made to profit our identity with a sense of validity and purpose; they are made to effectuate an individual will (intention) to surge up and realize itself in the midst of the world as legitimacy embodied. However, consciousness in a sociological setting has the theoretical drawback of differentiation. That is to say that these wills conflict with one another just as much as they complement, and this reality of

conscious experience defines any sociological structure given the multiplicity of population—in a word; it is the condemnation to the responsibility of individual consciousness to act freely amongst other consciousnesses that is the catalyst for the genesis of societal behavior, and the behavioral manifestations are then structured into what we call culture.

It'll be important in the following to consider the totality of being-human as a system in itself being it is essentially a multivariable-multivariate equation solved by the self-conscious (intrapersonal) interpretation of everything that it projects itself to be, in a material world overflowing with more than itself—existing not in a static state but a temporally dynamic state. In a society (given that we can define a society as an aggregate of individual consciousnesses) a system of individual complexities create from its own collective foundation, a system of parallel system structures. This adds a supra-layer to be considered from the human perspective, which is humans making choices to enact upon a society (or plural) a chosen conduct. The implication of this chosen conduct is what we commonly define as normative behavior and the normative ethic. These two variables provide the elements needed for normality to exist, and this normality is the expectation that makes us feel grounded in our moral rationality. This is a relatively simple idea but as demonstrated altruism and collectivism have distorted an *ideal* normative ethic and behavior.

Beyond the boundary of a singular society, we find what we can call an organization or the supra-society. We can describe the parallelism of individual societal structures that society faces as a duplici-meta-system (meta-meta) in the sense that it is hyper-transcendent from the human position. Human's navigating the supra-societal is a comparatively simple system dictating a meta-complex system in the most absolute sense. This has many implications such as being cognitively overwhelming due to its volatile complexity but the question is how can it be oriented to work as a harmonious collectivity. One might think to assimilate the parallel societies but this will and always has caused the most resenting dissonance amongst society—and this is due to the fact that external pressure placed on willed intention (a form of internal pressure in and of itself) will result in high friction no matter the amount of social conditioning (external pressure) eventually resulting in a form of revolt or dissolution. It is helpful to think about these

singular societies as the elastic potentials of a rubber band, when pulled back it flies hurriedly toward its own intention or it snaps due to the external force.

There is a cyclical quality within the totalized population of the world in the context of cultural determinism. Individuals are influenced by culture, society is influenced by culture, culture then influences itself due to the reaction that the individual has to their experience of the culture. This has somewhat of an oscillating and reverberant effect, in which culture influences the individual with the effect then being the individual influencing culture, and this goes on ad infinitum. This also happens in a geographical sense with countries influencing each other back and forth with each individually setting forth a new rendition of culture either effected by a positive, neutral, or negative reaction to what the country experienced from the other. This is the cascading effect of cultural determinism in a global sense. Though the essence of the dynamic cannot be lost, for it is this dynamic which defines its effect. Individuals have the capacity to be influenced by every level, as well as to operate with impunity due to their free-will in the sense that within a society, an individual does not reflect the sum-value of the culture or normality because in their complexity no individual is the true “epitome” or “archetype” given their social “deviation”—even if on a minor scale. This dissonance between the behavioral and cultural dynamic of the individual and beyond is the crux of the problem.

There have been several charges made but two revolve around the essential question, these charges are: “The fountainhead of society is the individual” and “altruism is a doctrine that advocates slavery as morality.” It must be demonstrated at this point, what freedom is and what it is not—this enables one to understand what is truly slavery and what is freedom, as the individual requires freedom and autonomy to self-actualize.

Autonomy and freedom are the foundations of human existence. Freedom and autonomy can be used interchangeably although it is important to acknowledge the metaphysical distinction and ambiguity. Freedom is a post-granted autonomous being. After an individual has no external pressure of any kind—through overcoming external adversity through competence and ability—they effectively operate autonomously, that is to say they exist within their own freedom. Autonomy is the underlying principle in which freedom can exist and operate within itself.

Freedom by definition cannot exist as an end to another freedom because its essence would exist as a form of freedom-transcended. Freedom existing outside of freedom is a fraud. It robs freedom of what it is and produces a kind of pseudo-freedom which is a freedom that is not responsible for its own freedom. Freedom is to exist within a completely unrestricted state of being. It is mental and physical state of intentionality determined by consciousness. A state of being in which being is not subject to, or affected by *anything* in the most absolute sense of the word. To give an order is to express freedom upon those deprived of it. This, what is an “order”, or “command”, contrasts with what is a “recommendation”, or “suggestion”, or even the “statement of an already existing fact.” The linguistic contrast in an applied sense is found in that a suggestion, recommendation, or statement does not possess a direct alteration of freedom and therefor poses no threat to autonomy.

To kill another human is for freedom to rob a freedom of its freedom. The Nazi Regime was an example of freedom transcending its own essence and principle. Authority as a concept exists to strip the freedom from freedom and direct it in the way of which it pleases—similar to altruism and collectivism. Any state of existence in which authority exists is no longer a state of existence in which freedom exists—freedom becomes adulterated under authority. Any system that operates as to direct or alter freedom does so, not as freedom, but instead as freedom-transcended. This “freedom-transcended” being the most enslaving of freedoms, the most destructive of freedoms, and the least free of all freedoms. An opposition to this view may say “Well isn’t freedom that is not responsible for the consequence of its expression actually the most free of freedoms?” The answer is absolutely not. It would appear that way in cheap observation, and to the abuser of it, it would be interpreted as a “truism” that freedom killing freedom is the ultimate freedom. This is a distasteful joke that could not be any farther from the truth. To impose on freedom what is not freedom is to revoke freedom of its freedom or to add a restriction onto it. To restrict is to subject freedom to captivity, which would turn the existence of this freedom abject—to restrict is to counteract, deter, redirect, or completely obliterate freedom.

All of this may seem obvious, yet to others its nuance is out of view or reach. American’s embody the ideal that “Representative Democracy” is “freedom” and they assumed the stance that they live in a “free” country, but ask, how can freedom be freedom if its goal is to



manipulate and influence the freedom it is in charge of? The freedom it serves? If an individual is to freely elect an official to be the arbiter of freedom, and to take charge of their freedom for them on their behalf, that is not freedom. That is a freedom-sold. It is a freedom under contract to negate its own freedom when told and encourage itself to operate within the restriction the authoritative freedom deems appropriate. This “authoritative freedom” is colloquially known as a government. This government dictates actions and if they say an individual displays what it considers deviant—they restrict the freedom even further through methods such as imprisonment. That is not freedom. Under inspection, a governed freedom becomes freedom-unable-to-be-free. It becomes freedom disguising itself as an object governed. This is due to the fact that freedom always wishes to be free, and if it does not, it simply is not freedom, it is instead chosen captivity... an instance of Stockholm syndrome. This is not to say that there is no practical use in a social contract between government and civilian—there is a case to be made that stability and structure is a requirement for the expression of freedom—however, historically and presently, the applied practice (the relationship) between collective stability and individual expression is not symbiotic and this results in the individual and the society lacking the synergy required to utilize the practical value of collectivism and individualism in any balanced sense.

If humans are not given the freedom to sublimate properly and freely express themselves, society goes down a few different avenues of undesirable potentiality. If restricted to the extent that they feel unbearable pressure, society will turn its repressed anger and frustration inward toward itself causing a cataclysmic implosion resulting in extreme expression of the freedoms previously restricted. If only restricted to the point right before they reach their limit, society will continue to operate with the majority of individuals living their life in utter anguish, cognitively dissonant trying to choose between forced obedience and insubordination. If restricted half-way they essentially embody and live as half of their potentiality. Meaning they will live only half as fulfilled as they would be able to without restriction. If they are restricted only slightly they may not notice, but will be ignorant to the potentiality of their potential for self-actualization. This is undesirable because every human should be given the full unbiased truth about what exists in their environment and elsewhere.

Without giving people full knowledge of their environment they will be less effective at confronting obstacles within it, which is not conducive to survival in any way at all and is not conducive either to a truly efficient society. This truth-made-secret will also bring upon the population an extremely unproductive speculation, this speculation in history has led to human deaths between believers and non-believers of a certain social phenomenon. At the very least it is divisive, and a population divided will not be a productive one if they are apprehensive to work with or cooperate with one another. This social tension and division is common; think of elections, sports championships, civil rights inequalities, theistic dispute, or any other dogmatic or tribal practice. What are these things not? They are not productive for society. Being in the position to do what is most fruitful to satisfy material necessity in order to provide an idyllic circumstance for consciousness to thrive in is the end sought through every means, and so achieving this as not just a society, but as a species, is the goal.

Up to this point in defining freedom, the mind of the collectivist has been thoroughly entertained and the central issue of an imbalance between stability and expression has been revealed. It is important to note; the logic and reality of the collectivist doctrine was examined so deeply because that is the governing ideology in the present state of affairs—a desperate and corrosive grasp at group health. If humanity is to aspire to be existentially exceptional—it must redefine and recondition the basis for which it achieves collectivism and altruism. It must abandon force, coercion, dominance—and produce an entirely new infrastructure based on prestige and excellence in order for the individual to participate in collective society without sacrificing or selling (contracting out) any amount of freedom. In other words, the infrastructure created by collective human praxis must create a support network—psychologically, physically, and materially—that indiscriminately allows any individual to reach their potential for self-actualization successfully aligning their internal and external realities. It is also important to note; it was necessary to examine the problem but the direction to take from this point must not be theoretical but pragmatic. The best question to ask is not "What is the self?" It is "Despite this systemic incoherency how can the individual become existentially exceptional and self-actualize?" All it takes is an abstraction, as simple as the imagination of a child to know what the self is. The self can become—within reason and reality—whatever it consciously projects itself to be. However, the true content of the self is the realization of its conscious projects. This

*realization* is enabled by the competence and ability of the individual as they are the individual's only method for navigating and shaping their external environment and reality. The integration of internality and externality is contingent on the amount of responsibility to their free will (as their level of autonomy within an environment is a manifestation of their competence and ability) that an individual is willing to accept. The amount of responsibility adopted determines—in tandem—their self-actualization.