

Chapter 9: The Historical Line

We live on a planet that is able to provide the needs of its 6 billion inhabitants 6 times over. But we live in a world which, while providing unbelievable wealth for some, sentences most to the depths of poverty. What has forced history to follow this line of ever-growing disparity? [Footnotes]

Genesis

At some indeterminate time in the ancient past, the Earth's first sentient beings awoke to their higher state of consciousness to find a rich virgin planet before them. It was a world in which - of all its many life-forms - they alone possessed conscious self awareness. With this came the power of abstract thought and the ability to communicate through symbolic language. It was these unique properties that gave these early humans their dominion over all the Earth.

Some speculate that an already large population of primitive hominids somehow acquired these properties in parallel gradually over time, by a process called evolution, and thereby became human. Others postulate that these properties were deliberately installed in a purpose-designed mated pair of bio-mechanical vessels that were pre-equipped with the necessary neural, vocal and manipulative sub-systems.

Historic evidence of the origin of human life is found in the account of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. Accounts from sources even more ancient bear surprising similarity. Recent genetic research points to the notion that the whole human race originated from one common genetic mother. These two things suggest that the human population of Planet Earth had very small beginnings. In all possibility a single pair.

Nevertheless, how they got there is not important. What is important is that they had the ability to use their minds and motor functions to gain their life-sustaining needs from the planet's natural environment. Those first human beings, and their generations of descendants, obviously had the strength and know-how to acquire their needs. Their water and food must have been freely available. Doubtlessly they lived in a region of the planet that was warm enough for them not to need clothing or shelter. Theirs must have been a world of supreme fractal beauty. Surroundings that at once would both fire the imagination and comfort the spirit. A hive of inspiration and discovery.

The bisexual physiology of the human life-form dictates that, when the children of that first generation themselves reached adulthood, each of that first generation of nuclear families would give rise to more nuclear families in the new generation. These would then themselves each start to raise children. However, although it is its fundamental building brick, the nuclear family is not itself the complete, stable and self-sufficient basic unit of human society.

Community

Each human life-form is a vessel of individual consciousness. But it is not self-sufficient. It has a multiplicity of needs that it cannot provide from within itself. It needs food, clothing and shelter. Without these it will surely die. It also needs a companion of the opposite sex in order to continue its species. These needs must come from outside. They must be provided by its environment. The human life-form cannot survive in disconnection from the natural environment, which is the only source of these vital physical and economic needs.

But the human life-form has more than physical and economic needs. It also has psychological, emotional and intellectual needs. Like food, clothing, shelter and procreation, these cannot be fulfilled from within. They can only come from the outside. Without them, the individual will just as surely starve. These less tangible needs cannot be met by the *physical* environment. Nor even can they be met entirely from within the individual's nuclear family. These are needs that can be met only through contact with a wider community. Any individual who is denied regular and adequate contact with a sufficiently large community of other human beings is thereby deprived of one or more of these equally vital needs. Such an individual is therefore by definition living in some form of real poverty.

A Natural Limit

The physiology of the human brain provides neural resources sufficient for an individual to distinguish between [about 150 human personalities](#). Each is thereby equipped to build and maintain strong social bonds with about 150 other human beings. Between them, these richly various relationships crystallise a community into a rich quilt of fulfilled individuals each of whom plays his special part in the life of the whole. Conversely, if a substantial proportion of these 150 or so potential relationships is absent within an individual, then that individual suffers a corresponding social hunger. He is subjected to a corresponding level of psychological, emotional or intellectual malnutrition.

Let us now, through imagination, join these ancients as they progress.

Because of the human being's natural need for the company of others of its kind, the members of this first community of nuclear families tend to stay close to each other so that they can maintain their social contact. However, the limit on the number of people one individual can know and recognise as members of his own community itself imposes an upper limit on the natural size of a human community. Allowing for the intricate overlap of relationships, the natural upper limit on the size of a natural human community is roughly 100.

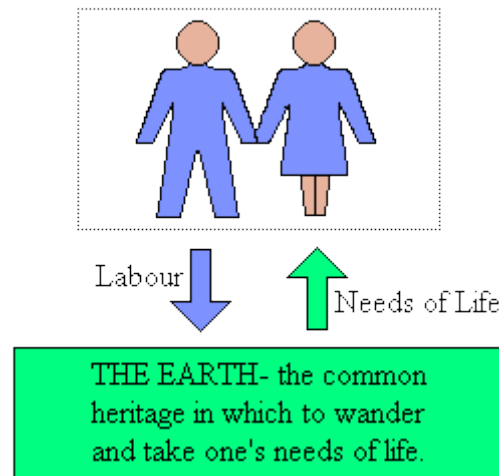
Consequently as the population of the first community passes this limit, it has to split into two communities. The larger population also requires more resources to sustain it. At this point in history, however, because they live on what is still a virtually empty planet, these two new 100-person communities are easily able to acquire their needs of life simply by migrating their separate ways to wander as yet undiscovered lands-of-plenty in other parts of the world.

Wandering The Earth

While they remain in the regions of the planet that are permanently warm and fertile, the human communities of the Earth can provide for themselves merely by grazing on what nature passively provides. When the place where a community is living becomes exhausted, they just move on to a new place, leaving the old one to recover naturally ready for the next time they, or some other community, pass that way.

But once populations start to increase and people begin to venture into temperate regions, the nomadic life reveals serious limitations. The mobile life has its advantages of changing scenes and permanent adventure. But the need to be mobile means that a family's home or shelter has to be transportable. It cannot therefore be made very large or substantial. Moreover, all the effort that has been expended in clearing and flattening land around their camp for crops is lost when the time comes to move on.

So sooner or later people start to settle. A family finds a place they like and decide to encamp there permanently. This enables them to invest much more effort in their land, making it more productive for less toil.



This in turn releases more time for the pursuit of 'higher' things.

The Grand Scenario

The human life-form's total dependence on what the terrestrial biosphere provides requires that human society must have at least started off this way. So at, and shortly after, the genesis of mankind, such a society must have existed. But it does not exist today and history reveals no trace of it. So by what process could that [ancient idyll](#) have been transformed into this present world of callous disparity?

What follows is not a historical account. It is an exercise in systems analysis. It bears no relation to real events. It is merely what I perceive to be one of many valid scenarios. It is a thought experiment in which I attempt to map the process by which a complex dynamical system we call human society has transmuted through a sequence of fuzzy meta-stable states from a tranquil beginning to a chaotic finalé. Each state is a kind of mode within which human society seems to function, held in place as if by some form of [strange attractor](#). I begin with the driving force; the causal precept.

Property

The root of disparity is the fundamental human notion of property. The rules by which an individual acquires and retains possession of a thing. The rules that determine how one individual alone may do as he likes with it and exercise full and exclusive control over its use and destiny.

In that ancient nomadic world, where nature freely provides everything and in which artisanry is yet unborn, property is without meaning. It is only when people begin to gather fruit and fashion wood that the idea of property and ownership acquire any meaning at all.

Gathering food in advance of eating it saves time. This time is therefore available for higher things. For art. For artisanry. For conversation. For socialising. For travel. For adventure. For romance. Forming wood into tables and chairs allows people to eat together in a way that promotes conversation. This forges and maintains family and social bonds. The forming and application of tools releases even more time by making the processes of gathering food and fashioning materials easier.

In gathering fruit from a tree and placing it where it is needed when it is needed, a gatherer expends time and effort. He thereby puts something of himself into what he gathers. Reasonably therefore, he considers what he has gathered to be his, to do with as he pleases. Fashioning a table and chairs out of a seasoned tree also takes time and effort. In making them, the maker adds value to the original wood. When he has finished them, he therefore quite reasonably regards them as his possessions to use, give away or exchange as he pleases.

On the other hand, the fruit that the gatherer has gathered cannot be gathered by anybody else. So if he gathers more than his fair share, he deprives others of the opportunity to gather their fair shares. In this case, his claim to the possession of all that he has gathered is not reasonable. If he takes more than his fair share of the available trees and fashions them into tables and chairs for sale, he has denied others the possibility to make things from their fair shares of the wood. His notion that he rightfully possesses all that he has made is again therefore unreasonable.

Possession of Land

Fruit and wood are nature's consumables. They grow. They are used by human beings. Then they die and return to provide the raw matter from which nature grows the next new generation of fruit and wood. Human ownership of them is therefore necessarily cyclic and temporary. Land is different. It is permanent. It is not a consumable. It is the means of producing consumables. So to claim ownership of a piece of land is, in effect, the same as claiming possession not only of the land itself, but also of all the consumables which that piece of land will ever produce.

It would be folly to suppose that every family in that embryonic society would transmute concurrently from passive nomadic grazers into active settled farmers. Different types of people have [different strengths](#). Some people are better at some things while other people are better at other things. So some people's natural abilities make them better suited to a life of nomadic grazing, while those of others make them better at farming a settled piece of land. These differences in life-style cause them to form violently conflicting views on the meaning of property and especially the ownership of land.

The Wanderer's View

The wanderer-type lives by taking his needs from wherever he can find them. He needs something. He searches for it. He finds it. He takes it. He does not seek to buy it. Because nobody owns it. It is just there. It occurs naturally. It just grows. So he takes fruit from the trees. He hunts animals in the wild. He cuts wood for fuel. Then he moves on to allow nature to replenish that area of land of what he has taken.

The wanderer has to work hard for his living. Finding his food, fuel and materials requires the wanderer to have considerable knowledge of the geography and geology of the lands through which he wanders. Hunting animals also demands fitness and well honed skills. His quest is therefore always to seek out the easiest way of acquiring his needs.

The Settler's View

The settler-type wants a more stable of life. He wants a secure life. He seeks a more predictable and constant supply of his needs. To this end he commandeers an area of the natural environment and then calls it his own. He marks its boundaries and fences it off from the open range. He then clears it, ploughs it, and plants a crop. He protects the crop as it grows. He thus invests his own life and work in both the land and the crop. Because of this he regards the crop as *his*. He therefore claims the

exclusive right to use it to meet the needs of himself and his family. The same goes for the animals he may domesticate, breed and protect. He regards them as *his*. Others may *not* freely take what he has reared.

Conflicting World-Views

To the wanderer, the settler's cultivated field is part of the environment. It is part of the planet's natural productive land surface. What grows on it grows by itself. The settler did not design the process by which a tree produces its fruit. Nor did he engineer the mechanism whereby animals - wild or domesticated - procreate their next generation. By fencing off part of the planet, the settler has stolen, for his own exclusive use, part of what the wanderer sees as the common heritage of all. He thereby denies its natural produce to everybody else. The wanderer therefore sees nothing wrong with invading the settler's land and taking as much of his needs as would otherwise have grown there naturally.

The settler, on the other hand, has worked very hard preparing his land and protecting his crop. Therefore when the wanderer breaks through his fence, invades his land and takes some of his crop, the settler sees him as a thief. Also when the wanderer takes one of his domesticated animals as he would hunt down a wild animal, again he sees it as [theft](#). Thus the wanderer and the settler each has a different, but equally valid world view. The trouble is that these different views are incompatible. Conflict between the wanderer and the settler is therefore inevitable.

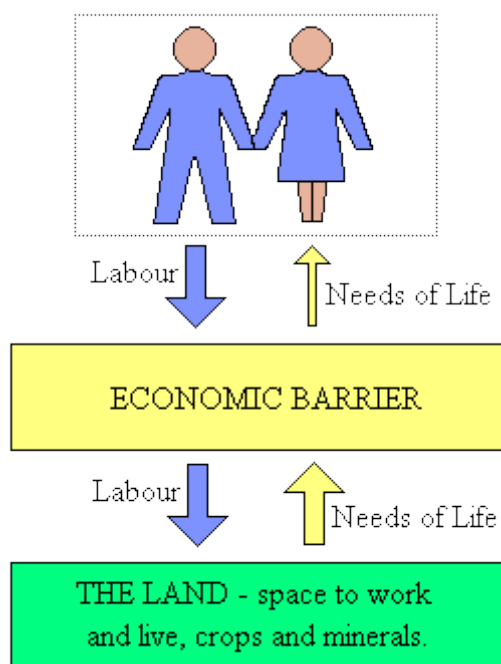
A New Social Order

Each anthropological community of settlers tends to develop within a natural niche in the landscape. This they fence off to form what I shall refer to as [a Hundred](#). This inevitably gives rise to a conflict of interests between the wanderer and the settler. In this conflict, the settler is first pillaged, then subjected to the mother of all [protection rackets](#). He is finally subjugated by the wanderer to whom his fences have denied access to the open land. The patriarch of the wanderers eventually dispossesses the settlers of their land and thereby takes possession of their entire Hundred.

The patriarch thus becomes a landed nobleman and the Hundred his [Noble Estate](#). Soon all the settlers and most of his own ex-wanderer kinsmen become his bondsmen. He is the *oppressor*. They are the *oppressed*. A fortunate few become his rewarded labour force. Most become surplus to his needs and are therefore discarded to live a life of want.

An Economic Barrier

From the time sentient man first walked the Earth, he always had direct access to - and full control over - the means of turning his labour into his needs of life. The land gave him bounteous recompense for his labour, leaving him time to enjoy life. Then along comes the Noble Estate. This forms an impervious barrier between common man and the natural environment on which his life depends. Its effect is to bleed off and *diminish the livelihood* nature provides in return for his labour, reducing it always to the most *meagre level of subsistence*.



The rest of history is nothing more than an account of how this great barrier, between common man and his natural inheritance, grew and metamorphosed into the global capitalist free market system under which we exist today.

A Taste of Freedom

The human life-form is not self-existent. It cannot survive without what the mechanisms of its terrestrial environment provide. Human labour cannot *create* the needs of life. It can only take them, transport them, rearrange them and change them into something perceived to be more useful. The needs of human life can come only from the terrestrial environment.

Both the wanderer and the settler had direct and unencumbered use of the land. The labourers of the Noble Estates also have direct use of the land as the means of turning their work into the needs of life. But here, the nobleman forcibly bleeds off his portion of the fruits of their labour, leaving them short-changed.

But the nobleman soon discovers that he does not need the labour of all his subjects in order to produce all his needs. He therefore casts out those who are surplus to his requirement. The individual labourer thus ceases to be a permanent and integral part of a particular Estate. He finds himself without a home and with no means of turning his labour into his needs of life. Nevertheless, even though he has been cast off into [an open labour market](#) with no permanent master, it is still the land that transforms his labour into his needs of life. But only as and when a master requires him.

He therefore becomes [an artisan](#). He becomes a specialist. Some of his kind stay on the land as tenant farmers leasing or renting their land from a Noble Estate. However, most become manufacturers and service providers, with their own workshops and tools, driven by their own labour. Their direct link with the land has been severed. Their enterprises no longer involve land - the only source of their needs of life and the materials from which to make their goods. They have to obtain these from those who still possess land. In return, they have to apply their skills and labour to forming raw materials (which again they must buy from those who still possess the land) into things that are desired by those who still possess the land.

Thus for the second time in history, society becomes split into two classes of *freemen* - those who possess land (the source of all the needs of life) and those who provide the labour (the power that extracts, forms and preserves what the land provides, ready for consumption).

Now, theoretically, they are equals, as were the wanderer and the settler. However, *he upon whose land food grows* can always gather it for himself, whereas *he who has no land* cannot gather, except by leave of *he who has*. *He who has land* is therefore always able to hold *he who has not* to ransom, to provide his labour for little reward. Between these two - the nobleman and the artisan - the land-possessing nobleman always has the upper hand. The artisan - the nobleman's freed labourer - is still very vulnerable. He somehow has to become stronger.

The Birth Of Capitalism

The Noble Estate has a natural focus (such as a small river) and a natural boundary (such as hills surrounding the river basin). These hills are unlikely to present much of a barrier to the traveller. However, the Earth's surface does contain oceans, deserts and high mountain ranges. These impassable barriers effectively divide the land surface of the planet into self-contained Regions. These *larger* natural Regions are the vessels within which the next *larger* socio-economic entity - the Nation State - starts to take form.

The nobles tire of feuding. They form alliances. A leader emerges. He becomes a king. The Estates within the natural region become his Kingdom. From then on, the political evolution from monarchy to democracy takes place essentially on a national scale. The economic consequences of this are that the Estates all become linked by roads and other forms of national infrastructure. Trade is then no longer limited to the bounds of each Estate. Trade takes place between anyone and anyone within the entire nation. Suddenly the artisan's market boundary shifts from the edge of his local community to the edge of the nation and beyond.

This throws artisans into national competition, with the inevitable result that a favoured few begin to dominate. These then absorb their peer competitors and take over their market shares. In the process, they are able to accumulate capital. They emerge as a new petty-capitalist super-class of [wealthy middlemen](#).

But the nobleman is still by far the richer of the two. His ownership of land equips him to live well and accumulate capital without having to devote all his time and energy to his enterprise. He can use his time and wealth to explore the entire planet for opportunity and pleasure. The world is both his playground and his marketplace. With his land he can capitalise instantly the most enormous of enterprises to operate anywhere upon the globe. With these he exploits the people and resources of far-off lands, swelling his already gargantuan wealth. He out-competes, conquers, excludes and absorbs the relatively flimsy enterprises of the petty-capitalist middlemen. He and his peers take over the entire market both within the nation and across the world. He is the [true face of capitalism](#).

The Social Consequences

The capitalist's singular purpose in life is the uncompromising pursuit of self-gain. Concerning the social consequences of this uncompromising pursuit, he has no conscience. His conscience is salved by a belief that the socially detrimental consequences are not his doing but are simply the [natural order of things](#). Any social reactions against such consequences must therefore be nothing other than irritating nuisances that should rightly and justly be put down and held down by force.

The business enterprise is the capitalist's means of acquiring his gain. It acts as a bleed-point or control valve within the conduits through which the fruits of human labour pass from producer to

consumer. The focus of the enterprise is his factory within which his producers work. This he builds at a focal point on his Noble Estate close to any natural resources required by its processes.

An irritating consequence of this arrangement is that his producers are human. As such they need food, clothing and shelter. However they do not need to be spread throughout his Estate as were their ancestors, the settlers, in their [landshares](#) in the days when what is now *his* Estate was *their* Hundred. He therefore builds concentrated back-to-back housing for them close to his factory so that they do not disturb his noble privacy in the green and pleasant lands of his Estate.

His labourers are packed into oppressively compact housing. They no longer enjoy the free and open space of the landshares like their ancestors did. Nevertheless, they still form an [anthropological community](#) whose members know and trust each other. This causes them to stick together in mutual support. This gives them power. This makes them difficult to control. It enables them to hold him to ransom for adequate reward for their labour. This reduces his self-gain, which is contrary to his purpose.

Progress comes to his rescue. It is the specialisation of labour. Each of 100 specialists can make 100 copies of one of the 100 components of a product better and faster than 100 non-specialists can make one copy each of the complete product. A consequence of this is that the market for an individual's labour becomes 100 times narrower. In an ever more rapidly changing global consumer market, the demand for his speciality becomes ever more sporadic and mobile. The labourer therefore has to keep on moving to wherever the demand for his specialist skills moves.

This forces him to up-root from the anthropological community in which he was born and raised. He finds himself in an isolated cell - a cramped home on a cramped housing estate surrounded by strangers with whom he shares no childhood memories, no family, no friends, no culture. The labourer's anthropological community has thus been divided and conquered. The anthropological community idyllically nestling in the hinterland of its ancient Hundred has been reduced to a labour camp in which human resources rest and refuel themselves ready for the next hard day's work.

Enterprises get bigger. They congregate close to the larger sources of natural production and communications. Their labour camp hinterlands coalesce into towns. Towns become cities. Those workers with higher scientific, engineering and administrative skills move out to more up-market labour camps - vast endless bland [housing estates](#) in satellite commuter towns. Graded and zoned into small, medium and executive properties. But these are the most boring and demoralising of all human habitations. They are not homes in communities but well-appointed cells in suburban prisons where nuclear families exist in overpowering isolation from their relatives, colleagues and friends. Brick boxes built by capitalists who charge for each such a price that it takes the labourer the best part of his working life to pay it.

The Final Economic Order

In ancient times the grazer commandeered a choice piece of land from the open wilderness. He thus became a settler. The ancient nomad - by force of arms - then took possession of the settler's land and drove him from it. Thus he became a *nobleman*. The dispossessed settler could then have access to land (the sole means of transforming his labour into his needs of life) only by the leave of the *nobleman*. The *nobleman* had thus built around the land a wall unscaleable by common man.

Later, the dispossessed labourer commandeered a choice niche from his local free market. He thus became an artisan. But then the *nobleman* by force of wealth took possession of the artisan's market and barred him from it. He thereby became a capitalist. The dispossessed artisan could then access the market (the sole means of transforming his labour into his needs of life) only by permission of the capitalist. The capitalist had thus built around the free market a wall unscaleable by common man.

As for common man, he possesses neither land nor a share of the 'free' market. He may offer his labour but he will be rewarded only when and if perceived by the capitalist to be of real and present value to him. The capitalist owns and controls the labourer's entire world, and through his powerful [means of influence](#), even shapes the labourer's inner mind and opinions.

And no matter how free or entrepreneurial the self-employed artisan or the small company proprietor may think he is, his 'independent enterprise' is never more than a mere satellite of the capitalist's leviathan. He has access to the market only through and by the condescension of the capitalist. His whole existence is only at the sufferance of the capitalist. He is and will never be more than a labourer in businessmen's clothing.

Perception of History

History is written by historians. Historians are human. They can see the events of history only through the dark glass of human perception. Thus the reality of a historic event is unlikely to have been as it now appears. This is why the foregoing Grand Scenario does not attempt to be a true account of history. It is merely a *construct* to illustrate the *processes* by which a sentient being, that was born a free inheritor of a bounteous and beautiful planet, has been systematically dispossessed of his rightful inheritance, and enslaved by a system of which he is a part but does not understand.

The world is a large place. This has meant that for most of history the different communities, tribes and nations of the Earth have developed in mutual isolation. People in different parts of the world have passed through the different phases of this Grand Scenario at different times, in different ways and at different rates. But the play they act is the same. The same characters always take part. Only their names and costumes are different. The European nobleman is elsewhere an Asian khan, an Arabian sheikh, an African slaver, an ethnic godfather, a gangland boss.

Many nations have missed out some of the steps altogether. Conquest and colonisation instantly advanced them to the stage reached by their conquerors thus causing them to skip the intervening steps. Some have passed through additional sub-phases. Doubtlessly others have passed through phases that differ completely from any of them but which are equally valid alternative stages along the path of social evolution. Their progress is unlikely ever to have been always in the forward direction. It is far more likely to have been a case of 3 steps forward and 2 steps back. For most, possessions must have constantly ebbed and flowed. Freedoms must have waxed and waned - won and lost, then won again.

History is thus in reality a massively parallel complex dynamical process, which is still in progress and which engulfs the entire face of the planet. It is an incomprehensible mass of factual detail whose true appearance necessarily differs according to the status and location of the observer. But the detail is unimportant. What is important is the path of history as a whole. That common man is being increasingly dispossessed of, and isolated from, the natural Earth, which supplies his needs of life. And that he is becoming ever more enslaved within a false illusion of freedom.

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