

Meditations on the Road to a Post-Modern Age

By Christopher Nagle

The greatest journeys must first be imagined and so trenchant in their intent as to grasp the imaginers by the throat and tell them bluntly: only through travail and trial, by fire and blows can their spirit be reforged. This ordeal can either temper or destroy according to its whim, or perhaps the pilgrims' strength within. Courage can surmount faint hearts, but how can faith presume that having gambled all, there is a way to save us in the end? There are no roads upon the other side, except the ones we make, every step perhaps at stake our lives, every view through soldiers' eyes. And so we wile away our days beside brooding familiarities that will not speak to us for fear that it is not the sun that brightens all that we hold dear, but the bonfire of our vanities; that the deepening darkening shade it casts is not shadow, but decaying sanity. We look for hopeful signs, but at midnight, the clock rings its hands and says in anguished tones, "Ladies and Gentlemen, it's time."

There is a specter that haunts us as we begin the second decade of the twenty-first century; that we are shortly to be propelled into a very difficult and different kind of future from the one we have so blithely come to expect over the last 200 years. This future will defy all our notions of 'progress' and sense of historical determinism, whereby it is assumed modern times must inevitably continue on an indefinite upward curve of ever larger and more sophisticated industrial developments.

The beginnings of the transition to post-modern times are already assembling themselves as we approach the limits of the resources of our planet and our own species to withstand sustained pressure and damage; that tipping point at which either the genius of capital completely re-invents itself by transforming its understanding of 'wealth' and 'development', or it fails to read the signs and is buried by structural and environmental collapse.

But whatever happens, the long accumulated institutional and intellectual momentum of the existing order will dictate that any attempt to fundamentally shift its rationale, pace and direction, will be extremely stressful and dangerous. It will test humanity to the limits of its adaptability and endurance.

Any ideological successor regime will be defined by the politics of re-assessment, retreat and rebuilding of technologically, politically and culturally defensible redoubts within a context of significantly reduced material circumstances, adverse global political/military events, ecological instability and psychopathic behavior mainstreaming from the margins.

Such circumstances will necessarily demand a more conservative mind set dedicated to defensive

bastion politics, survival economics and the values of stabilization and order.

Like all highly generalized political terms, 'conservative' has a plethora of meanings and nuances that describe a very broad and diverse band of thinking and behaviors. Even its main use as a term to distinguish itself from other generalized tendencies, such as 'radical' or 'progressive' can be porous and blurred, or shifted by events and time, or even made portable in segments across these ideological boundaries

This essay will be arguing for a non-traditional form of conservatism that relates not to some view of the past or ideological roots, nor to the nostrums of rugged individualism and utilitarian freedom from social regulation, but to notions of sustainability in the face of a dangerously over-extended world order. It will be arguing for reduced consumerist industrial activity and a disciplined post-liberal mind set. It will be bent on foundations up rebuilding of cultural and 'spiritual' software assets as part of a redefinition and rebalancing of individual and collective 'wealth' portfolios. It will be designed to shock proof us as much as possible. Its leadership will be authoritative, seniority biased, tough and pragmatic. And while it will likely have democratic features, these will be defined by the politics of accumulated authority, as populations reach out for wisdom, reliability and safety in both their domestic and public affairs.

It starts its journey driven by concerns as to how we should treat the planet because it is a closed system that needs to be conserved and stewarded if we are to survive. This leads directly to the idea of a conservative economic system that applies this conserving principle in its capitalizing and operating culture. It would be a logical extension of this to argue for a concomitant conservative ideology that broadens the notion of sustainable practice to encompass all areas of personal and community life.

This personal and moral conservatism must have as a starting point a demand to stop the economic, social and ideological excesses created by the consumer society. It sees modern societies as aggressively invasive metastases that overwhelm everything around them as they themselves drown in their own overcapacity.

Thus it insists on a much more comprehensive and long term cost/benefit analysis of economic and social enterprise. It requires that everybody start to think not only in terms of the limitations that bear on us in a vulnerable and rationed world, but our own limitations as individuals and communities.

A conservative sensibility as defined here says that we cannot have and do it all just because in the short term, for the moment, we can.

This conservative response to the unfolding of the consumerist project is inherently very hostile to moral and social license parading as freedom. On the one hand, it sees such license as damaging the

means of individual character construction and cultural reproduction, and on the other, a disarmingly effective means of concealing just how revolutionary and totalitarian modern markets have become. For these reasons, it is becoming increasingly unhappy with and intolerant of what has become of liberal and humanist ideas as they have evolved since the last World War.

This paper will try to argue that this version of conservative thinking is a natural default setting in the face of an economic system that is working off a World War production template. For the conservative mind, the blurring of the difference between total war production to fight for national territory using military machines and total production war to fight for market share using marketing machines, ultimately means the same thing: huge amounts of damage and the totalitarian mobilization of economic and social resources.

Because the latter has become so protracted over time and aggressive in its apparently 'normal' operations, it eventually destroys, distorts or perverts everything it touches, whether they are life forms, cultural arrangements or psychological software. To any conservative mind, not only is there nothing 'normal' about this, it is an anathema.

Whether it be poison gas or air freshener, war propaganda or advertising, military service at the front or civilian 24/7, martial discipline or customer service, in the end, the results are the same, particularly when compounded over a long period.

Thus the underlying analysis that drives the conservative response that will be argued for here is that we live within an overwhelmingly successful, privatized totalitarian society that has largely (but not entirely) been constructed since 1950, around consuming passions and mobilization to satisfy them every bit as virulent and all out as the warfare and dictatorships that preceded it.

Unlike its heavy handed and state sponsored totalitarian predecessors, this revolutionary apparatus is a background running project that has hardly disturbed the surfaces of public awareness. Contributing to this smooth running operation was a Cold War that not only confronted what turned out to be a particularly obnoxious tyranny, but diverted attention away from the growing, much more powerful and subtle tyranny within.

The systematic pulling up of cultural roots, the destruction of their memory, the removal of mature, autonomous adult values and the social structures that assemble them, are primary markers for a totalitarian entity.

Age based obsolescence moves from a product based category to a cultural one. New is better. Experience has unwanted baggage. Its criticism is reduced to mere negativity. Fresh and tenderly

inexperienced youth is so much more open to and trusting of forces that tend to eat their young.

Their historical naivete makes the present moment seem overwhelmingly important, as if it has always been and always will be the same stuff. Most of the past is thus removed and depoliticized. The future is discounted, or just too hard, or simply more of the same with snazzier technology. Reality becomes Gore Vidal's America; a laughing gas bubble that anesthetizes the high pressure extraction of economic value.

Once such a transformation would have required a police state armed with instruments of terror.

The hidden persuaders bypassed the usual warning systems and progressively downloaded and installed a permanently embedded radical change agenda into what is now a completely reprogrammed host culture. Our children and grand-children have been 'got at' in ways that no previous generation of parents and grandparents, no matter how autocratic and violent the regime set over them, would ever have willingly submitted to.

Even the terrible decade of the young 'Red Guards' in Mao's China during the Cultural Revolution, that temporarily reversed the roles of adult and youth, was only an interlude.

In The West, the revolution goes on, as does a much more insidious and permanent commercial form of Red Guardism; the Consumerbabelet; the child agent of the market used as leverage against its parents to increase overall consumption of an ever expanding, more widely defined and broadly appealing inventory of participation intensive 'youth' designated goods, services and lifestyles.

The 'Consumerbabelets' world devolves around media generated sports and entertainment heroes and scenarios. Their sense of reality is so carefully pre-digested and pitched to an undemandingly adolescent concentration and maturity level, heavy boring stuff lasting anything longer than a thirty second grab provokes a grab for the remote.

The Pied Pipers of Cool have entranced them and led them humming and dancing to the tunes of myriad ipods, into the shining halls of Consumerland whose doors have shut on them, permanently.

They reject traditional and socially based authority, but are completely subsumed by McSystem based conformity. Socially proximate adults such as parents and teachers are increasingly ineffectual 'paper tigers' who cannot compare to the vast anonymous authority of 'as seen on the media', the cults of personality, the iconic and institutionalized power of branding, and the shared experience of this within the peer group and the production team.

Youth has always had the same tendencies, but now it scarcely has to reckon on powerful and obviously adult demands and disciplines. It hardly notices the relentless pressure of being sold what it has

been trained to fantasize about.

Adolescence: the most vulnerable, spontaneous, passionate, insecure, unstable, anarchic, manipulable and irrationally hormonal transitional period of human life has been entrenched as a cultural norm and increasingly extended to entrap the world of the fully grown. Resistance to this has virtually crumbled. This is the stuff of revolution, stripped of unnecessary 'political' content.

The other underlying conservative assumption is that this deconstruction of traditional mores by market forces has been further leveraged by institutionally entrenched and radically stripped down forms of liberal humanist dogma and practice. Paradoxically, the cultivation of 'liberty and respect for human rights inside critical organs of cultural reproduction and administration has created a legitimizing platform for the deepest and most overwhelmingly successful colonization of human consciousness ever attempted.

Although there has always been tension in the relationship between Private Capital and its liberal-democratic and radical offshoots, it has been much like that of a lumberingly powerful, sometimes indulgent, sometimes bullying Big Brother and his much smaller, but more nimble and quarrelsome siblings.

It has always been a hostile co-dependence, for they have all needed each other even as they fought. They all assumed some version of capitalism. Their disagreements were about who should get to run it, how it should be administered and where the wealth it created would be directed.

As long as little Liberal and Radical were quick enough to avoid and strong enough to block their older brother's terrible and cloying grasp, the dance/struggle between them could go on.

Paradoxically, the capacity of its ideological siblings to hold Big Brother to his promise of democratic reform and liberation, both promoted and cut across the latter's drive to establish an uncontested axis of freedom and market power. This is the root of their collaborative conflict.

From Big Brother's left side came an aggressively critical and radical liberationist tradition that found its most powerful form in a bureaucratic state apparatus that at best strangled the economy it was supposed to reform and exacerbated the social problems it claimed to solve. At worst, it degenerated into arbitrary violence and extremism that reduced subject populations to a state of abject terror, in the name of freedom and social justice.

Eventually, this originally very rapidly growing left field sibling, that had always wrestled with BB and kept him at arm's length, was crushed and withered away, not only under the weight of its ever larger and more powerful protagonist, but its own incompetence and crimes.

On BB's right side was the 'reasonable' tradition that tended to embrace it, even if uncomfortably

and sometimes to the accompaniment of noisy protests. But as BB waxed more powerful, Reasonable Liberal waxed fat, slowed down and fell into his overwhelming grasp, thus turning little Liberal into his creature, whose ever weaker snarls of protest were increasingly overwritten by his master's voice.

Big Brother has co-opted Little Brother Liberal's humanist apparatchiks in the education, social welfare and legal systems, and strategic parts of the media to do much of the hatchet work of disabling traditional values and practices that predated the emergence of Capital, which might inhibit the consumerist culture.

These 'Libertarchs' (a name invented to indicate a powerfully entrenched ideological orthodoxy armed with considerable moral and political clout to administer a large and authoritative cultural agenda backed by the state and public media organs) have rapidly transformed social life and left opponents so defeated, as to be muted and marginalized into little more than grumbling complaint.

The Libertarchs never really questioned the timing or source of the sudden post World War 2 advancement of their ideas

The World Wars had already done much to break up 'authoritarian' social values and traditional certainties. Victory over Fascism was undoubtedly, at least in part, a victory for humanitarianism and democracy against a tyranny that had consciously targeted these values for demolition. The subsequent emergence of a totalitarian Soviet super power created urgency in the roll out of democratic ideas as embodied in the Charter of the UN. And quite understandably, it didn't take long for liberal acolytes to start to assume that their increasing success in spreading and extending their agenda was an inevitable result of their 'progressive' nature, inherent superiority and manifest destiny.

It never occurred to them that the 'Truth' and 'Justice' embedded in their notion of 'progress' belonged to the real makers and breakers of worlds, as symbolized by Superman and the 'American Way'.

Nor was it apparent to anyone that the 'freeing up' of the repressions and tyrannies of old fashioned discipline and restraint was deeply connected to the reconstruction needs of a demilitarizing economy that had to find a way of firing equally rapidly expendable mass produced 'ordinance' onto markets, as it had onto battlefields.

It was highly convenient for industries looking to maintain wartime levels of production output, to want spoiled and indulged little princes and princesses ("You can't touch me because I've got rights and that's abuse and I will report you to the welfare authorities".) to turn into spoiled little grown up Peter Pans and Wendys ("Oh me oh I, oh me oh I, my only limit is the sky"). These underdeveloped characters would have nearly as little control over their more impulsive behavior and suggestibility as their next

generation progeny. And they would all happily absorb an increasingly massive barrage of goods and services even if it ultimately beat them into a spiritually dysfunctional pulp.

It was not merely a coincidence that Dr Spock's ' Baby and Childcare', just happened to be published in 1946 and sold an astonishing 50 million copies. His critique of traditional early childhood raising (which had always emphasized disciplined routines) and his advocacy of more child centered and responsively affectionate approaches, fundamentally reset the attitude to not just children, but the sort of characters they would turn into as they grew older.

Spock never saw himself (and in fairness to him, he never was) an advocate of 'permissiveness', but the effect of his work, along with everything else that was going on, was to start the process of not only undermining disciplined restraint as a dominant social concept, but as a legitimate one as well.

The assertion here is that this ramification of his ideas got traction firstly because it was a starter pack for converting children into 'autonomous' consumers. Secondly, it raised them and what they stood for into a dominant position within the marketing culture, because they were and are its most pliable target, that all others should emulate.

'Youthfulness' was converted into a powerful cultural icon instead of something that just couldn't be helped until you were old enough to be a responsible, albeit junior adult. And older people came to be judged by its standards.

Mao's Cultural Revolution was the megalomaniac vision of an all powerful despot who for his political ends, was prepared to inflict economic and social devastation by using a youth movement as a terror weapon against what he considered to be recalcitrant adults. However this tragedy could pass with his passing and/or his own acceptance that the society just couldn't withstand that level of disruption any more.

The youth revolution in the west however, behaves more like an inter-generational epidemic that inevitably and uncontrollably keeps returning in ever more virulent form. And although it does immense longer term damage, in the shorter term it thrives like a cancer or plague.

Old Styled and slow moving Conservatism didn't stand a prayer. It was pitted against vast, highly mobile, heavily armed and mostly concealed forces that easily outflanked and overwhelmed it.

While the Libertarch components of these forces made excellent front line shock troops that were well suited to dramatically confronting the traditionalist world order, they did not have the extensive integration 'software' (behavior remodeling) and consolidation 'budgets' (time and energy inputs) necessary to re-stabilize and recapitalize the areas that they overran.

Thus the liberal humanist forces would hang around their victories just long enough to raise up their icons, legally and administratively tidy up, regroup and head off to demolish the next conservative bastion.

Integration and consolidation is where all the real work of accomplishing change gets done. This is the long term heavy lifting phase. The legal/administrative segment of social and cultural change is 10% of the operation at best. As far as the Libertarchs are concerned, the other 90% is pure nineteenth century 'these-things-look-after-themselves' laissez-faire. People are expected to just spontaneously 'adjust' to the new order and if they don't, or they do, but really badly, that isn't really the Libertarchs' problem. Failure is just a regrettable 'side effect' of necessary change or a result of the moral and/or motivational deficiencies of some of the players involved, or some extraneous excuse like 'disadvantage'.

(In still extant conservative societies such as those run under Islamic Sharyah law, social adjustment is its problem, they don't tolerate poor performance and disadvantage is no excuse.)

The Libertarchs legally and administratively enshrine equal rights for women and then leave the boys and girls to sort it out as best they can. They variously try, but they have little idea how powerful the forces of behavioral inertia are or what is involved in overcoming them, or how far and how quickly they can be managed within a single relationship or an entire generational cohort.

Nor do they even begin to try and resolve how the relatively 'recently' developed consequential and rational parts of the frontal brain are going to resolve some of these gender issues with the very ancient (and original) base of the brain. The latter controls all the high powered emotional and reproductive hormones and it is as primitive, small, inflexible and instinctive as those of its dinosaur and reptilian cousins.

Even doing something like learning how to deliberately slow your heart down is difficult, but not a fraction as difficult as shutting down ideologically inappropriate sexual fantasies and attitudes.

For gender equalitarians, this is the elephant in the room, especially when you remove the one, albeit inadequate weapon that the upper brain has, when slugging it out against massed charges of hormones; the capacity to train an iron will that will not tolerate moral laziness or lack of political commitment to gender change.

The dominance/submission politics of reproductive courting are as old as our species. To imagine that they can be even partially swept away by anything less than a massive and concerted effort is just delusional thinking.

Even with such an effort, the risk is that what may mostly come out at the end of the day isn't going to be equality, but reactionary retreat, or role reversal, or diverse combinations thereof. And if that cannot

be managed somehow by pouring social resources at it, we may end up with a politically very disruptive gender stand off that will further damage the inter generational reproduction of our social system.

This possibility will put the notion of 'the battle of the sexes' onto a far less amusing footing.

Whatever, in the absence of strong and realistic guidelines and a lot of concrete support and training, the main winners in the gender equality stakes are the divorce lawyers, the purveyors of anti-depressants and the social welfare bureaucracies that have to clean up the mess. The losers are the relationships formed within inadequately prepared and structured institutions that are under constant pressure from unresolved agendas that they cannot or will not address appropriately.

But whatever the inadequacies of the Libertarch agenda had been, behind their front line assault came the quiet colonization by the economic apparatus that would systematically fill the now vacated territory with its consumerist agenda.

Its integration software was not a philosophy so much as a behavioral modification suite and its integration budget since 1950 has run into the equivalent of many trillions of dollars. Its modus operandi was cost efficient reward/re-enforcement 'operant conditioning' as first tried out on rats by the psychological researcher B.F. Skinner in the 1930s.

Skinner trained/sold rats to perform/buy tasks using food rewards and then worked out how far he could reduce the rate of reward before task compliance in the trained behavior dropped off. This very simple and almost bullet proof 're-enforcement' training template has been focused by Skinner and his behaviorist successors on mass markets from casinos to network marketing. It replaces far more complex and more difficult to operate systems of moral and authoritative command.

By focusing huge resources on a very narrow buy/sell sector of human behavior it was possible to engineer reliably predicable and ultimately totalitarian mass responses. But it also caused the non-targeted areas of human sensibility to be marginalized into atrophy.

The work of Skinner and his successors has turned human psychological management from an inspired art form into a science which has enabled markets to get into the collective imagination in ways only dreamt of by the totalitarians of the past.

The consumer apparatus used the energy released by the disturbance to the cultural framework caused by Libertarch assaults, as feedstock in its selective colonization of the 'cities' of the imagination; i.e., the instrumentalist, materialist, reductionist, rationalized, egoistic, acquisitive, shallow, fast, shiny razzledazzlevilles of the mind; exploiting their propensity for frenetic activity, need for color and movement and rampant desire to have it all now, no matter what.

On the other hand, the once redemptive and lush psychological 'hinterlands'; i.e., the holistic, intuitive, reflective, calm, quiet, deep, subdued, slow, deferred, constrained, virtuous, certain, secure, solid, balanced, giving, other regarding, nature respecting, 'forests and rivers' of the imagination were just left to rot; their software wealth looted and its environment degraded into desert.

The mechanism of this 'colonial' occupation was to conflate an aggressively marketed tranche of democratic rights for citizens and then human rights for absolutely everybody, with the systematic and pervasive indulgence and manipulation of customers. Over three generations this process marginalized, discredited and disassembled the moral construction of individuals, i.e.; their sense of duty to meet obligations to others and the community's confidence to enforce them when they weren't met to a sufficient standard.

What had built responsible autonomous people, facilitated their growth into maturity and adult awareness, and made real rights possible in the first place, was deliberately abandoned.

What was promised was liberation. What was delivered was license (doing whatever you like, the allowance/encouragement of which is the modus operandi of indulgence), courtesy of Freedom Inc. Loss of control was the underlying package left in peoples' lives.

The effect of this conflation of agendas was to dissolve the capacity to tell the difference between empathetic compassion and an uncritical soft touch, respect for rights and indulgence, compromise and being compromised, toughness and abuse, reasonable just cause and excuse making rationalization, concern for the value of human life and cowardice.

The inability or unwillingness to exercise honest moral differentiation and judgment is the most damning thing that can happen to any ideological artifact. Moral dialogue is reduced to excuse making, fudging and smear attacks on the 'judgmental'. This has completely corrupted moral discourse and allowed any opportunist to slip, slide, weave and duck through the yawning gaps provided by an increasingly porous and compromised social fabric.

Moral being is not an abstraction It is a basic construction tool for secure character formation. Construction failure is a catastrophe for its victims. It tends to make them at least partially inconsequential in their thinking and intractably immature, for they never develop beyond the original unconstrained egoism of the child. The fact that the language of the ideological culture which makes this possible is liberationist, makes its Orwellian reversal of meaning all the more grotesque.

The destruction of the already under siege conservative traditional society extant in 1950 was not to produce a more enlightened society because the vital components that would have enabled that were

removed. The substituted components imposed the pleasures and tyrannies of the market place as the dominant means of social satisfaction and control, and enabled the relentless 24/7 ratcheting of pressure on production/consumption behavior.

The energy that might have gone in to the production of stable adult values, broad and deep character formation, well-constructed domesticity and community solidarity was siphoned into the producer/consumer agenda stream.

Not only were cultural changes like giving women equal rights not properly integrated through gender reorganization and centering (gender cross training), but the social construction 'budget' that might have made this possible was actually cut. The withdrawal of female labor from domestic 'construction', value adding and maintenance into the production war system, was not compensated for by a commensurate withdrawal and retraining of male labor from the production war front to make good the gaps left in the domestic infrastructure. If anything, the loss was amplified by increasing male propensity for working overtime/second jobs to try and keep pace with the ever expanding inventory of pressures on their consumption pattern.

And while expanded childcare and 'labor saving' convenience product compensated in some ways, the one thing that they did not and could not do was replicate the massive effort, time and commitment that producing psychological intimacy builds into the foundations of individual character development and the larger business of social reproduction.

Thus women ended up carrying both the full time employment on top of trying to keep up their critical traditional role of nurturing the character formation of their children. All she ended up doing was killing herself on a time budget that would never balance, trying to be the superwomen she could never be, struggling without competent and committed male partner support to produce reproductive outcomes that she knew were bound to be sub-standard.

None of the other great totalitarianisms have accomplished such a permanent wholesale removal, substitution and degradation of the cultural software of mass populations. Nor could they have so stretched and distorted the parameters of human character, aspiration, effort and commitment, en mass, so protractedly, let alone done it in the name of democracy, liberty and human rights no less.

This master agenda, like all totalitarian agendas, is so powerful it destroys its own servants. The neat trick of on the one hand removing social constraint mechanisms and substituting them with high powered sales and marketing, and on the other, removing autonomous behavior by substituting it with consumer choice, deconstructed the democratic/human rights agenda, even as it swelled its power and authority.

The tradeoff was a Faustian deal whose impact (rather like the ecological damage this master agenda has also caused) was not immediately apparent, because the 'repressive' old order, even as it attenuated and faded over a 30-40 year period, continued to support some semblance of order and normality. Today, hardly any of it remains extant and the anarchic extent of the black hole that has been left in its stead is now becoming all too apparent.

What this demise has bequeathed is a very confused cultural mess that has left individuals and their communities so under and/or malconstructed and desecured, that they cannot govern themselves or each other without the help/intervention of consultants or media super-nannies. They don't learn the most basic life skills as they grow up, so they have to learn them later in life, the hard way, if they ever begin to realize how disabling and counter-productive their absence is. Their children are losing the guidance they need from adults who have enough depth and insight to bequeath them something of value.

Perverse, bizarre and even frightening behavior is creeping out of the cellars and cracks of our nature and starting to seem normal, acceptable, and even glamorous. Despite being surrounded by a wealth of goods and services, we seem to have become as existentially wrecked as a hyper inflated currency.

Even the most tender parts of ourselves, our gender and reproductivity, have been commodified into sexuality and marketed back to us as an adolescent fantasia and platform for product penetration into the unconscious.

The removal of 'repressive' constraints on sexuality has led to an even more vice like set of prescriptive requirements. Non conformists and marginal players are brutally pilloried as 'losers' and 'wannabees'. Ordinary conformity is never enough as the regime constantly ups the pressure, moves the goal posts and changes the rules of beauty, fashion, sexual compliance and perceived success. No one's position is safe from the competitive pressures in the sexual market place. Partners become consumable, casualized and disposable.

Inconsequential behavior has thus been entrenched as a cultural norm. Individuals are deemed to be quite properly helpless in the face of their desires.

Something that was merely biological candy to encourage reproduction has been falsified into an orgasmic mystery. It always promises emotional mountains that rapidly shrink on contact. But instead of questioning the erogenous propaganda, the victims keep throwing themselves at the fantasy like insects into light. This delays or permanently inhibits mature engagement that would otherwise hold together the loving and secure structures that emotionally incubate our children.

The inability of the Libertarch administration within social welfare, educational and legal institutions

to effectively manage the dysfunctional behavior arising from its disruption of past constraint and social construction, is causing widespread exasperation and loss of public confidence. This is paving the way for the final assembly module of the 'New Order'.

Like the Churches before it, the rule of the Libertarchs is coming to an end, as their social capital is used up and they in their turn outlive their usefulness. Particularly after the end of the 'free world' struggle against communism, corporate capital was ready to start moving towards the final psychological and cultural apotheosis of its marketing package.

First there was the mastery of the scientific, technological and energy intensive means of mass production. Then there was the mastery of the financing and distribution of its products and services. Now is coming the final tranche of the project; the Hyper-Responsive Marketed Person; devoted from top to bottom, from cradle to grave, without doubt, regret or historical baggage, to lifelong devotion to producing and consuming as the sole principle of a totally market driven life.

The absolute ideal of every totalitarian system is that it is so completely seamless nothing can escape from its power. The hyper-Responsive is its ultimate product. We are already 70% there. All that is required to complete the project is the full marketization of the means of social reproduction and re-enforcement.

This restructure will mean the end of the monopoly of our most entrenched traditional institutions (like schools, universities, courts and prisons), the integration, intensification and telescoping of social management (partly commercialised broad spectrum institutions that shape as they contain as they re-enforce) and the full market enclosure of language, character and aspiration formation (where traditional ideas of authority, discipline and social contract are completely replaced by selling and an ever expanding and more densely marketed goods and services environment).

Imagine if you will something located between an interactive electronic media environment and an organised youth movement, put onto a cross over platform somewhere between 'Idol', a McDonalds restaurant, a sports league and a gaming network, which is then connected to a matrix of industry, government and community service suppliers.

In this mix everyone is a 'winner' and 'loser-non-team-players' are marginalized into spaces so remorselessly 'positive' and under so much 'constructive' pressure that they are not tolerable for long.

Powerful entertainment values, indefatigably cheerful group involvement, ruthless competition, heavily capitalized and slickly packaged digital educational modules and relentlessly accelerating productivity management converge into an overwhelming virtual and real project that aims for, expects

and gets 110% from everybody, without exception.

The result is a 'slave' economy where everyone is a contractor. They neglect themselves and their own for their master's/customer's every whim, and apply the whip to their own backs more mercilessly than bailiffs ever did. Everyone is a prisoner in a Gulag without walls or wire, for the inmates cannot bear to leave the visions of paradise that they have been sold. The Gulag turns them into one dimensional people whose radically truncated and dysfunctional lives seem to be an inevitable fate to be suffered en masse, as are the compensations of retail therapy and marketed sexual fantasy.

The Golden Gulag is a human feed lot. It is a concentration camp for the affluent. Its appetites are bottomless and it milks as it pampers as it destroys. It is the quintessentially modern form of hell.

A primary result of the Libertarch led undermining of the integrity of moral discourse and the colonisation of social thought by an immensely powerful, but undisclosed and unrecognized totalitarian agenda, is that not only has the democratic humanist agenda itself been hopelessly compromised, but so have its supposed beneficiaries.

Those in 1950 who were seen to be discriminated against and denied what was increasingly considered legitimate recognition as a result of their colonial status, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, disability and indigenusness were promised much. They have since then been delivered outcomes that have been at best ambiguous and at worst, a terribly cruel joke; a curse.

The ancient Greeks counseled against asking too much from the Gods, in case they granted it. Capricious omnipotents could be perverse and attach unforeseen consequences to their largess. This might well lead over-ambitious supplicants into a malicious game in which they would lose what they originally had and gain more than they bargained for or wanted.

Once it was the Gods that were the great omnipotents. Now we have a much more prosaic Capital dressed in the hollow, tawdry and peeling shell of the statue of liberty.

But the final laugh rests with the Gods, for Capital, like all totalitarians has been too successful and too smart for its own good. No earthbound omnipotent has ever been able to resist the ministrations of hubris and megalomania. They have all been fatally flawed in their inability to see their own personal, systemic or larger environmental limitations. The foundations of natural eco-systems and sustainable human behavior have been so remorselessly asset stripped, they are now threatening to turn feral and drag down not just Capital, but its slaves as well.

No matter how miserable the liberal humanist/laissez-faire agenda has been in its effects on marginalized indigenous communities, a social performance based critique of their behavior will sink under

a welter of excuses and attacks that will construct it as 'racist' and 'colonialist', even if articulated by non Europeans who have fled from atrocities in their own homelands that put indigenous sufferings in the shade.

Even when it comes to indigenous health, the consumerist/libertine cultural pattern threatens to undermine benefits introduced to indigenous communities by modern medicine over the last 40 years that have still only brought their life expectancy into line with Europeans of the nineteen twenties. (See Wilson, Condon and Barnes, 'Northern Territory Indigenous Life Expectancy Improvements 1967-2004'.)

When one takes out the obvious and immediate positive effects in those areas most susceptible to medical input, like natal and gynecological intervention which have significantly boosted life prospects for infants and women, and communicable disease suppression which traditionally killed through all age groups, what is left is a worsening pattern of intractable, lifelong poor health behavior and resultant chronic illness like heart disease and diabetes.

Remoteness from high quality and rapid urban medical response systems combined with gross health neglect, self-abuse and wretched hygiene practices, reveal a steadily more health disabled society that blames everyone but itself for the poverty of its health and circumstances.

Over-crowded housing is led as an excuse for poor outcomes, but the military live in encampments at least as crowded as aboriginal ones, for long periods, but the former have a strong organizational ethic and the latter don't. The former look after their accommodation, no matter how basic it is. The latter don't.

Ever since the high non-combat death and sickness rate in military encampments during the American civil war was recognized as a hygiene issue, the problem was fixed. The conditions endured fifty years later in the trenches of World War 1 were atrocious, but hygiene based ill health and deaths were almost negligible.

Aboriginal communities have terrible infection rates, but unlike for the troops of WW1, there is an anti-biotic fix, when victims can be bothered to go to the doctor. Remote region medical services are forever battling easily avoidable/fixable diseases, poor reportage and even poorer medication compliance when they do report.

Worse, in the context of communities without either a traditional hunter-gatherer or modern economic base (and thus lacking even the most minimal responsibilities to produce) the consumerist message of freedom without discipline has been chaotically amplified to the point where the disempowering miseries of old style European paternalism and abuse have been comprehensively overtaken by a culture of self-abuse and the disempowering miseries of life without boundaries.

Much of the process of European decolonization, especially in places that were still highly tribalised, has been a catastrophe because the development of centralized institutions and the break of up of feudal/tribal power structures just hadn't occurred sufficiently under colonialism to maintain effective modern governance in the post-colonial period. To leave the locals to their own devices by giving them their 'liberty', as Australia did with Papua New Guinea in 1975, was not offering freedom so much as throwing them to the wolves.

On the one hand the result has been the rise of a lumpen militariat, kleptocracy, and sometimes egregious violence, and on the other, a decline in economic infrastructure, civil society and the respect for and adherence to the rule of law or the authority of family.

In some places, Sharya Law and the administration of Mullah and mosque is all there is by way of effective order, governance, education, health and welfare. Its repression of extra marital sex through the threat of the lash (or worse) is all there is between the populous and devastation by venereal plague.

Who can forget the sombre pathos of a sick, old and desperately poor Zimbabwean Grandmother, hopelessly struggling in the face of post-colonial calamity to raise her AIDS affected grandchildren, who have been orphaned by that terrible disease, and likely die of it before they grow up!?

The only place in the South Pacific that isn't up to its ears in failure is New Caledonia. It is a French colonial outpost that has slowed the independence struggle sufficiently to allow for the development of mature and robust local institutions to eventually prevail and hold the place together in the long run. . Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' predictions about British uncontrolled mass immigration policies in the 1960s were made eerily prescient by recent London bombings. However, this cannot lead to the rehabilitation of his memory or ideas. He is forever frozen into the posture of a reactionary old Tory who was absurdly out of step with his times.

The fact that once very liberal European governments have been reviewing their immigration practices in line with Australia's 'leading edge' late twentieth and early twenty-first century pioneering of off shore 'boat people' containment efforts in this area of policy, doesn't seem to even modestly constrain well-meaning immigrant advocate groups from wanting to go down with their inter-ethnic Titanic; one that has been rent by ghettoization and the emergence of a problematic, poor and under-educated ethnic/racial underclass; one that has given rise to a significant faction of hostile, intolerant, culturally rejectionist and dangerously violent quasi-citizens; and one that is increasingly identified with crime, gang violence, riots, and now terrorism.

And of course, let us not forget the other side of this dismal failure to heed the most obvious

common sense; the equally repellent ethnic chauvinism and fascist leanings of an 'indigenous' racist rump who are now completely lost to the multi-cultural ideal.

Singapore has very strict immigration and multi-cultural controls. It lies in a region that has had a well-known historical propensity for inter-ethnic violence and has shared in some of this in its early independence period. Thus its administration has been much more pragmatic about these matters than its British, Western European and Australian counterparts.

For instance, no ethnic group, particularly Malay Muslims, is allowed to occupy more than a certain percentage of the accommodation in public housing complexes. Ghettoisation, (and its attendant problems) which is most likely to arise amongst the lowest socio-economic strata that use public housing, hasn't occurred as it has in other parts of the world. But instead of praising this far sighted interventionism, it is condemned as Asian autocracy.

The fact that Dr. Spock's child centered rather than discipline centered view of child management has produced the spoiled brat pandemic that traditionalists always feared is irrelevant. One simply cannot suggest the properness of physical discipline of children in 'decent company' let alone dare to do it in a public place and risk being accused of being a 'child abuser'. Once there would have been only warm approval for a parent standing up for socially sustainable behavior and the long term interests of society.

We have become morally blinded to the difference between assault and chastisement and desensitized to the abdication of adult power and personal leadership that that implies.

This is not to suggest that chastisement is any sort of panacea or substitute for positive mentoring, or a wide range of non-corporal disciplinary responses. What is suggested is that any authority that does not have within its armamentarium the ultimate threat to use painful physical force to get its way, is a paper tiger whose only recourse is bluff or second and third 'chances'; a paper tiger that ultimately becomes an ineffectual and discredited figure-of-fun who is rendered powerless to do what is necessary to maintain not just good order, but the reproduction of stable and robust young people who in their turn can pass those values on themselves.

The very natural desire to want something done that wiped the newspaper front page smile off the face of the young man convicted recently of graffiti offenses against the Melbourne public transport system is constructed as teaching violence rather than respectful obedience to reasonable social norms.

The Singaporeans don't normally suffer from graffiti because they don't tolerate it. The occasional foreign 'artist' who doesn't understand how poorly the locals regard this behavior sometimes rather painfully and humiliatingly discovers the full extent of their collective wrath, in a 'five minute lifetime of

educational opportunity’.

Being ‘right’ in the face of Libertarch fundamentalism is absolutely no defense against a dominant ideology whose control of events is now built in to the fabric of a ‘reality’, whereby human rights provide iron clad protection against anything ‘too unpleasant’, no matter how awful the behavior and attitudes may be that might suggest its necessity.

If ever there were a more baleful and miserable example of the truism that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, the history of the Libertarchs is it. And to fix the foundations up damage that they have inflicted may take the best part of a century of tough confrontations and socially very expensive reconstruction.

‘The gods’ and their extravagant petitioners have a lot to answer for.

The almost complete delegitimation and ‘disappearing’ of traditional ideas and practices means the contemporary conservative cannot look to a living past to draw inspiration. It has been so systematically smashed up, all it can now throw up are obviously old fashioned and ideologically romantic backwoods caricatures like Pauline Hanson (an Australian rural conservative who beat the odds to get into Federal Parliament about a decade ago), who carry the unreconstructed resentments and anger of those who have been left behind and stuck in the backwaters of a history that has passed them by. Such conservative movements can only survive by stubbornly clinging to old fashioned beliefs and rosy memories of times now populated by ghosts.

That in itself puts them on the defensive, deprives them of credibility and makes them easy meat for the Libertarchs, who can legitimately represent them as ill-educated throwbacks operating off indefensible prejudices associated with primitive and/or dark forces.

It is some measure of how marginalized traditionalist religious conservatives have become that they still feel obliged to batter themselves against the extremely robust and well-defended bastions of the science of Charles Darwin. It isn’t so much a decent fight as a humiliating mismatch and yet it doesn’t seem to discourage them because there isn’t anywhere else for them to go except to gradually abandon the sacred altogether.

They know that any further retreat into acceptance of the mythological nature of the most basic assumptions of their beliefs is the beginning of the end. It is the start of the ideological death by a thousand cuts currently being endured by the ‘liberal’ churches, who think that a retreat from literal Biblical Truth into metaphor will save them.

The unpalatable fact is that the Biblical heaven and hell are no longer physical spaces in a hierarchy

of spheres above and below a flat earth on which the life giving and all powerful will of The Creator holds historical sway. The unity of faith and reason under the aegis of traditional religion is as forever broken as that of geography, astronomy, biology and history under the aegis of theology.

The faithful are all forced to make a choice between superstitious piety, which prefers fantastical explanation to ordinary cause and effect, and materialist instrumentalism, which is so stripped down it becomes one dimensional. One is intellectually irrelevant and the other has lost its faith and bearings.

Not only is the past blocked off. The conservative mind can no longer live comfortably within a status quo that is firmly in the hands of revolutionaries and their powerful servants. The status quo is no longer its bailiwick.

The only place now left where a conservative mind can safely and reliably assemble itself is in terms of a set of operating principles tied to a vision of a conservative future that does not look back, but retraditionalizes by building from scratch. It will likely have to pull itself up by the bootstraps out of the terrible ecological and cultural shambles left by the death throes of a consumer society gutted by generations of willful squandering and delusional thinking.

The conservative mind is reluctant to change because it knows how much hazard, capitalization and maintenance is involved. It recognizes the extent of cost in all new enterprises and especially ones that go into uncharted waters. Building a new tradition is always more involved, difficult, costly, and if radically divergent from past practice, dangerous, than its architects generally imagine. Capitalism and its liberal social engineers routinely do not account for the real costs of their economic and cultural enterprises, let alone merely underestimate them.

The paradox is that such a retraditionalizing project represents such a substantial departure from the immediate past that it becomes a 'radical' agenda. On the face of it, such a project is a most unconservative one, but this is what the conservative mind is forced to in the face of an almost completely detraditionalized society.

The Protestantism of the Reformation was a very similar conservative 'back-to-basics' movement in relation to its protest, rebellion and eventual revolution against a Mother Church that had 'lost its way'. It had to wrestle with this conundrum and ended up in protracted warfare against the 'Holy Catholic' order and persecuting its own heretics as well as Catholic adherents for over a hundred and fifty years. It took a terrible toll on all sides and its miserable effects have continued to echo in places like Northern Ireland until very recently.

Radical Islam in the contemporary world is behaving in a somewhat analogously humourless, killjoy

and fanatically hardline way to emergent Protestantism. Its turbulent ferocity is so polarizing both within the faith and outside it, that the spiritual values get as battered in the politics of the conflict as the perceived enemy.

So how does the 'post-modern' conservative resolve this paradox? Perhaps before we try to answer this question, we have to first explore the nature of conservative operating principles. Then perhaps we can extrapolate them into a vision of the future that does not fall into the revolutionist's trap.

The conservative mind tends to be cautious, slow to change, respectful of tradition, precedent and custom, and imbued with a sense of responsible, obligation intensive, standards conscious and far sighted stewardship of a world that needs settled and secure order. It likes certainty, rules and authority whose writ is firmly established, respected and enforced.

It prefers humble, personal and community based piecemeal solutions to problems rather than systemic fixes. It is suspicious of ideological agendas that make large claims and promises. It understands that it is much easier to make matters worse than better. It is, for the same reasons, also suspicious of blithely good intentions, grandiose visions and hubris. It is hostile to notions of unidirectional linear 'progress', no matter whether they are articulated from the 'left' or 'right' of politics. This is especially the case if it is re-enforced by totalitarian ideas of historical inevitability and/or moral hegemonism. It abhors extremism of any kind.

The conservative is usually more concerned about the long term balance sheet viability of enterprises than their year on year profit and loss.

It is pragmatic in doing what works, but also rigorously 'principled' about its sense of right and wrong. This makes it intolerant of dysfunctional behavior and excuses for it, as well as quick to discipline those who indulge in it; sternly if necessary.

It respects hierarchy and the necessary inequalities that that implies, and expects obedience to and respect for rank and position. Following from that, it is uncomfortable with allowing an extent of private discretion and unaccountability that might compromise collective order, especially when it is authorized prematurely to individuals of insufficient seniority and wisdom.

This kind of conservatism does not necessarily oppose democratic, consultative and accountability practices, but it does want to modify them in the light of the requirements of its other cultural infrastructure. Nobody is even going to pretend that all voices and rights are equal, as they do now.

Conservatives have never been comfortable with universal, automatic, unconditional and permanent enfranchisement into adult society and its larger polities. For the conservative mind, all social and political

standing is earned, gradated and accumulated by achievement and time. It can also be lost by noncompliance to expected norms. Rights are always balanced against responsibilities, and meeting them.

For the Conservative Mind, the idea that children have 'rights' is an indefensible absurdity. Whatever it is that children get in their social and 'political' relationships with adults is a result of the obligations put upon parents and other child responsible adults, by society, as a condition of their right to have or be responsible for children.

In a Conservative world, while the rights of adults can only be taken away by legally sanctioned process, children can only get summarily withdrawable 'privileges' that acknowledge their progress in seniority and good report, until they are finally recognized as adults. What is more, to get adult status is no pushover. An eighteenth birthday (or whenever it is) will only be the date an individual can apply to go through the process of admission to the first rung of the ladder.

Being allowed to apply for a car license and having to pass an examination that gives access to tertiary education would be mere 'bolt-ons' to the main business of ensuring that anybody who entered adult society could be relied on to meet their responsibilities as mature individuals and be reliable partners in the reproduction of the species. And unless a person passed all the requirements and tests for these things one hundred percent, they would remain a 'child' for all legal and social purposes. Their affairs would continue to be under the control of a trustee/mentor.

In the case of men and women, for the conservative mind there is little hope of perfect equality, for shared power across all matters is always difficult, particularly when shared between creatures as different as men and women. This does not mean however that women would or should be returned to an inferior status purely because of their femininity, or men to dominance purely because of their masculinity.

Every relationship should be politically tailored around the strengths and weaknesses of the individual partnering agents, regardless of gender. What the conservative wants is that these matters be thoroughly explored and clearly determined before a relationship is formalized into a permanent one, and that the character of these arrangements be embedded in the contract of partnership until such time as they are redetermined through other and later formal processes.

Erotic and romantic engagement would no longer be considered a sufficient basis for reproductive security. More, reproductive relationships would no longer be considered purely a private matter between the contracting parties, either in their formative set up or their subsequent accounting and regulation. Conservative societies do not tolerate familial failure. By the same token, they also take responsibility for ensuring success.

In a hierarchical society, families without a designated leader, female or male, would be the exception rather than the rule. The parties would have to know each other and themselves extremely well to be able to justify to each other and the significant others involved in the negotiating process, the long term wisdom of this arrangement.

How that might evolve is anyone's guess and for future generations to ponder and struggle over. For the conservative, the only thing that really matters is that whatever the settlement of these issues might be, they lead to stability, relationship integrity and the reproduction of children who in all but a few exceptions become sufficiently fully formed and secure as adults to in their turn pass on these inestimable virtues to their own children.

The post-modern conservative mind is not about trying to recover older practices from some mythical Golden Age. It simply wants where possible to make the best out of what we have inherited from our immediate past, make it functionally doable, add some discipline and dump the rest. It brings an uncompromising assertion that no matter how tense the relationship, the liberal tradition requires robust conservative roots to underpin its stability and enforce its obligations. Laissez-faire ideas simply cannot exist for long without substantial constraints and caveats.

The clearest indicator of a conservative society is the trouble it goes to, to carefully and properly capitalize and maintain its human infrastructure. And the measure of this will be the extent to which utilitarian liberal social privacy is breached by increasingly activist, responsible and authoritative communal institutions that have enough wisdom and clout to make sure that the liberties that they do allow are earned and therefore highly prized, so that they never again degenerate into a worthless travesty.

To gain traction without appearing to unduly threaten the established order, the conservative must take on as many of the trappings and methodology of the existing system as possible. Mimicry will disarm some of the potential for disabling hostility and conflict. Thus many of its enterprises will be corporately organized, network marketing driven and advertised with all the pizzazz of a fast food chain. They will chase a good sized chunk of the 'market share' of Old Capital with the feral energy of all new 'industries'.

Conservatives cannot afford to be seen as trying to overthrow capital or wanting to unduly disturb the established order, but they can insist that its accounts reflect reality; i.e., the real costs of doing business in a world that recognizes and puts a measured and tangible value on environmental, social, domestic and cultural assets and ensures their profitable use does not degrade them.

Such measures would make it very difficult for the old commercial sector to continue to loot the

wealth tied up in this so far unaudited area of 'production' by treating it as a non-economic 'externality'. The old mantra that economic life is but the sum of monetarily transacted exchanges will be extended to include all auditable assets regardless of monetary exchange; in short to give them economic equivalence with an equal entitlement to draw down 'economic' resources back to themselves.

Old Capital is far too powerful to challenge directly. A strategy that redefines wealth and 'economic activity' is subversive, but sufficiently 'in house' not to be easily repelled. By using the language and spirit of consumer capital, it is possible to create a successor regime to it that replicates it in enough ways not to trigger social war. By hooking into its transformative language and mechanisms, it can perform the same quiet revolution that so invisibly brought consumerism to power.

The New World Enterprise will have to invent a kind of para-economy which mimics the existing one and applies commercial principles to noncommercial areas of life. A marriage would be prepared for, regulated, measured and audited just like any business partnership, only more so, for the imperative to succeed with reproductive enterprise is of a far higher order than one that only stands to make or lose money.

This newly audited sector will insist that the entrepreneuriality required to move away from a mining economic model to a sustainable one can be just as challenging, exciting and creative as in the past, will create new types of enterprise and bequeath a much more balanced, diverse and in depth wealth portfolio to future generations.

Naturally old capital will argue that these new industries will not be 'competitive', but that will be assuming some sort of constant as to what is being competed for. If that shifts, then so does the whole supply and demand chain. If people start to concentrate more on their software wealth, they will have less time for or interest in the toys and pastimes of yesteryear. They will switch to simpler, longer lasting and more labor intensive solutions that produce less physical throughput, use less energy to make and transport, and require less administration and ancillary servicing to promote and distribute.

'Spiritual' life will become an integral part of 'economic' life.

One day, the consumerist free-for-all that we have come to take for granted as 'normal', will be viewed with the same fascinated disgust and moral opprobrium as the upper class orgies of the latter-day Roman Empire. One day people just won't 'understand' today's behavior and they will ask themselves and each other, "How could they do it? What on earth were they thinking of?"

Old Capital won't like it, but the language of debate that leads us to these conclusions will be that of capital itself. It is a bit like the argument over carbon trading. The old dinosaurs don't want to pay the real

price of ecological security and will dodge as long they can until they are outflanked by larger market responses to ecological change. They are going to have to pay if they want to survive, if their product or service is still viable in the restructured economic game. Nor will they like their 'Hyper-Responsives' being ripped off them by New Industry competitors with a more satisfying product array that drops them out of much of the old system of consumption either.

However, that's competition!

Bringing biological systems, psychological software and technological hardware wealth into a harmonious balance will significantly relocate the locus of human effort and raise human consciousness to another level.

When one takes away the archaic language and thought of traditional religions, this conservative vision encapsulates much of what the old divines were trying tell us; that we do not live by bread alone; that the construction of our inner reality is key to our construction of the outer one; and that we are but stewards of a much greater and more powerful entity than us, which is the life force within us and without.

Conservatives understand that evil, the force of degradation and death that metastasizes its growth cells into healthy tissue, has many short term and persuasive leverages that give it temporary advantage over virtue, the force of life and disciplined reproduction. They understand that to give way to evil is to court ruin in the longer term, both as individuals and communities.

This conservative vision does not have to weigh itself down with arcane mysteries or superstitious speculations. It is intensely practical and businesslike. It will utilize whatever tools are at hand to organize itself and spread its work and word amongst the lost and infirm. Its agenda is firmly resolved on the salvage, repair, recapitalization and maintenance of a world that is almost destroyed, inside and out. Its vision of failure is apocalyptic. The time line that it must pace itself against is almost hopelessly optimistic and requires leadership and organization boasting almost messianic galvanizing capability and speed.

The interesting thing is that it is only in times like these that such characters emerge. Watch this space.

"Softwell Trust Inc is the network marketer for the Softwell Plan™. It delivers superior levels of life performance through a graded structure of achievement second to none. It empowers individuals, families and communities to maximize and balance their wealth over the whole living cycle. It offers a wide portfolio of vehicles to provide the foundations, growth, maintenance and enhancement of personal and collective software.

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The Softwell Person™ believes that it is what we can invest in each other that makes us truly rich. Every day, in all their actions, Softies model and spread this powerful message to every corner of the globe.

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You will know the world has really changed when you sit down to a Softwell meal with friends

At the head of a small group sitting around a table, a woman raised her hand to get the silent attention of her guests. "My dear friends, before we eat, let us think on our fate as it is weighed between the frailty and the strength of the life force within us and without." She picked up a glass of water and started to drip part of the contents into a large dish in front of her. "These are the tears shed for the suffering and death that we must all endure." She put this glass down and picked up a glass of wine. She slowly decanted part of it into the dish. "This is the blood of the life force that is sacrificed for us so that we might live." She put down the wine, took up again the glass of water and poured it over the wine. "These are the purifying and renewing waters that wash away wounds and loss." She then took bread and broke it up into the dish. "The earth absorbs all that we do to it". She then got up and took the dish around the table, giving a piece of soaked bread to each guest and saying, "thus the earth turns suffering into a living feast."

When she had finished she added some more bread. Then, out of a miniature automotive oil decanter she poured over it a black mixture of vinegar and bitter herbs. She then took the plate around the table again, saying, "Whatever evil we put on or into or above the earth eventually comes back to us as a bitter harvest. Let the acridness stay on your palate as long as it lasts, for in the struggle with evil we must endure its effects until its force is spent." She sat down again and with all the guests reflected on the little ceremony that had just been performed. At last one of them looked up and said, "It is over and I am free." Each guest repeated the words in their own time until everyone had spoken. Refreshed in spirit they

then commenced their meal.

At the end of it, when it was time to go, she went round the table again, giving each person a piece of fruit and she said,

“Go therefore in the peace that is to be the fruit of your love’s labour. Eat of it freely, for the more you partake of it, the more it grows and the better it tastes. It can never cost you too much, for its value is priceless. It will enrich all of us while you live and it will be the most substantial part of whatever you bequeath to your successors. Bless you all. May the warmth, comfort and love you and we give to each other, keep and hold us all our lives, and down the generations.”

Each person ate the fruit of goodness silently with their eyes cast down in meditation. Then they got up, embraced each other and departed.

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