

YARVIN ON DEMOCRACY, LEFTISM, AND JULIUS EVOLA

The introduction to this series should be read first. It has the index to all posts in this series.

Blue Pill, Red Pill

In his second blog post, Curtis Yarvin makes what he calls a case against democracy. He begins by pointing out that we are all steeped in democracy and its values from birth, and it's hard to change. To help see things differently (of course using *The Matrix* image of the red and blue pills) he offers ten statements about democracy and an alternative view. He doesn't discuss any, so all discussion is mine. I'll look at three, the first, and two chosen by the highly Enlightenment method: the 15th decimal digits of pi and e.

First Pill

blue pill:

Democracy is responsible for the present state of peace, prosperity, and freedom in the US, Europe and Japan.

red pill:

The rule of law is responsible for the present state of peace, prosperity and freedom in the US, Europe and Japan.

So close. Yarvin doesn't ask himself where the rule of law comes from, nor why it's working. I'd say that in a democratic polity most people think they have a voice in deciding laws, so they are generally willing to obey the laws. That leads to the good stuff, which encourages further acceptance of laws. Of course, there are other reasons depending on the nature of the individual and their sense of participation in

humanity. Some people obey out of fear, or because that was engrained in them from birth. Others think about the alternatives, and agree to be bound. And there are many other possibilities.

Yarvin doesn't ask himself who are the people who refuse to obey, like the current administration and its leaders. Are they acting like they live in a democracy? No. They act like they're rulers. And it's easy to see that a majority of people don't like it. Of course the current administration goes much farther than others, but Yarvin might have noticed the abuses and corruption of the Bush administration, or that it pushed us into pointless wars and then failed at them. Maybe he suddenly has.

Third pill

blue pill:

The disasters of fascism and communism demonstrate the importance of representative democracy.

red pill:

Fascism and communism are best understood as forms of democracy. The difference between single-party and multiparty democracy is like the difference between a malignant tumor and a benign one.

Yarvin calls fascism and communism single-party democracies. But they were not democratic at all. They were all managed by a single person whose decisions were his own and were final. How exactly are they different from the monarchy he wants to install?

Fifth pill

blue pill:

Power in the West is held by the people, who have to guard it closely against corrupt politicians and corporations.

red pill:

Power in the West is held by the civil service, that is, the permanent employees of the state. In any struggle between the civil service and politicians or corporations, the civil service wins.

The premise here is that some person or group in each “Western” nation has ultimate power. It’s just as false that “the people” have ultimate power as it is that the civil service has ultimate power. Anyone who watched the Bush Administration run things would know this. The civil service is and always has been reasonably accountable to the political leadership, more in Republican administrations than in Democratic.

Yarvin doesn’t mention the role of the courts in all this. It’s a telling omission.

Leftism

In this post, Yarvin tells us that the essential idea of leftism is that intellectuals (he prefers the term “scholars”) should run the world. Scholars are indistinguishable from priests. He asks:

Can anyone find an exception to this rule—i.e., a mass movement that is generally described as “leftist,” but which does not in practice imply the rule of scholars, or at least people who think of themselves as scholars?

I’d guess he means that the ideas that justify and organize a leftist mass movement come from intellectuals. For example, Karl Marx justified and motivated the leaders of the Russian Revolution. John Locke justified the American Revolution and the form of its new government.

But that’s true of any revolution. There may be grievances, but grievances can be solved by negotiation or tweaks to the order of things. Regime change requires a replacement for the

ideology that supports the existing regime. Does Yarvin understand that this applies to himself, to Ayn Rand, to all those right-wing jerks he cites?

1. In comments on my last post, people noted that Yarvin was going to debate Danielle Allen, a Harvard professor with a specialty in democracy. Afterwards, someone posted what looked like a transcript of the debate on Blue Sky. It was taken down and the account closed, but I read it before it disappeared. Yarvin's arguments felt like a ball falling down a Pachinko board, bounding from pin to pin with no clear connection. Or, as the WaPo described his blog posts, he was "wildly discursive".

At one point he said that Harvard doesn't teach conservative thought. For example, no one teaches the thought of Julius Evola. This is from the Wikipedia page on Evola:

He viewed himself as part of an aristocratic caste that had been dominant in an ancient Golden Age, as opposed to the contemporary Dark Age , , , . In his writing, Evola addressed others in that caste whom he called l'uomo differenziato—"the man who has become different"—who through heredity and initiation were able to transcend the ages. Evola considered human history to be, in general, decadent; he viewed modernity as the temporary success of the forces of disorder over tradition. Tradition, in Evola's definition, was an eternal supernatural knowledge, with absolute values of authority, hierarchy, order, discipline and obedience. Links and fn. omitted.

Evola was a major factor in Italian fascism, with ties to German fascism. After WWII he was closely involved with far right-wing Italian politics. It gets worse: "Evola wrote prodigiously on mysticism, Tantra, Hermeticism, the myth of the Holy Grail and Western

esotericism.”

So, Harvard doesn't teach a marginal weirdo fascist. That's what Yarvin thinks is a gotcha.

2. I'm on the road, and my main book for this trip is *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy. It's set in Russia between 1805 and 1812, and give a history of the Napoleonic Wars from the perspective of Russia and five aristocratic families

Here's how Tolstoy describes the attitude of one of his characters, Nicholas Rostov, towards Tsar Alexander I:

Rostov, standing in the front lines of Kutuzov's army which the Tsar approached first, experienced the same feeling as every other man in that army: a feeling of self-forgetfulness, a proud consciousness of might, and a passionate attraction to him who was the cause of this triumph.

He felt that at a single word from that man all this vast mass (and he himself an insignificant atom in it) would go through fire and water, commit crime, die, or perform deeds of highest heroism, and so he could not but tremble and his heart stand still at the imminence of that word. P. 467, Kindle edition.

Does Yarvin feel that looking at Trump or Musk?