

CONSCIENTISM

A General Rationale

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Cooperation allows tasks to be performed at a level of productivity, that is far beyond the capability of a sole, unassisted individual.

Human society is practically defined by cooperation: the provisions for our very survival (and lifestyle) are all produced, and distributed, entirely through our collaborative efforts. Access to all of these provisions – and not just those that the recipient was directly involved in producing – is generally rewarded in exchange for one’s contribution to the cooperative. This level of variety available to just one individual – which could never be matched by the sole efforts of that individual – clearly illustrates the unparalleled benefit of such collaboration.

Cooperation, in any form, requires rules, which instruct participants how to correctly behave in order to coordinate. A single, definitive body of interrelated rules that apply to every member, instructing how one is expected to engage with the collective, is a hallmark (and a necessity) of functional society. These rules usually serve to provide short- to medium-term benefit; which means they can also often be the source of serious long-term detriment, if inconsiderately constructed. **It is vital that these rules serve primarily, to maintain perpetual continuity of the society they govern.** This means long-term considerations must be treated as a primary concern. While short-term benefit is necessary, it must never be provided at the expense of future prospects (except in extreme circumstances, where immediate survival is at stake).

Maintaining secure access to the resources from which all provisions are produced, is the foundation of societal perpetuity. All such resources originate from natural systems; therefore, to ensure the greatest likelihood of a perpetual supply, societal rules must be configured to best ensure that all activities are performed in a

manner that does not threaten the continuity of those systems. While progress is the general ambition of human endeavour, it cannot be genuinely achieved unless natural systems are simultaneously being protected. In general, all structures built upon a flawed foundation are rendered precarious due to that flaw; so, in regard to societal practice, neglect of such a fundamental responsibility as protecting nature (whilst pursuing for example, technological progress) compromises the structural integrity of the entire society, thereby (prematurely) dooming it – and its legacies – to gradual, but quite potentially total, collapse; the very antithesis of progress.

To protect natural systems, society must first determine how these systems actually operate, before any rules can conceivably be deemed applicable. Fortunately, this very pursuit of understanding natural systems is an ancient legacy of humanity; and has (in more modern times) generated a body of applicable knowledge, more than sufficient in breadth and, more importantly, accuracy, to inform the rules required.

Only when accurate, is knowledge of any practical utility; and only if an individual has personally, directly observed the actual phenomenon that their knowledge describes – in reality – can they genuinely verify the accuracy of that knowledge. Yet due to (inevitably) limited opportunities to actually bear witness, much of the knowledge held by an individual is instead, sourced from the assertions of others; and although the information acquired in this manner may well be accurate, without having personally experienced it as such, it is – for many reasons, innocent or otherwise – very possibly inaccurate. Ultimately, every assertion requires a convincing rationale to be considered accurate; and quite often the perceived credibility of the informing source alone, is a sufficient reason to be convinced. In the interests of self-preservation, one's perception of credibility regarding a source of information should always be (and generally is) cautiously awarded. Of course, no perception is infallible; however, nor are all perceptions equally prone to fallibility. **The likelihood of accuracy in any perception, is directly proportionate to the degree of rationality employed in its formation.**

Rationality involves exploring every apparent perspective regarding a phenomenon, in order to maximise one's understanding of it, before making any attempt to definitively explain it (essentially, identifying its tangible causes and/or effects). Accepting assertions from others is a major means to enhance one's perspective – and an inextricable

component of cooperation – so is a vital human practice, despite its inherent risks. In order to minimise that risk, a source of information can be rationally deemed credible only if in compliance with these basic determinants: *expertise*, *reputation*, and *agenda*. Accordingly, one must assess whether the source: possesses sufficient *expertise*, or experience, regarding a particular subject, to be making a valid (or well-educated) assertion relating to it; has a justified and widespread *reputation* for, or known history of, generally employing and advocating cautious, humble, objective, rational conduct (such as freely confessing any measure of uncertainty) when forming and sharing opinions, and; has an honest *agenda*, concerned only with facts and data, with no apparent cause to personally benefit if their assertion is false, but accepted as accurate. Where the source of information is simply an individual with whom one has considerable personal familiarity, one's perception of their credibility is already well established; however, **where a source is unfamiliar, a commonly-accessible means of assessing their credibility is required, especially if their information is of societal concern.**

A contented society is one that generally approves of its own trajectory; therefore, its members must be confident that the decisions that determine that trajectory have not been compromised by dubious influences. Only when a provider of information is publicly, legitimately recognised to have received the exhaustive preparatory education, and relevant experience required to best produce an accurate analysis (i.e. sufficient *expertise*); shown no previous inordinate lapses in professional competence (sound *reputation*); nor holds active affiliations with any external party that may particularly benefit, if certain practices are pursued (uncompromised *agenda*), can they be regarded as credible, by any commonly-accessible, rational measure; and are thereby demonstrably **qualified to influence the societal trajectory, regarding only any concern directly relevant to their expertise.** However, as an apparent compliance with these criteria can be falsified – or a defiance hidden – or simply because humans will inevitably make mistakes, **only a consensus of the maximum available number of those with these necessary credentials - who have comprehensively tested (or at least, intently analysed) the methodologies and data by which the assertion was publicly rationalised; and subsequently, agreed upon its objective integrity - can ensure the greatest likelihood that the asserted information is indeed accurate; and therefore, of genuine application to society.** This process is known as "peer review"; and is the most reliable means available to humanity, of verifying the accuracy of

asserted information. It is the vital, final step in the greater process of discovering - entirely by objective, rational means - factual information about any aspect of the universe; a process known as science.

Science alone, has allowed humankind to understand (among many other things) the mechanisms through which natural systems produce raw resources; it has thereby allowed us, not only to identify and understand how certain human behaviours detrimentally affect the ability of those systems to continue producing resources into the future, but to conceive alternative behaviours and technologies, that instead have a beneficial (or at the very least, relatively benign) effect on natural systems (albeit probably not as beneficial as a complete absence of humankind). Science has not however, managed to persuade society to actually adopt these strategies, to any sufficient degree; this is essentially because the relevant societal rules have conventionally, and invariably, been determined by **politicians, who by their very essence are free to measure credibility, and define societal benefit, however they wish.** The rationality so valued and protected as a matter of course throughout the entire scientific process is consequently, abandoned just prior to its most vital application. Yet, if politicians were actually obliged to legislate only in accordance with the scientific consensus, and in observance of certain existential realities – such as the requirement to protect natural systems – it would render their vocation essentially ceremonial, and ultimately redundant. **General agreement among scientists practising in relevant fields, that all aspects of a societal pursuit comply (or not) with the requisite parameters, can in itself quite effectively constitute an official decree by which to approve (or deny) implementation of that pursuit,** providing the society is both structurally and socially prepared to recognise such an unconventional authority. The actual experience of working under such an authority (bypassing the significant matter of the transition phase for the moment) would not, for most people, be a particularly alien or disorienting one: societal contribution has always generally been performed in a manner consistent with established protocol, rather than at the direct whim of an authority figure; indeed, even most directions given by (minor) authority figures merely relay (and enforce) what is fairly universally considered standard practice, regarding methodology and conduct in a given work situation. Provided that **definitive, officially sanctioned protocol** (essentially a comprehensively-detailed Code of Practice) – which additionally, serves to consolidate the **coordination of all industries** and their practitioners **according to appropriate principles and objectives** (essentially a Code of Ethics) – is established, **society can function successfully without**

politicians. Determining the exact principles such protocol ought to reflect however, is practically the same quandary as that which confronts politicians (and voters, where they exist), regarding what policies they should be seen to represent (and which projects to resource); a dispute that explains – if not defines – their enduring societal presence. So many varied opinions and ideologies exist – adopted and discredited, discarded and recycled throughout history – regarding what constitutes appropriate policy, as to render the entire issue apparently subjective. Yet **humanity's responsibilities, and the basic strategies by which to successfully address them, are in reality not only objective, but constant; universally applicable, and crucial.**

The greatest priority for any society is to maintain a perpetual supply of natural resources. Although there are many specific organic resources of very prominent and obvious utility, in reality each and every species of organism potentially constitutes, in some form, a natural resource of unique, and irreplaceable – perhaps even vital – benefit to humanity (even if only a fraction of humanity actually recognise that benefit); additionally, all species rely on the survival of certain others for their own, so it is indeed **vital for society to actively ensure that every entire species enjoys the greatest prospect for survival** (though perhaps excluding those identified as pathogens). Maximising the range, and resident population, of every native habitat, to the minimum extent that genetic diversity can be maintained (i.e. avoiding/reversing fragmentation); avoiding pollution, and exotic species invasion, of habitats; maintaining the geological and climatic conditions (especially regarding water supply) typical of each habitat; and generally ensuring that the diverse ratio of native species comprising an ecosystem maintains a co-dependent balance, is – along with any other factor identified by science – fundamental to the protection of any species. While there is little danger of excessively harvesting a farmed species, the resources and general practices employed in the entire farming process (as with all societal pursuits generally) must still fundamentally comply with the basic principles of species and environment protection; simply because ecosystems, the birthplaces of all species, are of insurmountable value, yet especially vulnerable to inconsiderate human activity. Mineral resources – the material basis of all life – are variable in abundance, but all ultimately finite; so, should be utilised in a manner and form that allows them to readily retain their optimum utility whenever they have exhausted their intended application (similar in principle to organic decomposition/fertilisation processes), in order to avoid their overall (or

at least, premature) depletion and - often - subsequent role as a pollutant. If their usable form is unable to be salvaged, its availability should only ever be allocated to the noblest of applications in the first place. Upon acknowledgement of these realities, it becomes conclusively apparent that all natural resources – even though their comparative volumes of production can (and must), in many instances, be greatly manipulated – are ultimately available only at a very limited rate, and for restricted application, if their availability in general is to be sustained. **Science must determine, and thereby inform, the rate and manner in which they are to be extracted accordingly; upon extraction, the industries responsible for having performed that task must measure – and inform the societal administration of – their resultant availability; and a predetermined official priority order, reflective of society’s genuine requirements, must fundamentally dictate how the administration then distributes those available resources.**

The primary application for any harvested natural resource must be societal function; and **the primary function of society is to provide for its members, the means for individual (through collective) survival.** While society’s capacity to *secure* a constant supply of natural resources is vital initially, an individual’s immediate survival relies on their own capacity to *access* those resources; in particular, adequate nutrition, shelter, sanitation, healthcare, and security. Such provisions are generally awarded by a collective, in recognition of a contribution towards it; this means however, that if an individual does not possess sufficient capacity (in whatever form) to satisfactorily perform any requisite tasks, they cannot therefore gain legitimate access to such provisions, leaving little choice but to instead pursue either charity (which burdens the particular element of society that donates, whom does not necessarily even have the greatest capacity to), or crime (which generally detracts the entire society), as a means to acquire sustenance. **Where personal survival is of immediate concern to an individual, wider societal concerns are generally not;** indeed, an individual neglected by society has no tangible obligation towards it (though still retains utter dependence on its products). If the vast majority of capable members are actively contributing to society, the burden of producing and providing basic requirements to the minority who (for whatever reason) are not able or willing to contribute, is minuscule compared to the turmoil which their desperation is otherwise liable to generate. **The capacity of an individual to serve society in a beneficial manner – achieved initially through acquisition of relevant education, and later through gaining**

permitted involvement in applicable projects – advances the prospect of collective survival; it is therefore not only advantageous, but imperative, for society to purposefully instil in its members, such capacity, and to sustain them in the process.

Any contribution endorsed by society demands reward, to indicate collective acknowledgement of – and appreciation for – the effort made; and to encourage more of the same. The first such reward conceivably available to a contributing society member is the right to choose their basic provisions, according to personal preference (though ultimately subject to general availability). The surplus provisions, rejected by contributing members, may then become available to those available to members whom do not actively contribute (and have therefore not earned the right to have their first preferences reserved ahead of others). Choice regarding basic provisions however, yields only limited appeal (and application) as a reward, when a vast diversity of ultimately unnecessary, yet clearly desirable (depending on personal taste), societal products exist. Hence becomes apparent the need to administer the **production and distribution of provisions that do not necessarily sustain life, but nonetheless enrich the experience of it: the secondary function of society.**

Due to the increased productivity generally afforded by cooperation (and further enhanced by human ingenuity), a large proportion of societal tasks need not be dedicated to addressing primary concerns. Those excused from performing the most important work however, still require other projects of societal benefit, towards which they too can contribute (and earn entitlements from). These projects must, of course, collectively serve to enrich human experience; either through the production of appropriate material, or by utilising that material in a manner that exceptionally pleases (rather than impoverishes) others. The innovative and creative tendencies held by many individuals ensure that such projects are never in short supply; indeed, the general concern is an oversupply, requiring a **method by which to organise these projects according to a clear priority, in order to manage a responsible allocation of resources, whilst maximising cultural diversity and ingenuity** (and ensuring the greatest talents are recognised). Clearly, the resources required for these projects must in no way, be utilised in a manner that compromises society's primary function. The societal need to **prioritise the alleviation of requirement over the gratification of desire – the basic principle that defines the distinction between the primary and secondary**

societal functions – is ethically undeniable; determining a priority order regarding only the (relatively unnecessary) projects of the secondary function however seems, in comparison, to be an entirely subjective matter. Yet, applying the same principles involved in recognising societal responsibility, yields a thorough, objective prioritisation strategy.

A common obstacle when attempting any sort of objective prioritisation regards diversity; there is often no way to rationally compare the respective worthiness of completely unrelated phenomena, which is why the **guiding principle when administering unnecessary projects must be to maximise diversity**. Every individual has a unique combination of interests, and each of these interests is, to some degree, shared by others (and indeed, often characterised by collective participation); and so long as those interests do not involve depriving other individuals of theirs, are of equal validity to any other, so in such respect deserve enough societal assistance to maintain their practice. However, as pursuing an interest generally requires access to applicable natural and/or artificial resources, and as the societal capacity to provide this access is again, subject to the restrictions of sustainable availability, the **consumption rates attributable to the pursuit of each particular interest (relative to the number of participants) must have fundamental bearing on its relative allotment of applicable resources**. Generally, interests that demand little consumption (beyond an initial provision of appropriate equipment, maintenance requirements, or inevitable long-term degradation of that equipment), ought to be given first priority, due to their relatively minimal demands, and capacity for extensive periods of self-sufficiency. Interests that inherently require semi-regular replacement of a minor proportion of utilised equipment should take second priority, and those that demand a high rate of replacement on major proportions of equipment, third. Such an order of priority ensures maximum diversity in potential pursuits, as it caters to the greatest number of interests per volume of resources (plus encourages innovation regarding further efficiency). Another measure integral to the minimisation of resource consumption is to provide only to a genuinely interested recipient; production (particularly large-scale manufacture), and/or subsequent negligent long-term possession (or indeed, permanent disposal), of any unwanted property unnecessarily diminishes the (already limited) availability of its component resources. Opportunity to sample, and thereby evaluate the suitability of, a potential interest allows participants – through the comparison of direct experiences – to confidently prioritise their own interests, and to thereby collectively (and democratically)

inform, through their selectivity, applicable levels of production and distribution. Essentially, **providing every opportunity to responsibly possess and utilise a product for the duration of its requirement – whether for long periods or short – and then return it as public property, is a basic strategy in the minimisation of the demand for resources.** Lastly – and perhaps somewhat antithetically – the intrinsic propensity of humans to modify and innovate, using (preferably pre-discarded) available materials, must never be stifled; but must be appropriately regulated, to minimise damage or destruction of societal resources. An ability to rationally differentiate between the intended outcome, and the most likely outcome, of such experimentation must be imbued early – and demonstrated – if it is to be resourced at all. Certain materials applicable to certain levels of complexity of experimentation should only be supplied to those with (or in pursuit of) sufficient expertise in a relevant field. Otherwise, **maximising accessibility and diversity, whilst minimising overall waste and consumption, summarises the administrative principle integral to sustainable, equitable, and commonly satisfactory distribution of excess societal wealth.**

The capacity to regulate effectively, the distribution of societal provisions and resources (in any context) is attained by establishing a central bureau, through which to coordinate and administer the activities of all industries according to established principles (whatever those principles may be). While such an institution admittedly, lays the groundwork for a totalitarian regime, if utilised responsibly (and competently) can, in contrast, actually serve to prevent any inordinate (or otherwise inappropriate) concentrations of authority. No one appreciates being told how to conduct their lives – least of all by someone "on high" whose expertise is no greater than (or even inferior to) our own – but by the same token, the price of complete autonomy, is complete chaos. A society is a cooperative; cooperatives need to be coordinated according to certain principles; and some principles are more important or appropriate than others. Just as practitioners of a particular field of science collectively possess the most accurate – and therefore relevant – relatable knowledge regarding that field, experienced workers in any industry possess the equivalent knowledge, regarding their particular industry. Where such workers are compelled to cooperate (rather than compete) with all within the industry, to complete commonly-beneficial projects, they are thereby well able to openly and amicably, objectively document, assess and compare all known, applicable techniques and equipment –

and subsequent innovations thereof – to ultimately determine, through comprehensive expert consensus, those most effective (according to appropriate criteria). **Such consensus can and must, in itself constitute an official declaration of the industry standards they – and the society as a whole, when providing resources – must thereon observe,** until proven inferior to any subsequent innovation (regular revision is therefore necessary).

In a centrally-administered society, any incidence of non-compliance with official rules is inherently conspicuous, and therefore particularly vulnerable to the attention of law enforcement. As compliance alone, grants individuals access to provisions in such a society, there exists little incentive to misbehave; while the prospect of punishment provides quite effective deterrence additionally. In a more conventional (and recognisable) society though, the threat of accountability does not necessarily haunt every individual; the potential rewards can be staggering, which not only serves to justify the risk, but in certain cases can also provide the means to corrupt those tasked with enforcing the law. This is just one example of how those who are able to exercise authority with a measure of discretion, are able to make exceptions to the rules at will, thereby evading accountability for the perpetrator, and – due to their authority – often for themselves, too. **Replacing individual discretion with explicit standard protocol** (which cannot discriminate at will) however, **renders every form of miscreant** (even those occupying the central bureau, or coordinating a law enforcement service) **equally accountable**, by dismantling potentially corrupt, demoralised and/or incompetent hierarchies. The hierarchical structure, at its best, enables very decisive and definitive strategising; whereas bureaucracy is notorious for – and practically synonymous with – inefficient problem-solving (and subsequent inept solutions), and circular buck-passing. However, this is not the inherent nature of administrative structures themselves; but just another consequence of concentrated authority, with its limited expertise (and creativity), governing and coordinating its operations accordingly. While some relevant, professional authority must inevitably be bestowed upon individuals that possess relatively superior expertise over those less experienced, within an industry, underlings must never be entirely bound by command, and thereby compelled to obey inappropriate (or non-standard) orders. **A society member's rights and responsibilities, applicable to every circumstance, and consistent with basic principles, must be established in, and adequately protected by, law; instilled in the society's culture, in each members' psyche, and –**

crucially – rendered a vital, intrinsic determinant of standard protocol.

Competition between groups – for greater access to the resources that sustain each of them – is a primeval phenomenon, which has served as a valid survival strategy throughout our entire history; accordingly, we as a species retain a very strong competitive instinct to this day (albeit one that is stronger in some individuals than in others; which has also, always been the case). Competitive sport exists primarily, to feed this instinct; though in the spirit of enlightenment and civility, the prizes for sporting victory – and the corresponding prices of defeat – are kept relatively trivial (we generally frown upon fights to the death these days). However, completely legitimised, yet utterly fierce, high-stakes competition – involving reluctant competitors, compelled to fight for their very survival, against forces that are, more often than not, already thriving (and certainly in no imminent danger themselves) – is rife throughout our entire modern, global “civilisation”; and in fact, practically defines it. Competition – as a means to govern the allocation of our natural resources – is an unmitigated disaster for humanity; and especially, for the planet. At its starkest, it encourages the complete exhaustion of resources (rather than their conservation and renewal), by placing a greater immediate value on rarity, than on future abundance. Even the arena through which this competition is most conspicuously played out – advertising – is itself a major drain on resources, and a particularly wasteful one; demanding a constant turnover of materials, almost entirely for only temporary, unwelcome, and unworthy purposes, and ultimately, to universal detriment. In contrast, cooperation – or more specifically, belonging to a cooperative group – has been humanity's basic survival strategy since the dawn of our species (and will always remain so); and although it initially creates competing groups (and aids their competitiveness), it can also unify them, in recognition of a common interest, and a common identity. Cooperation ought to represent the dominant mode of interrelation within a society, at all orders of magnitude; to exist at such a scale that the contributions of all members are genuinely coordinated, according to a universal, common interest. Only if centrally-administered, can a society genuinely achieve this, and thereby constitute **a definitive cooperative: a common interest towards which all can contribute, and a common source of provision from which all can receive.** This centralised, cooperative structure is integral to most theories of socialism (including the infamous Soviet Communism); though not to all, so should not be considered

synonymous. "Socialism" - at its most definitive - simply means public (rather than private) ownership and control, of natural and societal resources; centralised coordination is not a mandatory aspect. As was earlier discussed (and advocated), there is certainly nothing wrong with the basic socialist concept; it is a vital resource management principle, if nothing else. Yet, the term implies something different to every individual, and - despite its very agreeable conceptual origin - invites misunderstanding and suspicion like no other. And for good reason: along with its broad definition, it has become heavily tainted by a history of insidious crimes - committed in its name - against humanity (and against the natural world also, though these are less than common knowledge). These were certainly not the inevitable result of the ideology's implementation (though the repetition of atrocities, by vastly separate regimes, would strongly suggest otherwise); rather, the root cause was the means by which the ideology was uniformly implemented: authoritarian rule. For a government to sufficiently administer socialism, is to considerably - and necessarily - expand their authority; thereby increasing society's vulnerability towards the inherent imperfections of its political leaders, and exacerbating the damage those leaders inevitably cause. Indeed, any policy principle that exemplifies socialist (or any other) doctrine is ultimately voluntary, from the perspective of an all-powerful government; their own unique interpretation of those principles is what ultimately becomes implemented (otherwise again, their role would be redundant). State socialism is essentially an unrealistically idealised form of authoritarianism (more so than a form of socialism), hopelessly reliant on a perpetual stream of ideology-compliant leaders. Yet as far as the knowledge of the much of the world's population extends, this is how socialism is necessarily conducted, and ultimately, what it entails. In recognition of government's excessive role in the conventional ideology, the term has come, in the contemporary era (in the Anglosphere, at least), to refer to "government spending (of collected taxes) towards projects (they deem to be) of societal benefit". As this is generally considered to be the entire mandated purpose of government, "socialism" has therefore, practically become a synonym for government. State ownership is quite a different beast to the broader concept of societal or common ownership, but is still by far the most intuitive means of practising socialism, to those of us familiar with the concept of "representative" government. So the term "socialism" suffers, not only a poor reputation; but also, quite an identity crisis. This too however, is ultimately self-inflicted: its proponents (still) insist upon portraying it as a fundamental, defining ideology, and the central solution to all the world's problems; with the

means of implementation, and other "preferred policy", tacked on as an afterthought, serving to differentiate its many proposed "forms". Whereas in reality, it is just one key principle amongst a greater body of vital principles. Without those other components in place, socialism fails; and its once-honourable name gets dragged further through the mud. It is a term - and a movement - that needs to be dismantled, and reconstructed only in a museum. It needs to lose all pretence of deserving a capital 'S', and be rehabilitated back into conscious ideology a much more humble servant. Maintaining a healthy ecology is our fundamental responsibility; this rationally-indisputable fact must become recognised as the primary reference point of every ideological debate. Social-environmentalism is a far more appropriate term than eco-socialism; but still paints only half of the requisite picture.

The task of distributing provisions and services to *all* society members – and doing so, not just reliably, but appropriate to individual requirements – is a basic necessity, and defining function, of societal governance; regardless of the society's size or complexity. Many communist governments had been notorious for their failures in trying to master this task, despite it being central to their ideology; it is indeed, a massive challenge. It is certainly beyond what most people would realistically expect from any conventional, modern government. So it is understandable that these governments would seek to avoid even trying, and to downplay the idea that this task is even their responsibility; by redefining (and shrinking) their role, and leaving it up to "the market" - unrestricted, omnipresent monetary trade - to determine the societal distribution of provisions and services. So long as trade is vibrant, they feel the market is doing its job; and so by extension, they are too. Their main role, as they see it, is to ensure the market – the economy – stays fluid. Given the dire consequences of a stagnant economy, this is all very reasonable; but considering the much more catastrophic ecological destruction, being wreaked in the name of economic progress, a lose-lose situation becomes very apparent, and serious doubts about the validity of this system become inescapable.

To engage in trade, a participant must offer – so already possess – a commodity deemed by another, to be of a similar value; since bartering (the most basic form of trade) is prone to failure regarding this prerequisite, it can offer little beyond a mere (albeit sometimes necessary) supplement to centralised distribution. Money however – being a universal trading item, of standardised value – maximises accessibility to

(and efficiency of) the trading process, so provides the simplest means by which to significantly decentralise society. Trade allows individuals to personally decide which provisions best address their own, self-defined requirements; and additionally, ensures that only such provisions are even made generally available, as only complying production efforts are likely to earn reward. Members of a decentralised society thereby collectively – albeit subconsciously – generate, commonly observe, and constantly revise, what could conceivably be considered a ‘correct’ (being democratic) priority order of societal projects, and resource distribution; therefore rendering obsolete, the need for politicians to do so manually (and indeed, formally). Such a (conceivably) meritorious depiction of advanced decentralisation summarises the economic theory of pure (or extreme) capitalism which, like that of state socialism, could constitute an entirely practicable, comprehensive solution to the enduring inadequacies of conventional societal strategy; if of course, it was not already a fundamental source of those inadequacies.

Capitalism’s most appealing feature is the freedom of choice (or range of options, regarding provisions) it offers to the (moneyed) individual. A major consequence of this freedom however, is that it encourages the false assumption that the whole purpose of life is the pursuit of material (through monetary) enrichment; that the planet's resources are endlessly abundant - or that money simply entitles one to the remaining resources - and that to sustain the incoming flow of resources, all that is needed is more money. Maintaining a sufficient inflow of money is the primary concern for all individuals in a capitalist society (and not just for those seeking an affluent lifestyle), as it is the only legitimised means to maintain personal survival. Indeed, at its most extreme, capitalism demands that any individual (or family) unable (or "unwilling") to establish an income, be funded entirely through charity (if at all), while somehow virtuously refraining from committing such crimes as theft. Yet, any potential provider of charity (or indeed, of any societal benefit) is not enabled to exist solely for that noble purpose; their charitable resources must be generated through their other, profitable activities, which – due to the generally exploitative nature of profitability – are almost guaranteed to be of societal detriment. The concept of taxation, as a means to address this distributive imbalance (however modestly) by funding noble causes, implicitly serves to represent and address the intra-societal responsibility borne and shared by every society member (i.e. taxpayer); in reality though, the (quite justified) expectation that the money will largely be wasted (along with less justifiable, plain old selfishness), embitters many

about even paying tax, thereby diminishing even further, any sense of societal goodwill. But even if the revenue did go entirely towards noble projects, the money paid to the individuals performing the required tasks would then be used by those same individuals to access products and services that they, in turn, believe provide *personal* benefit. As mentioned earlier, such products and services may well (and very often do) consist, at some stage of their provision, a component borne of considerable societal detriment (usually unbeknownst to the individual); so **simply by dealing in money, governments (and indeed, their entire citizenry) indirectly – though inevitably – fund projects they might condemn, which in turn also inevitably, directly compromise many of those that they (for whatever reason) might condone, and even pursue.** This unavoidable phenomenon produces what is essentially a self-sabotaging societal structure, where every progressive endeavour pursued, somewhere and somehow undermines another; tracing specific examples of these interconnected causes-and-effects in reality however, can become overwhelming very quickly, which leads to the very common (and understandable, though incorrect) notion that it is in the inherent nature of human society itself, to be so complex and fundamentally compromised – where right and wrong are inextricably tangled, and the preponderance of problems therefore unresolvable. Yet beneath the tangled complexity, the root of practically all of its intrinsic detrimental phenomena, is a basic – and inescapable – human fear of becoming monetarily deficient. Lack of money constitutes the most immediate threat to every individual’s livelihood – if not survival – *constantly*, for consistent access is never guaranteed, and always limited; and the often daunting task of alleviating that threat, lies solely with the concerned individual. The concept of civil behaviour therefore becomes seriously compromised and corrupted, with the only matters of true importance appearing to be those that concern the individual. This individualistic mentality – which ought to manifest only in extreme circumstances – not only perpetuates, but exacerbates itself within, and permeates every cultural aspect of, trade-based society; and as the mentality spreads, societal cohesion becomes increasingly fractured. Considering that this major distraction is universal, and unrelenting, it is inevitable that **society’s fundamental collective responsibility – the protection of natural systems – never receives first priority; as is vital. Only a sociological system that operates primarily in observance and accordance with that mammoth responsibility can effectively address it; and only if humanity’s needs are simultaneously given maximum consideration, can such a system be tolerated.**

Capitalism's only unique socially-beneficial attribute is that it exposes manifold examples of poor societal practice – and the consequences thereof – to serve as a cautionary guide to humanity; it is the quintessential Bad Example, providing a negative template for society to build *in direct opposition to*. This is not to suggest that extreme (totalitarian) government – at the other end of the scale – is the direct opposite of capitalism, or any kind of solution; indeed, it merely illustrates the *remainder* of the negative phenomena we need to avoid (though the horrendous shenanigans of the ultra-rich, already amply demonstrate the folly of investing certain individuals with inordinate societal influence). **Although capitalism constitutes a direct alternative (or remedy) to government – and vice versa – both are inherently flawed; to minimise the flaws of one ultimately means exacerbating those of its counterpart, quite potentially to the extent of societal collapse, if either is afforded sufficient prevalence.** The general undesirability of such a scenario necessitates (if no other valid option is apparent) the incorporation of both principles into different aspects of society simultaneously; because, although neither constitutes an ideal solution to the other, one will inevitably prove more appropriate for particular applications (albeit still insufficiently so). Such a hybrid, at the centre of the scale – the area we are most familiar with, in our collective experience – provides a mere glimpse of the type of society we desperately need; with constant interference from both extremities. What is truly needed is a complete departure from the entire “government vs. market” ideological spectrum, with its hideous intrinsic flaws; and the establishment of a system cleansed of those flaws. Such a system can be built from the ground up, using an unprecedented type of constitution as a blueprint.

A constitution is a document of principles – both moral and logistical – universally recognised as the supreme law of a society, by which all subsequent laws, rulings and practices must abide. Its primary function historically, has been to dilute the absolute authority of any single political leader (along with their often obscure opinions and extremities of ideology), by establishing institutions (such as parliaments/congresses, judicial courts, etc.) that provide a more consensual form of decision-making. In many instances a constitution may also establish moral and ethical principles – most prominently, a Bill of Rights, applicable to all society members – upon which authorities are expected to abide and/or aspire to when performing their role, and when developing laws. Such

principles are a laudable inclusion; though without specific guidelines describing how best to actually achieve and maintain these standards – especially all at once – they remain largely aspirational. Basically, determining those guidelines is considered the political leaders’ role, despite their limited authority and expertise (and often, morality), and despite facing no major compulsion – beyond perhaps, re-election considerations – to recognise as beneficial, any policy introduced by their predecessors; all while contending with (and being constantly undermined by) a fundamentally flawed resource-distribution system (i.e. capitalism). Generally, their efforts are considered adequate if they can provide specific instances of improvement in any given sector; regardless of how much they may have neglected – or even depleted – other sectors in order to fund the (subjectively-defined) “improvement”.

The concept of the constitution is ultimately a subconscious acknowledgement that humans cannot be trusted with authority; it more openly recognises that certain other phenomena too, are of absolute detriment to society, and that it is much safer to establish permanent laws that competently address such phenomena, than to rely on political leaders to enact – and perpetually maintain (despite continuous ideological and leadership battles) – appropriate laws through their own “wisdom”. Yet this seems to contradict the sentiment traditionally attached to a constitution: protection and consolidation of government (and, by implication, the society it represents). Whereas in reality, the true value of constitutions is their ability to effectively *constrain* the authoritative discretion of political leaders, and impose permanent, prescribed protocols as replacement – albeit for limited applications, generally – but there is no reason why the same concept cannot apply on a much greater, more comprehensive scale, and replace political leaders completely. **Standard procedure, applicable to every given societal situation** – whether of regular, or only remote occurrence – **needs only to be given common recognition and due regard in order to successfully govern society** (and in the overwhelming majority of common instances, already does). **If a procedure abides by certain parameters, in compliance with fundamental principles - as dictated in the constitution - Science can subsequently test, to confirm or deny, its conformity to those parameters/principles. Confirmation would automatically constitute an official decree of approval.** The procedure is thereby rendered Standard, by the most elegant, competent and incorruptible means available.

Essentially, conventional constitutions attempt to retrofit desirable principles into the undesirable, incompatible systems they simultaneously perpetuate; whereas, **in order to prioritise, and render these principles truly fundamental, and therefore effective** – not just in aspiration, but in practice – **a compliant system needs to be constructed around and upon the principles themselves**. That system is Conscientism.