

# Cracking the Synergy Source Code

*Finding Meaning & Purpose in Your Life*

*What We Didn't Learn in School –But Should Have!*

Volume FIVE

## History's Hidden Lessons

*Learning from the Good, Bad, & Ugly*

We've all taken history classes in school and learned dates, facts, and the broad sweep of the eras. Yet we seem to learn little about the nature of the decisions that mold history and the impact of culture on the destiny of its people.

Too many of history's most cruel hoaxes have led to corrupted belief systems and vile leaders who betrayed the trust of their people.

But some leaders have created cultures that instilled the highest values and produced remarkable examples of civilizations greatest glories. What made them so empowering?

This volume examines the things that made the difference and the key lessons that enable you to impact positively on your own life and those lives you influence.

*By Robert Porter Lynch*

# *Learning from the Good, Bad, and Ugly*

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## ***Preface***

This “Thought Piece” emerged from research for my book: *Trusted to Lead*, and also as a sequel to my research about the Greek innovation process and how they discovered the secrets of “synergy.”

My original purpose was to understand why the Roman Empire failed to produce the *level of innovation* of their Greek predecessors, along with the exploration of the failures of the early Christian Church and its Greek roots.

This exploration then led to many new insights. This volume includes numerous deeper assessments about human nature, the impact of culture on our lives, the essence of personal destiny, and the future of the world to come.

## ***Why this is Important***

Often it’s been said that those who don’t understand the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. In this volume I look at the lessons of the distant past because I didn’t feel the histories I had read before did justice to their most valuable lessons. Two things worry me that this volume addresses:

1. How do we *advance our civilization* in an era where there seems to be a lot of darkness, evil, and conniving everywhere, from white collar crime, internet theft, terrorism, and drug trafficking, to name a few?.
2. How do we prevent our civilization from declining into an abyss, as did the Western World during the Dark Ages? Or the Mayan Empire? Or the City of Detroit? Or Juarez, Mexico?

Each of us makes daily decisions about how we live our lives and advance life on this planet. I hope this information helps you make better decisions for yourself and the good of all.

Robert Porter Lynch

Naples, FL

June, 2012

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## DEDICATION

To David N. Burt

For his deep friendship and unfailing encouragement to continue the quests that resulted in this set of books.

&

The Welch Family

Scott, Todd, and Glen who have championed the highest level of ethics, values, innovation, and teamwork in all their endeavors.

&

Ninon Chrysochoos Prozonic

For her commitment to investigate the ancient Greek inner spirit in a way that only a person with the soul of a Greek can do.

&

Jerry Dell Ehrlich

One of the few Platonist scholars in America, his scholarship and personal guidance to me have kept Greek spiritual roots alive.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please Note: This is still in a DRAFT form, for comment only.

There are still typos, grammatical errors, and lapses in logic which the reader may spot. Please forgive any such errors. Permissions for use of materials have not been requested.

Not for Distribution

June 29, 2012

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## CHAPTER ONE: BUILDING & DESTROYING EMPIRES

### What a Difference a Culture Makes A Fresh Look at the Real Differences between Greek and the Roman Empires and the Implications on Today's World and Personal Destiny

#### *THE GREAT GREEK EXPERIMENT*

Greece was a great experiment in advancing civilization to a whole new level. It happened quite rapidly during a 350 year period (about the same period of American history), from about 510 BC to 146BC – the time known as the Golden Era of Hellenic<sup>1</sup> Invention. This time is particularly intriguing for several reasons:

1. There is no period in the history of the world where, on a per-capita basis, there was more intense innovation. It was during this era that the Greeks invented a new language, new architecture, new medicine, new literature, new philosophy, new theatre, new mathematics, new astronomy, and many great scientific inventions, such as the steam engine and the first geared chronometers, new engineering, and especially new insights into the nature of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hellenistic Era is formally considered beginning at the time of Alexander the Great (323 BC). However, for the purposes of this article, we are also including the earlier Greek Classical Era (beginning about 510 BC). Some scholars advocate that, despite the fall of Greece to the Romans, the vestiges of Hellenistic culture continued, though somewhat diminished, until 180 AD with the death of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the great Roman Emperors, who was not only a military general, but a philosopher of Greek tradition.

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2. There was very little precedent for what the Greeks did. While the Hellenistic era followed their Egyptian predecessors, the Greek epoch was a breakthrough from their Egyptian antecedents. In other words, the Greek innovation was a massive shift in thinking from any other civilization that preceded or co-existed with it.
3. The heart of this massive outburst in group genius was Athens, which was populated with a relatively small number of people, probably not more than 40,000,<sup>2</sup> which would make it just a very small city by today's standards. What emanated from that city and the surrounding regions is staggering, even by today's standards.

Taking the study of innovation out of the realm of our modern era forced the authors to look at innovation through the eyes, mind, and heart of an ancient Greek.

While innovation did not start with the Greeks, there is no question that, until the modern era, there is no precedent in history for such a burst of creativity in such a narrow time window of only three hundred and fifty years, from approximately 500BC to 146 BC. Historian Kenneth Clark, musing across the wide expanse of Western Civilization, saw this period as one of the most remarkable in human kind:

*At certain epochs man felt conscious of something about himself – body and spirit – which was outside the day-to-day struggle for existence and the night-to-night struggle with fear; he has felt the need to develop these qualities of thought and feeling so that they might approach as nearly as possible to the ideal of perfection – reason, justice, physical beauty, all of them in equilibrium.*

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<sup>2</sup> This figure includes men, women, children, and slaves. Compare this with Rome, which, at its peak, held a population of over a million people.



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*Western Europe inherited such an ideal. It had been invented in Greece in the fifth century before Christ and was without doubt the most extraordinary creation in the whole of history, so complete, so convincing, so satisfying to the mind and eye, that it lasted practically unchanged for over six hundred years.<sup>3</sup>*

## **IMPACT OF CULTURE**

What were the unique characteristics of the Greek culture that spawned such a massive outburst? What innovations were created from individual effort and what from collective collaboration, we shall never know. But what can be stated with certainty is that *culture nurtures innovation*; innovation seldom occurs independently of culture. If it did, innovation would occur randomly throughout the world and throughout time. For this reason, we made it a point to examine the cultural underpinnings that enabled a few Grecian City-States to create breakthrough innovations so discontinuous from anything that preceded.

## **Basis of Modern World**

The array of great thinkers produced advanced mathematics and the core formulations of geometry & trigonometry. Astronomers discerned the earth was round and calculated its

All of us are both the *creators* and the *products* of culture:

- the culture of our immediate family,
- our community,
- our schools,
- our nationality, and
- our employers.

Similarly, we create our own culture in every human interaction:

- our marriages,
- our friendships,
- our leadership, and
- our teams.

One cannot escape from culture, thus one can either be victimized by it, fight it, or shift it to a level that brings out the best in us and in others.

It is our everyday choice to influence our personal destinies by choosing our formation of and reaction to culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Clark, Kenneth, Civilization, p 3.

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diameter to within 100 miles of its true breadth, along with the theory of a planetary solar system. The first complex analog computers made intricate mathematical calculations and astronomical predictions.<sup>4</sup> The depth of their philosophical constructs amaze thinkers to this day. The principles of moral character are still taught throughout the modern world in Aesop's Fables. Their method of diverting human aggression from war to fair competition continues through our Olympic games. Modern theatre, movies, and television trace their roots to Greek drama. Nutritional medicine originated in Ancient Greece. The Greeks invented the basis of the first steam engine. Their construction of a language, is, in many respects, far more expressive of complex thinking than is possible in English. The Greeks began our modern system of laws and justice, and the political systems of democracy and republican representation were pioneered by the Greeks.

Surprisingly, the massive amount of innovation was produced by a very small number of people. Athens, the by far the largest of the Greek City-States had a population of 40,000.<sup>5</sup> Only 6-8,000 were members of the educated male elite; the rest were women, children, and slaves. The wealth both financially and culturally, attracted many of the best and brightest of the times to study and live within its bounds.

When the Greeks were conquered by the Romans in the middle of the second century BC, this great era of innovation slowed dramatically, retrogressed horribly during the Dark Ages after the fall of Rome in 455 AD, not to be resumed until the Renaissance, a millennia later.

For example, to gauge the impact of Greek thinking on our twenty-first century world, I often ask people in workshops: "Can you name any Greek 'thought leaders.' Nearly everyone can come up with about a half dozen names, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Euclid, Archimedes, Homer, Aesop, or Aristophanes, to name the most familiar.

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<sup>4</sup> The Antikethera mechanism's complex gearing system used to calculate the sun, moon, and stars has astounded modern scientists.

<sup>5</sup> Other centers of intellectual prowess were in Ephesus and Alexandria.

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I then ask them to name Roman ‘thought leaders.’ Reading faces, I know people are struggling with the question. Some may name Cicero or Virgil, but these are not thought leaders (Cicero was an orator, and Virgil mimicked Homer). Others may cite Galen, Epictetus, or Plutarch (these were Greeks writing during the Roman era), or Marcus Aurelius (who tried to introduce Greek thinking into the Roman culture. Most will fail at the answer, and limply suggest a Roman General (Caesar or Marc Antony), or an Emperor, (Caligula, Octavian, Hadrian), none of whom were thought leaders.

Then I will wryly ask them to suggest a thought leader from the Dark Ages. Some might say Merlin (who was a mythological character) or Charlemagne (who could not write).

Today when we teach our students about the Greek and Roman era, we err greatly by implying that the Romans were an extension of the Greeks. Such is not the case, as we will see as this story unfolds. The distinction between the two cultures is dramatic and dynamic.

## ***KEYS TO DYNAMIC EVOLUTION***

Why, then was Greece able to produce such a prolific stream of thought leaders, while Rome, whose period of dominance was 700 years, double the Greek era, produced so few? And why did the Dark Ages produce no great thought leaders at all? (we refer to this period as “dark” for a good reason.) Certainly if genius was simply determined by genetic factors, then the law of averages would call for producing a standard percentage of thought leaders in every generation and in every nation. The genetic makeup of humans has not changed in two thousand years; thus the answer could not be in their unique combination of chromosomes.

Culture was, and is, a major determinant of results.

*What had the Greeks created, designed, learned, or discovered about culture that enabled them to manifest such remarkable results?*

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*What structures, systems, or processes produced so many magnificent breakthroughs in thought, science, architecture, and politics?*

*What did the Greeks reward and reinforce that sustained this prodigious output?*

*Why could not the Romans replicate the Greek system, even though most wealthy Romans were sent to Athens for their formal education.*

*By replicating these cultural parameters, could human beings in today's world produce equally remarkable outcomes?*

*Could we, on an individual and communal level, significantly enjoy life and prosper by grasping what the Greeks had learned?*

Working with my friends, Ninon Prozonic, who is Greek and has the heart and soul of an Ancient Greek, and Jerry Dell Ehrlich, an extraordinary Platonic scholar, we found the evidence of the unique processes that enabled the burgeoning of such a remarkable culture. Often the cues were very deeply hidden, not in the text of a book but often buried in the etymology of word structure and reading between the lines in the philosophy of the Greeks.

Sadly, many of the Greek words that held the constructs of these great processes never made it into Latin, and thus the concept behind the word was lost – hidden actually – waiting to be discovered by someone who would spend the time digging for hidden treasure.

Other words passed into Latin, but were either “flattened” of their depth and richness, or were never passed through the old French into English.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Upon closer examination of Greek and Roman word structure, one finds that the truly spiritual words in the English language originate from the Greek, while the more practical words come from the Latin, German, or

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Between the burning of libraries by Christian and Islamic Fundamentalists, destruction by barbarian hordes, and total neglect during the Dark Ages, scholars estimate that more than two thirds of the Greek writings were lost, destroyed, or just rotted away. Think of a gig-saw puzzle where you don't have the big picture and the majority of the pieces are completely missing.

However, what still remains we believe gave us enough to begin answering the challenging questions we had posed.

## ***MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE***

Discerning the nature of the Ancient Greek culture has been a challenge to classical scholars, primarily because "culture" is somewhat "invisible." Culture is the sum of all a societies core values, what it considers "normal behavior," what it prizes and punishes, how it constitutes its laws, and what it idealizes and despises, among many things. Much of culture exists under the radar simply as accepted behavior. After several hundred years of daily usage, many of the key processes and practices simply migrate into the invisible aura of "context"<sup>7</sup> - everyone accepts it as natural and ordinary - it just "is."

Academics enjoy mystifying people by complexifying the essence things, like culture. I like to do just the opposite: uncomplicated and simplify and unify, but not dumb things down.

By delving deep into the original Greek language to explore the true richness of meaning, we found a virtual treasure trove ("thesaurus" in Greek) of coded meaning that reveals how Greeks were able to convert the problems of the day into innovative solutions, creative displays in every field. We believe we may have cracked the code on how the Greeks created synergy.

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Anglo-Saxon roots of English. Varo was the Roman literacist who "codified" the Latin language, leaving out much of the richness of Greek.

<sup>7</sup> Context is something everyone knows and understands, but does not need to talk about. For example, every corporate culture has a rewards system that is just "known," and seldom discussed. Thus, as Carl Gustav Jung observed, the "collective unconscious" becomes "invisible." And, because it is invisible, it can easily become lost, foreign, and inaccessible.

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Archeology searches for lost artifacts from a by-gone age. My approach to history is a bit different – I enjoy discerning a *lost processes or practices* hidden in words, systems of thinking, patterns of interaction, and how problems are addressed. (In Volume Two, I outlined the details of how we conducted the research and our core findings. Here I will summarize what we found.

### ***Ancient Discoveries of Dynamic Differential Energy***

From the earliest of human civilization, people have gazed into the sky to fathom the secrets of creation. As a species, we have continually questioned our meaning, purpose, and the cycles of birth and death.

These questions were deep in the minds of early civilizations. As soon as we mastered language and writing, the question of creation was put to pen and paper.

Man’s search for meaning starts with creation<sup>8</sup>, which the ancients believed emanated from a “divine spark” – *Energies of God*

The idea of imbedded or contextual values is a blessing and a curse. I remember asking a Japanese business executive in 1990: “could you tell me what specific things cause trust?”

He looked at me with a querulous, almost jaundiced eye and said: “Why? No. “It should be understood. (meaning that everyone knows this without having to verbalize it and anyone who doesn’t get it shouldn’t be trusted in the first place.)”

When something becomes imbedded or implicit, it doesn’t require thinking or explication – people just do it. But for an outsider, what is implicit is effectively “invisible.”

The Greeks had created an “implicit” culture that was not easily communicated or seen by the Romans who had to have it codified or it would be lost on them.

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<sup>8</sup> The theme continues today: Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*/Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> (adopted as the Anthem of the European Union) begins and ends with: “Joy, beautiful Spark of Divinity!” The Old Testament evidences the linkage of the creation and the divine: Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created ...”

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- a mystery just beyond the normal human being's grasp. The objective was to convey this energy to humans through transcendence, giving us the power and spirit of the divine. Our reverence for inventors, such as Leonardo da Vinci or Thomas Edison, continues our long tradition of marveling at creative energy.

Deep inquiry was the hallmark of many ancient thinkers and their philosophic followers. The path of knowledge would lead first to wisdom and then to truth and freedom. (Today, any scientist, innovator, inventor, technician, engineer, or architect must be committed to seeking truth, lest they succumb to being a mere charlatan. A seeker of the truth, looking to solve a problem or invent a new method or create a new product must be searching for this greater truth, or the solution will fail on its own merits.)

Finding the underlying laws that governed all things was an almost obsessive quest of the Greek thinkers. Thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle sought to find the *unifying* order of the universe itself, whether it be in the solar system, plants and animals, or human existence. Life could not be illogical, disorganized, and without an *inner design*. As Einstein commented more than two millennia later, "God does not play dice with the universe."

Thinkers were among the most admired people of the land. And the greatest thinkers were revered not just for their knowledge (Greek: Gnosis) but for their wisdom (Greek: Sophia) and the quality of their inquiry and questions.

Aristotle reinforced a long line of esteemed thinkers by emphasizing how "character" - namely *courage* -- was the "first cause" of one's personal destiny. He maintained that Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees the others.

Aristotle then took the game of life and relationships to a much greater height by maintaining that to be trusted, one must possess character, which is founded on a firm commitment to virtue and excellence (Greek: *arête*).

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The one powerful, and often overwhelming problem the Greeks had to address was how to find peace and harmony in a world that was filled with war and strife. Cultural differences, even in an area as small as Greece often produced brutal wars. *Differences are often charged with emotion, fear, conflict, and even warfare.* Differentials, polarities, and opposites seemingly have a greater chance of exploding into conflict, not synergizing into innovation. (Just look at Arabs and Israelis or Conservatives and Liberals today.) A method had to be devised to ensure differences did not produce destruction.

The Greeks learned that people must “trust” the alignment of principles and processes. When there is misalignment, there is conflict and discord as people fragment and then position themselves to defend their positions and possessions.

We discovered a number of interacting cultural values that created the Greek phenomenon. We found six *directly* impacted the ability to generate innovations, and a number of others that were instrumental in *enabling* a thriving culture..

### ***Six Core Values***

In Ancient Greece, these values were considered a “given,” imbedded in the cultural context of the time, thus considered “self evident.” (Much of Greek innovative interaction was manifested in their philosophies and embodied in their words and values.) We identified several critical words that epitomized the underlying value structure of the core innovation processes:

1. ***ARÊTE (Virtue)***
2. ***PHILOTIMO (Love of Honor)***
3. ***KOINONIA (Spiritual Community)***
4. ***SOPHIA (Wisdom)***
5. ***METANOIA (Mind Shifting)***
6. ***HISTORIA (Deep Inquiry)***



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When these values combined,<sup>9</sup> the consequential force of aligned human energy was released. These “magical” six values, embodied in these words, shot a burst of co-creative synergy, much like a lightning bolt discharges when the energy potential reaches a flash point.

Also, it's vital to understand that the ideals embodied in “philosophy” were far important to Grecian society than “philosophy” is to ours. Back then, philosophy [literally: the love (*philo*) of wisdom (*sophia*)] was discussed, debated, honored, and idealized. The idea of creation, beauty, and truth manifested and embodied itself all aspects of society: in architecture, art, sciences, and social discourse. These were powerful reflections of the philosophic values of the Greek culture.

The key six values described below we believe were the “core” values that contributed specifically to a thriving and ever-evolving civilization. These created an awesome vibrancy and vitality, instilling *enthusiasm* [literally: to be imbued with god-like qualities] and *inspiration* [literally: to be filled with divine spirit]. (listed in no particular priority order – each was symbiotically central to the synergistic interaction of the other):

## ***1. ARÊTE (VIRTUE):***

Arête, known in Latin and English as virtue (or excellence), was also a pivotal value the co-creative spirit in ancient Greece. One could not perfect one's soul unless virtue was a continual pursuit.

Virtue was dependent upon one's commitment to act in accordance with the dictates of the higher soul, and not forsake oneself to the more prurient, lower level vices such as lust, greed, anger, or revenge. While no one then, nor today, could be expected to be perfect at the practice of virtue, holding this standard as a

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<sup>9</sup> The first three created the “culture of the community” which formed the foundation for the second three to prosper. The second three lifted the mind and the heart/soul to a transcendent level.

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goal enabled higher order teamwork, intellectual interaction, and co-creativity to take place.

Plato introduced the concept of the soul in a profound manner. The soul became a universal connection between people, enabling the sparks of creative energy to flow between individuals without the fear or concern of betrayal, who got the credit, or loss of ownership. Ideas were owned collectively and thus shared and built upon by a group who cherished the value of regenerative energy.

But virtue could never be achieved unless one practiced honor, sought wisdom, and built community. As Ninon Prozonic observes:

*“Arête (virtue) was not a moral virtue only, but it was more an aspiration and endowment of qualities that would result in practical efficiency and public fame. Most young Athenians wanted virtue more than anything.”*

Differences in opinions can be handled virtuously with compassion, understanding, and acceptance, or, conversely, arrogantly with condemnation, derision, and denial, as the commitment to exploration and inquiry is an essential to successful innovation and breakthrough.

Another Greek word, closely associated with Arête is Dikaisone<sup>10</sup>, which means “equity of character” or “spirit of wise action” – possessing divine qualities in perfect balance.<sup>11</sup> These divine qualities include: courage, compassion, love, faith, hope, discipline, wisdom, mercy, justice, truth, power, and holiness.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This term appears 86 times in the New Testament. It’s translated into English as “Righteousness” connoting individual steadfastness, obliterating the original intent, which also implies collaboration..

<sup>11</sup> Author’s note: whenever you see the word “balance,” it implies there may be a number of “tradeoffs” to maintain the balance. Always ask the question: “How could I bring these diverse forces into ‘alignment?’” making the energies synergistic.

<sup>12</sup> Ryan, Sharon Catherine, and Prinster, Lt. Col. Paul Jeffery: *Finding God in War, U.S. Warriors Speak from the Heart*; Authorhouse, 2010, p9

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## 2. *PHILOTIMO*<sup>13</sup> (*LOVE OF HONOR*)

Philotimo literally means the “love of honor,” and carries a very special sense of honor, obligation, self respect and teamwork. It was considered as an “extremely sensitive region of men's souls that gives forth gallantry, nobility and moral pride; it is the sense of honor and dignity.” When Virtue (Arête) was joined with Love of Honor (Philotimo), the union created two powerful foundations for trust by focusing on the “greater good,” as explained by Alexander Makedon:

*“In ancient times, there was great public pressure to behave uprightly .... an internalized inclination to do good, with a strong sense of social responsibility. It would be unthinkable that someone without integrity (honesty, justice, truthfulness) is admired....”*

Trust removes the fear of betrayal, thus letting the mind expand into imaginative realms. Focusing on the “greater good” is, by its nature, expansive, superseding narrow self-interest needs

The power of Philotimo was extraordinary in that it bound every individual to very high standards of behavior. Philotimo was not just an admired trait, *it was expected*. The expectation was that all members of the society or community would first act in the interests of the greater good of the whole, not in their self interest.

And anyone who violated the honor code of Philotimo would be branded a heretic, labeled with the scarlet letter “A” for *Atimia* - which means unscrupulous, dishonest, dishonourable, like a weasel and a fox etc.. The consequences of *atima* were severe: excommunication - to be ostracized or exiled from one’s community for violating the “common unity.”

Philotimo was the principle source of trust that enabled the group to overcome their fear of betrayal, their fear that one person’s unscrupulous or selfish desire would supersede the greater good of the whole.

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<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, neither the word nor the idea has any Latin or English equivalent, and thus the concept has been largely lost in our culture.

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## **3. KOINONIA<sup>14</sup> (SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY)**

Unifying and manifesting the two ideals of *Arête* and *Philotimo*, required a forum for group action. Without joint action, the words would be simply abstract and irrelevant concepts. Today's idea of teamwork had a deep meaning for the Greek. Joint action was required to produce something unique and potent.

For Koinonia to flourish, the idea of *synergy* and *zyzygy* came into being. *Synergy*<sup>15</sup> means the cooperative interaction of people or forces so that their combined effect is enhanced or *greater than the sum of their individual effects*. *Zyzygy* addressed the idea of "yoking" these energies together to bring them into *alignment*.

The Greeks had observed that when a group adopts the values of honor, virtue, and spiritual community, along with wisdom, mind-shifting, and deep inquiry, a synergistic effect occurred, an ideal we seem to have lost in our modern era.

Because Virtue (*Arête*) and Love of Honor (*Philotimo*) were conjoined, their union produced an *inner* goodness (from virtue), and an *outer* goodness (supporting social relationships), resulting in a completeness and wholeness of the human spirit: Integrity.

This laid the foundation for outer goodness to embrace joint participation in something with someone, such as in a community, or team or an alliance or joint venture.

In the idea of Koinonia, there is always an implication of action included in its meaning including:

- **Generous Sharing:** the spirit and act of giving as contrasted with selfish getting. When koinonia is

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<sup>14</sup> Koinonia is a very expansive and meaningful term, which no single word in the English dictionary can describe.

<sup>15</sup> The word itself is derived from the Greek *sunergi*, meaning *cooperative work or unified/joined energy*, and from *sunergos*, meaning *working together in fellowship*. In effect, for the ancient Greek, simply working together would produce an effect far greater than more than the sum of the individuals. This is a critical meaning, because it transcends issues of conflict, dissention, and factionalism.

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present, the spirit of sharing and giving becomes tangible. It can also imply "sharing an idea," the precept: "Sharing Expands, Hoarding Contracts."

- **Partnership:** a companion, a partner or a joint-owner, implying an association, common effort, or a partnership in common, an aligned relationship, such as a fellowship or common interest.
- **Marriage:** Two people may enter into marriage in order to have "koinonia of life", to live together where everything is shared, a powerful common interest that could hold two or more persons together.
- **Spiritual Relationship:** something held and shared jointly with others in a "relationship with God" particularly through the connection with the Holy Spirit (Sophia) in a manner that benefits the greater good of the members as a whole. The term *enthusiasm* is connected to this meaning of koinonia for it signifies "*God in Us*,"<sup>16</sup> or *one's participation in the Divine*.
- **Fellowship**<sup>17</sup>: creating a mutual bond between comrades by sharing joys and pains together, united by common experiences, interests and goals. The bond of fellowship overrides each individual's pride, vanity, and individualism, fulfilling the human yearning for fraternity, belonging, and companionship, thus accounting for the ease by which sharing and generosity flow founded on an interdependent

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<sup>16</sup> Definition: Greek *enthusiasmos*, from the adjective *entheos*, "having the god within," (*en*, "in, within," and *theos*, "god.") **Word History:** "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm"-- Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<sup>17</sup> Definition: *Fellow*: from the Anglo-Saxon/Old Norse 'felagi', comrade or partner.. 'Ship' is a suffix indicating state or condition. Fellowship is a state in which we share as fellows, that is as partners or peers. Fellowship addresses the relationship between people, belonging to a community, to something greater than oneself., not between material objects. One doesn't have a fellowship with a house, a companionship with a tree, or a comradeship with a bed.

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friendship among multiple group members.

Fellowship is never passive in koinonia; not just being together, but also actively doing together.

- **Community**<sup>18</sup>: The idea denotes a “common unity” of purpose and interests. By engaging in this united relationship a new level of consciousness and conscience emerges that spurs the group to higher order thinking and action, thus empowering and encouraging its members to exist in a mutually beneficial relationship. Community and family become closely intertwined, because aiming at a common unity strives to overcome brokenness, divisiveness, and, ultimately gaining wholeness with each of the members, with their environment, and with their God. By giving mutual support, friendship and family merge. There is no implied a hierarchy of command and control; leadership is expected to focus energy, and align interests, not impose control.

Both fellowship and community imply an inner and outer unity, which, today, we call “character,” or more specifically, “integrity.” Koinonia creates a brethren bond which builds trust and, especially when combined with the other three values, overcomes two of humanity’s deepest fears and insecurities: being betrayed and being demeaned.

Together, Arête (virtue), Philotimo (love of honor), and Koinonia (spiritual community) created a solid foundation of security, love, caring, and friendship, elevated to a spiritual level that formed a solid foundation of trust for the next three core values to have a powerful impact on the Greek civilization.

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<sup>18</sup> Definition: from Latin *communitas*, *fellowship*, from *communis*, *common*; **a.** A group of people having common interests. **b.** A group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society. **c.** Similarity or identity: a community of interests. **d.** Sharing, participation, and fellowship.

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## 4. SOPHIA (WISDOM)

Wisdom was so vital to the Greeks that it was not embraced by just a word, but honored in the highest manner by dedicating a goddess to it. The Greeks knew Wisdom as *Sophia*, a Goddess who brought inner Truth. The distinction the Greek made between knowledge (gnosis) and wisdom (Sophia) is important.

An active mind could access deep knowledge. But knowledge alone is often empty of real learning, and can carry with it much conceit and narrowness. Knowledge existed in answers, wisdom in questions and in revelations, uniting idea with action. The pursuit of wisdom created the challenge to grow upward with a spiritual yearning. Wisdom thus was sacred.

*"Wisdom, [Sophia] the fashioner of all things, taught me.*

*For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, undefiled, distinct, beyond harm, loving the good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, philanthropic, firm, sure, free from care, all powerful, all seeing, and interpenetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and most subtle.*

*For ... she penetrates and permeates everything,*

*because she is so pure;*

*for she is the breath of the power of God...."<sup>19</sup>*

This sacred journey so excited and empowered Greeks.

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<sup>19</sup> From the Apocrypha (this is the "Middle" Testament covering the thousand year gap between the Old and New Testaments.) Later versions became embodied in the Catholic Church's Bible (but omitted in the Protestant version). Because gods and goddesses were clearly a pagan belief, the early Christian church struck out the references to "Sophia" from the Wisdom of Solomon, and renaming her as the "Holy Spirit" in her place, still retaining the sacredness of Wisdom. See John 14 & 16 (New Testament) for more details on this connection.

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*Wisdom combined: knowledge  
with spiritual transcendence,  
human compassion, and  
passionate action.<sup>20</sup>*

By holding wisdom as a sacred ideal, it unified groups to search, to inquire, to explore, to be open to new ideals. This approach is diametrically different from the arrogance of those who found prideful pleasure in knowing more than someone else, who put others down for some perceived weakness, or condemned others for lack of superficial wealth or status.

*One may heal with Goodness;*

*One may heal with Justice;*

*One may heal with Herbs;*

*One may heal with the Wise Word.*

*Among all the remedies, ...*

*the Wise Word will best Drive away sickness*

*from the bodies of the faithful,*

*For Wisdom is the best healing of all the remedies.<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> The Greeks did not write obituaries. Instead they asked the question: "Did he live a life of passion?" In other words: "Did he take action on his beliefs, and were his beliefs of a "high order" of thinking."

<sup>21</sup> *Prayer to the Angel of Wisdom*, in Szekely, Edmund B.; *Essene Gospel of Peace*, Volume Three, International Biogenic Society, 1961, p 51

In the Judea-Christian tradition, goddesses were not appropriate. Instead Angels were an acceptable alternative. There were six "earthly" angels which brought spiritual qualities to man: Angels of Sun, Water, Air, Earth, Life, and Joy, joined by six "heavenly" angels which brought the power of God the Father to man: Angels of Power, Love, Wisdom, Eternal Life, Work, and Peace.



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## 5. *METANOIA (MIND/SHAPE SHIFTING)*

If one looks up the word *Metanoia*<sup>22</sup> in a modern dictionary, the definition is typically overly simplistic: *beyond the mind*. Unfortunately, the richness and depth of its real meaning has been “flattened” in the English language. More properly it means:

*Shift the “heart of the mind” to a  
higher/transcendent/broader/deeper/clearer  
order of conscious understanding.*

In this Greek sense, *metanoia* sought to move the level of perception from a more mundane experience to “higher truth;” a spiritual understanding where the perceptions of reality embrace the role of God as creator and maker of the highest and deepest truth.

Albert Einstein was well acquainted with *metanoia* (although perhaps not expressly the word itself), and where such high-order thinking could take him when he said:

*Creativity is More Important than Knowledge.  
We Cannot Solve Today's Problems  
with the Same Level of Thinking that Created the Problem.  
God Does Not Play Dice with the Universe*

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<sup>22</sup> The word is made of two parts:

*Meta* = beyond, in the sense of outside the normal realm of perception, shifting to a higher plane, higher than what the birds that fly might see. Modern English words like meta-principles, metamorphosis, metaphysical, etc embrace this notion.

*Nous* = the highest good, beyond normal being, the “first cause.” When one reaches the level of “*nous*,” everything becomes natural, obstacles cease to exist, life opens, and one’s soul and mind marvelously unite – giving access to a transcendent universe of “first source,” or “fundamental truth,” referring with reverence to the deepest meaning of life. It implies the “heart of the mind” which in the ancient context unified one’s intellect with one’s compassion.

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Greeks engaged the heart/spirit/soul<sup>23</sup> connection to ‘see’ beyond, the ‘mind,’ transcending to a higher place referred to as the “the heart of the mind”<sup>24</sup>

As one shifts to a higher view of life, the relinquishing of the old point of view, previous framework, or outdated paradigm is now seen as fallacious, incorrect, or regrettable. We then relate to the world and to others in a fresh, new, rejuvenated way.<sup>25</sup> It’s the “ah ha!” moment as a new perspective is unveiled.

Similarly, metanoia often required “courage,”<sup>26</sup> a word meaning a *heartfelt conviction*, by which the courageous person put their ideals ahead of their fears, or taking the less comfortable path to stand for what’s right, despite the consequences.

By shifting the “heart of the mind” to a higher plane, metanoia became a fundamental learning process through which “discovery” (Latin: to uncover) took place.

Much like Michelangelo, who, after unveiling the Pieta, said he didn’t really carve the statue, but simply revealed that which was already in the stone, so metanoia became not a process invention, but a discovery, an unveiling of that which has been hidden.

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<sup>23</sup> In the ancient writings, the words *repentance* and *forgiveness* are often closely linked to metanoia. While this seems strange to the modern reader today, it must be understood that the word *repent* is a Latin word that obfuscates the original Greek meaning: “to shift or change one’s mind to a higher order of thinking.”<sup>23</sup> When a person had acknowledged this shift in the mind, they had “repented.”

<sup>24</sup> Book of Proverbs: “As a man *thinketh in his heart*, so shall he be.” *Heart of the mind* is more expansive, more powerful, more peaceful, more natural because it operates above and beyond normal experience and expectations – functioning at the level of *divine expectations*.

<sup>25</sup> Forgiveness shifts moribund thinking (anger, hatred, revenge, & vindictiveness) upward, releasing pain and hurt held within. Forgiveness first heals the forgiver. Thus metanoia is a regenerative force.

<sup>26</sup> From Old French: *Coeur* meaning *heart*. In the world of the twenty-first century, the rich Greek meaning of courage is used nearly synonymously with the Latin word “valor,” meaning fearlessness or bravery.

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## 6. *HISTORIA (DEEP INQUIRY<sup>27</sup>)*

Our modern word: *history* is derived from *historia*, but we've "flattened" its meaning. To most of us, history is the chronically of dates and events. But to the ancient Greek, it meant much more. The process of recording history was first begun by the "historian" Herodotus. Thucydides followed him a generation later. His highly disciplined approach always looked for evidence that could be corroborated by others, cause and effect responses, how human behavior responded to stress, and seeking root causes that would not leave fate to some mysterious intervention by "the gods."

There is perhaps no other thinker in the history of the human race that was so filled with deep questions as Socrates, a contemporary of Thucydides. The Socratic dialogues, as recorded by his student, Plato, are among some of the most challenging interactive questionings ever recorded. Using the idea of polarities introduced by Heraclitus, Socrates developed the process of the "dialectic" (*dia* meaning *across*) which pitted one side against the other to bring forth facts and thus reveal the greater truth.

Today, our legal system is founded on this Socratic process -- one side takes the position of the plaintiff, (complainant), the other side becomes the defendant. A judge or jury then decides (Latin *for kill the alternative*) which argument hold the most truth. Modern political debates follow the same basic method of polarities.

Today, however, we leave out a critical aspect of the Greek method. After a dialectic debate, there would be many anomalies, paradoxes, contradictions, and ambiguities revealed. Then metanoia would kick in – a shape shifting of the mind, using the heart of wisdom, to see if they could discover (un-cover) the greater, higher, unified, deeper, simpler truth hidden inside the current complexity.

Today, instead of engaging in the metanoic process, we let the debate continue to polarize, antagonize, and victimize, making

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<sup>27</sup> Other Greek words for inquiry include *Ereivna*: to research, to study. *Meleti* means deep study, pondering, or reflecting.

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debate a game of winners and losers, with winners goading, and losers vowing to get even.

In summary **the six core values** were:

1. *Virtue (Arête)*: the personal commitment to a universal standard excellence, self-improvement (physically, mentally, and emotionally) Those not willing to engage at this level were considered second-rate.
2. *Honorable behavior (Philotimo)*; which was the hallmark of the Stoics, Athenians, Spartans, etc. Respect of others a fundamental tenet of honor.
3. *Wisdom (Sophia)*: integrating: 1) deep understanding and *knowledge*, 2) sensitive empathy and *compassion* for others, and 3) the ability to translate these into intelligent and heartfelt *action* – a readiness to take action on insightful, well-founded beliefs.
4. *Shape-Shifting (Metanoia)*: the process of taking conflict, failure, polarities of thought, dialects, etc. and seeing these in a new, higher, broader, or deeper perspective
5. *Community (Koinonia)*: creating unity in the diversity by joining the energies of people into a whole: a multi-dimensional sense of joint purpose, sharing, marriage, partnership, alliance, and belonging.
6. *Deep Inquiry (Historia)* the incessant quest for knowledge the “inner truth,” the “underlying law,” the “hidden meaning (dis-cover), the “reconciliation of the anomaly,” and the quest for “first cause,” thus seeking the “inner design” or “architecture” of all of life.

By combining a strong amalgam of the six core values, Greeks were able to work collectively, to co-create, co-operate, and generate a revolutionary community that exceeded all other tribal nations of that era, and set a standard of excellence that, in many ways, as never been duplicated.

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## *Ten Enabling Values in Greek Culture*

But to infer that these six core values were sufficient to sustain a culture over the long term would be overly simplistic. We found ten other “enabling” values that were deeply engrained into the culture to nurture the core values.

1. *Ethical Behavior*: Doing the right thing for the right reasons.
2. *Sustaining Relationships*: Friendship, loyalty, and caring were central to having a meaningful life.
3. *Justice*: Fairness and Rational Order became the basis of the of the legal system. :
4. *Trust*: the quality that enabled ideas, commerce, and action to flow so fluidly without unnecessary need to protect one's self-interest (a factor which we will shortly is in very limited supply in Rome)

The first four together create a “community of ethical relationships.” Thus, when under crisis (which was extremely frequent), the community was able to respond rapidly and adroitly.

5. *Ethical Response to Adversity*: Greeks, under adversity, responded with “the Greater Good,” while the Romans responded with “Self Interest” (what's in it for me). The Athenian process of “ostracism” of dishonorable people is a good example of cleansing psychopaths and other untrustworthy people from their community.
6. *Competitive-Cooperative Balance*: While the Greeks were highly competitive in many areas, such as athletics, philosophy, and science, they too were highly collaborative, sharing ideas and wisdom, nature of the universe, nature of human behavior, philosophy of life.
7. *Experimentation & Acceptance of Failure*: Willingness to see the whole of life's experience as a series of learnings from experimenting with new ideas and approaches. Thus there is no such thing as “failure,” just a failure to learn, failure

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to improve, failure to shift and see the world in a new way.

8. *Respect for Intellectuals:* The Greek society did not regard their best thinkers as “egg heads” or “ivy-tower high-brows:” Instead they saw their deep intellectuals as a prize of their culture, who held the future of the civilization in their ability to translate knowledge and wisdom into action.

Underlying these factors, was a very deep set of “spiritual roots” that were highly treasured and reinforced by the culture:

9. *Cherishing Diversity:* In the ancient Greek world, the concept of “Unity in the Diversity” was important. It integrated the origin of life (first cause) ideas of the Pythagorean concept of Harmonies with the Heraclitian concept of Polarities. This meant that the frictional interplay of different cultures and ideas was not to be a cause of conflict, but a primary means of newer, deeper, and higher insights into the cause and meaning of things. Life was not a “battle of supremacy of thought” but an evolving progression of innovative thinking.
10. *Progressive Trajectory:* One hallmark of the Greek Quest for Knowledge & Truth was that it would translate into a continuous stream of improvements and progressions that would lead their civilization on a pathway of getting better day by day, year by year. This led to the belief that the future would be bright, even in the face of adversity, regardless of circumstantial problems or setbacks.

This last value, the power of a progressive trajectory is important enough to explore in a bit more detail. It begins with the quest for inner truth.

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## *The Quest for Truth & Discovery*

The never-ending search for truth, for the Greek, was a quest to discover the divine design of the universe. This was far more than just a search for knowledge, which is often dry and uninspiring. The quest was like a treasure hunt, and the treasure was to gain access to the power that created life itself. And what was uncovered, unearthed, and revealed was simply the next layer of learning used as the foundation to climb higher to the heavens *to understand the mind of god* – to use a phrase of Einstein's.

When investigating this quest, I'd run across descriptions that would be awe inspiring, such as my colleague, Jerry Dell Ehrlich wrote:

*"The Greeks were deeply inquisitive, wanting to know what things in life really were, why they were, how they were, and that it could not be otherwise...."*

*The Greeks themselves knew they were very special among men, not because of race or power, but because of their desire to know and to perfect that portion of the cosmos that was given into their hands by the Craftsman and the Father of the universe. The wisest man cannot turn away from the search, but loves it passionately, and cannot be fulfilled ... compelled to continue the long-held desire ... for wisdom that they might obtain as much is possible through dialogue, education, discovery and all forms of the learning process.*

*It was their quest to improve everything and every thought that they received from others. ... Confident that they could improve and bring perfection ....*<sup>28</sup>

What was it that the Greeks were doing/thinking that got them on this wavelength? Could we have this same vibrancy and vitality in our lives? And just as importantly, why couldn't the Romans capture this same energy?

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<sup>28</sup> Dell Ehrlich, Ibid, p 1-2

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Reflecting on this commentary, it will become clear in the next chapter, that the Romans who followed did not have this sense of discovery and desire, what might be called the *Power of Progression*<sup>29</sup> (except in material things, like building, bridges, and roads), much like a company whose entrepreneurial founder has sold her business to a large corporation, and its source of innovation and excitement has left, leaving the business with stale products and no new ideas on what to do except have flashier advertising and bigger promotions.

We learned what our school teachers had never revealed – that Rome *mimicked* the Greek's creations, but lacked the capacity to *create* the next version, the better solution, the new science, or the deeper understanding that would reveal the inner truth: to step closer with divine inspiration to understand the nature of life itself at a higher level.

But why could the Romans not grasp these insight? They were trained in Athens by Athenians who were descendants of the great masters: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. What was missing? Could we find the missing pieces and gain access to this powerful and passionate energy that propelled Greece's engine of innovation?

Whether working collectively or individually, the best and finest of the ancient Greeks worked for the greater good of the whole – to propel their community forward, to share their understanding with others so that all ships would rise on a rising tide. Thus loftier goals and dreams are more easily manifested in the mind and achieved in reality. Their sense of purpose became manifest.

In the modern world, a concerted (but unknowingly superficial) effort was made in, beginning in the Renaissance, to

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<sup>29</sup> Where are we today with the Power of Progression from a societal perspective? Is there any sense that, as a culture we are on the journey of progression? How about our children? Do they think their lives will be better than their parents? Do the actions of our political leaders demonstrate a decline in our concept of civilization?



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resurrect a some of the symbols and edifices of the ancient Greek culture, along with the teaching of some of their core values and principles. With the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, what was left of the Greek books of learning were reopened after a thousand years of collecting dust, mold, and rot. Their genetic code was examined only as an exoskeleton, without understanding their real DNA buried within the culture in the aftermath of the Roman Empire, which left only a shadow of the evidence. This is how the Greeks could keep a fighting “warrior” spirit without letting fighting, fear, and greed become their social culture or individual personality

The six core values formed the “core” or “kernel” of a society that lifted the world to a new level. Like a seed kernel, the entire plant lies dormant, imbedded in the kernel’s DNA. And, like a seed, it will not germinate and grow without sun, water, and fertile soil. Continuing the analogy, the kernel needs a support system of other values to flower. In the next edition of this study, we will include the “support values.”

With this newly discovered level of understanding, what has been lost or invisibly imbedded in our collective unconscious can now be manifested, replicated, and regenerated. By engendering the Greek values into a family, marriage, team, community, government, or corporation, remarkable results will occur. Our extensive case studies verify this. Our field work confirms this.<sup>30</sup>

Why do the Greek values work? Because they trigger the finest response in the human brain, and bring the four drives of human behavior (see Volume FOUR) into synergistic alignment.

For the first time in over 2000 years we should be able to create synergy on a sustainable and replicable level.

As we unfold the next chapter about the Roman Empire, note how these six core values and ten enabling values are so clearly

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<sup>30</sup> In my experience revitalizing deteriorating communities, the first thing in turning the tide was to create a mission to build a future for the people, a sense of hope to cure the despondency that manifests after suicide of the soul.

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missing in the Roman culture, even though many Roman leaders such as Caesar and Cicero were sent to Athens for their schooling. While many of the Roman leaders learned the Greek system, the Roman culture reinforced antithetical behavior and rewarded material agglomeration.

The trajectory for the future must be propelled not simply with intellectual logic but also with emotional passion – an inner commitment and a powerful belief that a positive future will become a reality. In generating progressive power, each who touches the vision must add something of value – making it better or broader or more universal or more accessible.

The importance of trust is inextricably connected to the *Power of Progression*. With trust, people see that such progress will be inevitable in the struggle to overcome obstacles.

This was the progressive trajectory of civilization – where we were headed, until the next two chapters of humanities fate – the Roman Era and then the Dark Ages -- took things in a very different, despairing direction.

The Romans tried to live life as an illusion, and the longer the illusion was unfulfilled, the more elusive it became, until the dream drifted away, to be replaced with a progression of psychopathic leaders, like Caligula and Nero. These were the “Leaders Without Conscience” who were never removed by the Roman Senate, but allowed to desecrate their societies for their own selfish aims.

Before you go on to the next chapter thinking “Oh how nice, weren’t the Greeks smart!”, think for a moment about how you can imbue these core values into your own personal world – family, friendships, love relationships, teams, or business. Manifesting these values will produce significantly different outcomes than the values held dearly by so many the Romans – power, fear, material wealth – as we will see in the next chapter.

If one might imagine the Greek culture being a mountain, with the most precious gems located in the top of the mountain, the Romans lopped off the top of the mountain because it was

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impractical to access the real heart and soul of the culture. What remained was a flattened mountain where the practical uses of Greek innovation remained. Much like a modern corporation acquires a smaller, more entrepreneurial company, gains access to its current technology, but drives those who are the real source of its innovation away by imposing a lugubrious culture upon the entrepreneurs, so the Romans suppressed Greek innovators.<sup>31</sup>

## *What Kind of Quest?*

The idea of seeing the world, its history and its future, in terms of a “quest” is important. Societies with direction have a “quest.” In America in the 1800s, that quest was named “manifest destiny” to signify our dream for the United States to own the territories from Atlantic to Pacific. The twentieth century American quest seems to have been “to make the world safe for democracy and capitalism.”

The Greek quest could be called a “meta-quest,” seeking something “above and beyond.” The Roman quest was clearly a “conquest,” often also plagued with an accompanying “inquest.”

Over the last three thousand years, although circumstances and opportunities play a part, human intelligence seems to have remained fairly constant. Human society contains the potentiality to produce hope or fear, glory or destruction, life or death. Too often, this fateful decision of destiny -- crossing of the Rubicon as Caesar implied two thousand years ago -- is left too much to chance, by a cast of the dice, rather than by conscious choice and careful consideration of the underlying design that can weigh the dice heavily in our favor.

*Destiny hangs in the balance.*

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<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the only Roman Emperor to recognize the real value of the Greek culture was Marcus Aurelius. However, during his 20 year reign, he was tied up fighting to protect the outer perimeter of the Roman Empire, and was thus unable to enact real reforms to the Roman system of governance.

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### ***The Greek Library in Alexandria***

About 300 BC Alexandria, named after Alexander the Great, had become a magnet attracting scholars, mathematicians, inventors, astronomers, and artists from around the known world. Archimedes formatted the relationships between weights and gases; Callimachus designed a system for cataloguing libraries; Heron built robots, gadgets and the first prototype of a steam engine; Euclid formulated his theories of geometry; Ptolemy mapped the structure of the heavens; Eratosthanes calculated the circumference of the earth; Ctesibius developed water clocks; Diophantus worked out the formulations of algebra; and Zenodotus collected every version of Homer in existence to ensure an accurate and complete version for posterity; and many others labored on research and development, forming a unique community of learning and discovery.

In today's terms, we think of Silicon Valley as a technical center of excellence. After the Roman conquest, Alexandria became a learning center for scientific, social, and spiritual thought, rivaled only by Athens in the second and third centuries BC.

To support these burgeoning academies and intellectual centers, King Ptolemy ordered a great Royal Library to be built. Researchers found documents and made accurate copies from every collection in the Empire. Every ship that entered the harbor had to turn over its knowledge for copying. Translators searched for knowledge in other languages, and translated them into Greek.

Alexandria remained independent, even after Greece fell to Roman rule in the middle of the second century BC. It was not until Mark Antony started a civil war (after Ceasar's assassination in 44 BC) and he had a passionate love affair with Cleopatra (whose Egyptian nation was allied with Rome) that Caesar's son Octavian forcefully invade and conquered Egypt, the last independent stronghold of Greek thinking, learning, and innovation.

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## CHAPTER TWO: THE ROMAN ILLUSION

### *PART ONE: THE ROMAN RISE OF FASCISM*

#### *Rome's Republican Experiment*

Greece had a long history of being attacked. To start with, there was no "Greece," just a handful of city-states – Athens, Sparta, Corinth, among many others – who would occasionally war with each other. As those that would soon call themselves Grecians came to realize the absurdity of their wars, they united in an alliance that became Greece.

But that alliance did not dissuade other nations from trying to steal Grecian wealth. Persia (now Iran) was committed to conquering Greece, sending armies and navies to attack.

Alexander the Great, coached and trained by Aristotle, led the first campaign for world peace by conquering most of the Middle East in an attempt to pacify the warrior world that had plagued Greece with death and destruction.

In 334 BC Alexander invaded Persian-ruled Asia Minor (now Turkey) beginning a decade of conquest over his rival, King Darius. By 325 BC Alexander's forces controlled the entire Persian Empire all the way to the border of India and into Egypt.

In the years following his death in 323 BC, the empire was divided into sectors, which then triggered a series of civil wars as several of Alexander's surviving generals and heirs attempted to reign over the largest empire in the world at that time. But Greece had stretched its reach too far. And, because Rome, to the west, was not considered a threat at the time, Greece had turned its back-side to the growing power of the Romans just to the west.

As the Grecian city-states were beginning to flourish about 500 BC, so did Rome, then ruled by a Monarchy. The Monarchy was overthrown by a revolution that replaced the kingdom with a Republic. For the next several centuries, the Roman government struggled with developing a set of checks and balances that would

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create a political system resulting in fair representation and economic prosperity.

A war machine bound on conquest put enormous economic pressures on the struggling middle and lower classes, as the aristocracy constantly maneuvered for increasing its power and control.

A Constitution was developed to formalize the relationship among the ruling consuls, the senate, and the legislative assemblies. The struggles to create the right system of checks and balances meant the Constitution was always in the state of flux. Surprisingly, the Constitution of the Roman Republic remained an unwritten set of guidelines and principles passed down mainly through precedent. In other words, the codification of the basic law of the land was neither formal nor official. It was largely unwritten, uncoded, constantly evolving, and forever debated.

Not surprisingly, no record of the Constitution seems to exist. There is a Latin expression: *Verba volant, littera scripta manet* – *Words fly away, written letters remain* that captures the ephemeral nature of an unwritten law of the land.<sup>32</sup> Another ancient Greek expression from Aristophanes says it well: *The oath of an evil man should be written on water*. Plato suggested that the indelibility of truth should never be *written on water in black ink*.

It is difficult to imagine an entire country guided by an unwritten constitution. (We have enough problems interpreting our Constitution in the United States.) Not committing the basic laws and rights of the people to written form left the Roman Republic vulnerable to a never-ending set of power struggles.

For the first centuries of the Republic, Rome confined its territorial conquests to the Italian peninsula and Greece looked the other way; it needed to focus attention on managing as best it could the vast lands conquered by Alexander.

However, in 280 BC, Rome had been flexing its muscles, and began to come into conflict with long-standing Grecian colonies on

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<sup>32</sup> Contrast this with the 1215 AD signing of the Magna Carta.

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the Italian peninsula. Meanwhile, most of Rome's attention was aimed at Carthage on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Ultimately Rome disposed of Carthage, but by 200 BC frictions between the Rome and Greece begun to erupt into open conflict, resulting in four separate wars. By 146 BC, Greece was defeated.

The Roman victory had taken its economic toll. Financing centuries of war brought economic depressions, hurting the middle and lower classes. To aggravate matters, Roman generals distributed the plunder from the widespread battle campaigns to their staff, leading to a powerful army loyal not to Roman legislative authority, but to Roman military command.

Centuries of combat and victory gave Rome a vast supply of slave labor drawn from the vanquished. The wealthy class got stronger as it was able to accumulate vast tracts of farmland, which profited enormously from hordes of slave labor.

Slave uprisings became frequent. Between 135 BC and 71 BC alone there were three major uprisings requiring the army to intercede. The last of the uprisings was the most famous and disconcerting, led by Spartacus. Somewhere between 120,000 and 150,000 slaves rebelled. To send a signal of terror, 5,000 were crucified on the road back to Rome.

## ***Military Dictators Kill the Dream of the Republic***

By 107 BC, the Roman general Marius grabbed command of the Republic, installing himself as a fascist dictator with veto power over the Senate. The leaders of the Republic accepted their fate, and from that point onward, a progression of dictators, including Sulla, Crassus, Caesar, and Marc Antony usurped the power of the people. A permanent Fascist Dictatorship replaced the Republic that has replaced the Monarchy.

Soon civil wars became commonplace throughout the Empire. In 91 BC the Civil War erupted between Rome and its former Italian allies who complained they had shared the risk of Rome's military campaigns, but were deprived of their fair share of rewards. In the final century BC at least twelve civil wars and rebellions tore the country apart.

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The response by whatever dictator was in command was not to improve fairness and give power back to the people; just the opposite. Roman military control replaced civil law for the next six hundred years, became the law of the land; a law that was arbitrary, capricious, brutal, and unjust.

By 27 BC any semblance of democratic principles from the old Republic had been replaced by a permanent dictatorship; the person holding that power was euphemistically named “Emperor.” The Roman experiment with freedom, justice, and fair representation was put in a coffin, only to be referred to in history books. (Perhaps a written Constitution and the reverence it attracts might have made a difference.)

From this point onward to its fall, Rome was a prototypical fascist state, ruled by a wide ranging succession of horrible despots like Caligula to an occasional enlightened visionary, Marcus Aurelius being the epitome of enlightenment.

### ***Grandiose Plans, Conquest, Distrust, and Civil War***

Rome had grand plans to be the biggest and most powerful in everything. To fuel this monster, it needed slave power that could only be attained by conquering new territories and enslaving the conquered people. Slave revolts were commonplace. Rome wanted no insurrection and put down the revolts with terror. The Spartacus slave revolt in southern Italy in 70 BC was put down by eight legions of the Roman Army, with the loss of about 70,000 slaves killed in the final battle. The ten percent of the slaves that survived the battle were then crucified, and their crosses evenly spaced along the road from the battlefield all the way back to Rome as a statement to put fear into the hearts of every slave in the entire Empire.

Civil wars had become a common occurrence, almost predictable. Errant generals who commanded large and powerful armies were ambitious and hungry for more and more wealth. Taking over a region nominally under Rome’s control could land them power and money.



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Religious prosecution was also commonplace. Christians, Manicheans and any other religion that was not subservient to Roman authority would be open to prosecution and the practitioners subject to annihilation either by mass execution, or as sport in the gladiatorial arena.

During this time, wealth was sucked out of sacked cities and put into building the majestic city of Rome (which had grown to over a million people), and to pay the ever-needed army legions and naval fleets that were necessary, not just as protectors of the Empire, but as predators who needed more slaves to work the farms, build the roads, and fight the civil wars.

## ***Moral Purification and Fundamentalism***

With Constantine's mandate in 325 AD that Christianity would become the official religion of the Empire came retribution and religious fanaticism. Religious purification swept the Empire. Alexandria was a center of both intellectual and spiritual thought, and thus one target for purification.

Emperor Jovian (363-364 AD), ordered the burning of the Library in Antioch, issued edicts to begin pagan prosecutions, and established the full authority of the Christian Church (while losing key battles as Roman rule was collapsing quickly under pressure internally and externally.) Jovian's successor, Valentinian (364 to 375) began to reclaim lost territory. While he was a Christian, he did permit liberal religious freedom.

After Valentinian, there was no end to the decline. The empire was crumbling at the edges, with battles on every front. Writing sometime after AD 378, Ammianus laments, "the libraries are like tombs, permanently shut." Most likely, as is today, the Empire had run out of money as it sustained such an enormous army to fight internal rebellions and external enemies.

Emperor Theodosius (379-395 AD) made religious intolerance his spiritual mission. One of his first acts was to declare "Catholic Christianity" as the sole legitimate Imperial religion and issued

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Edicts<sup>33</sup> to that formally ending any state support for the traditional Roman pagan traditions. From this point forward, any remaining semblance of deep, *open learning* or *religious tolerance* that had existed in the empire was gone. <sup>34</sup> Any vestiges of Greek culture, thought, or methodology that had hung on for a thread for centuries, was being extinguished, not to rise for another millennia.

At the same time, civil wars, barbarian invasions and other hostilities mounted.

Two decades later, Rome fell to the Visigoths and a Dark Age was about to begin.

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<sup>33</sup> From Wikipedia: "Edict of Thessalonica" all their subjects should profess the faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria (i.e., the Nicene faith).

<sup>34</sup> In 391 AD, to wipe out any vestige of paganism (including Christian Gnosticism), Emperor Theodosius officially gave his order to Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria to destroy any rival Christian religions (Arians, Gnostics, etc.) in the region, as well as much of the contents of Public Library. How much was actually lost is not know, but some authors believe it might be as high as 500,000 scrolls.<sup>34</sup> He is recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Church as Saint Theodosius.

From Wikipedia: Between 389-391 he emanated the infamous "Theodosian decrees," which established a practical ban on paganism; visits to the temples were forbidden, and remaining pagan holidays were abolished.

From this moment till the end of his reign in 395, while pagans remained outspoken in their demands for toleration, he authorized or participated in the destruction of many temples, holy sites, images and objects of piety throughout the empire participated in actions by Christians against major pagan sites. He issued a comprehensive law that prohibited any pagan ritual even within the privacy of one's home. He is likely to have suppressed the Ancient Olympic Games, whose last record of celebration is from 393.

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## ***PART TWO: DESTRUCTIVE LESSONS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE***

The initial purpose of this analysis of the differences between the Greeks and the Romans started off trying to understand why Rome, with all its power and might and educated elite, could not sustain the level of innovation of its Greek predecessors. An additional part of that puzzle is to understand why the Roman Empire ended in a death-spiral of the Dark Ages.

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### ***A Very Personal Note by the Author***

During this journey into the lessons of the ancients, I have personally spent a considerable amount of time and energy studying both Greek and Roman history in search of the answers to the interrelated questions of ancient innovation and synergy.

As an author, researcher, innovation practitioner, architect of strategic alliances, and long-time dedicated amateur historian, I cannot help become passionately engaged in my study, often to the near total exclusion of one's normal daily realities (In sports, it's called "being in the zone.") Comparing my experience in the Greek "zone" versus the Roman "zone" was like comparing heaven and hell.

Emotionally, studying the Greek approach to innovation, and life itself, while enormously challenging, was extremely inspiring. The breakthroughs we found while engaged in "process archeology" were personally enlightening and vastly applicable to today's innovation processes. In the intervening five years since "cracking the code" of the Greek system of innovation, we were able to test many of those processes in the unforgiving crucible of action in corporate and government environments, and, much to our joy, produce results similar to what happened in ancient Greece.

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On the other side of the coin, digging under the covers in the Roman Empire produced exactly the opposite result. Every day felt depressing as I vicariously relived what seemed to be an abjectly dysfunctional, if not psychopathic, dynasty of bullies and tyrants whose ossified range of motion was limited to fear and terror. The constant repetition of assassinations, revolts, repressions, and civil wars is mind-boggling.

Roman era history can be best described as tumbling from one turmoil to the next; its legacy is of what *not* to do in a society. (Unlike Greece which gives us many lessons of *what to do*, along with learnings about experiments that, while failing, create the springboard for a new evolution of thinking.)

While there were some sparks of brilliance, notably Marcus Aurelius (d. 180 AD), and a few others, for the most part there would be a very limited number of leaders of the Roman era from whom we might garner positive leadership lessons. The century-after-century failure of leadership preeminence is so awful that one author could find nothing about Romans leadership to write about, and instead turned his lessons to “*the Leadership Lessons of Attila the Hun,*” the nemesis of the inept Roman Emperors.

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## ***What Went Wrong?***

Where did Rome go wrong? Scholars have debated this issue ever since Gibbon wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 1776.

Here’s what I sensed from doing the research on Rome:

### ***1. Overdose of Fear***

By consistently exercising raw, brutal fear, all too many Roman Emperors conducted a five hundred year reign-of-terror on their people. This psychopathic behavior was destructive and self-aggrandizing, without compassion or vision.

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Such repeated destructiveness, hammered into the Roman psyche over a number of centuries, like a soldier exposed to too much war, left people shell shocked – stressed out – unable to put any perspective on life. This triggered hedonistic behavior, because sensual pleasures were needed to override the overdose of constant stress.

Fear, not vision or fairness, ruled the land. With fear came intolerance of anything that did not bear the Emperor's stamp of approval. With intolerance came the squelching of dissent and diversity. With no differentials in thinking, the culture suffered from inward thinking and no one who thought differently from the accepted norm would be tolerated. New thought becomes heretical, and heresy is a crime punishable by death.

Rulers held a warped view of human motivation, believing that fear and greed was the only way to evoke favorable responses. This in spite of compelling evidence from both the older Greek and newly emerging Christian culture that fear and greed were not the best or only way of getting people to pay attention.

## ***2. Distrust***

Centuries of betrayal, deceit, assassination, conniving, and terror, with no focus on fairness, integrity, honor, or truth, left a society that trusted neither its leaders, nor its institutions, nor itself.

Distrust led to depression, demoralization, and disillusionment, with no commitment to others or to the future. No one trusted their

- leaders (who were dictators),
- government (the Senate was impotent and the bureaucrats bumbling),
- relationships (based on fear and greed)
- future (which lacked vision and could only see more revolts and civil wars).

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Romans simply could not trust their leaders to do what was in the best interest (greater good) of the nation; one could count on leaders doing what was in their personal self-interest, which created a dog-eat-dog world.

With no ethical boundaries, corruption would run rampant, making trust even more difficult to sustain.

### ***3. Neglect & Failure to Learn***

Neglecting the real needs of its people caused people to lack commitment to the nation that had alienated them.

When the barbarian hordes bombarded the gates of Rome, self-interested, self-protectionary behavior prevented the citizens of Rome from bonding together in the greater good of the society and risking their lives for a future they could no longer believe in.

Particularly in the first centuries of the Empire the Romans learned the Greek language and studied the Greek philosophers. But they “learned the words, not the music.” The deepest secrets the Greeks discovered, such as those by Plato and Aristotle were never translated into Roman action. For example, Aristotle’s Nichomedian Ethics were never embodied into Roman law, nor were Plato’s ideas of justice incorporated into Roman jurisprudence in a meaningful way.

Much of the wisdom and knowledge of the world at the time was still located in the academies of Athens and the Great Library in Alexandria.

Instead of spreading knowledge and evolving wisdom, the Romans focused more on building things bigger and more impressive. Closing the Library of Alexandria is a perfect example of the lack of appreciation of learning and its role in evolving a civilization. Insights into the nature and possibilities of humanity are forever lost, and perhaps, as Robert Frost ruefully lamented in his poem, *The Road Not Taken*, as the roads of destiny diverge, and ‘as way leads onto to way,’ it’s difficult, perhaps doubtful, that we should ever come back to that pathway of wisdom.

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## ***4. Civil War***

Unlike the American experience -- where our *first* civil war was actually the Revolutionary War -- which set the stage for a major reform of the essential processes of governance and justice, all of Rome's civil wars are won by the established power, and yielded no reforms, no renewal, no justice, no new vision.

Once the Roman civil war was over, because of the lack of purpose or ideal on the part of the dictator, there could be no healing, and no new system of governance, just retribution and revenge, setting the stage for the next civil war.

Roman methods for resolving problems were inevitably combative (such as *proscription*<sup>35</sup>), rather than persuasive, or enlightened, resulting in death to the vanquished.

Emperors were military commanders, which had some very terrible consequences, the worst of which was the propensity of generals to wage war upon Rome itself if a general decided he wanted great wealth and power. This created a survival of the fittest mentality that attracted psychopaths to positions of power and control, leading to a long progression of leadership by psychopaths which, in turn, kept Rome in a perpetual cycle of civil war, which eventually drained the human spirit from the people, and stripped Rome of its energy and best leaders.

## ***5. Failure to Innovate its Social Institutions***

Successful societies are constantly evolving their social institutions - methods of governance, justice, education, religion, and community - to find new solutions to their social institutions and methods of governance, led to a collapse by stress and distrust.

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<sup>35</sup> Proscription was the accepted process of the Dictator annihilating all supporters of his opposition and taking their property, wealth as his personal possessions. Many Dictators amassed great wealth this way.

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Lack of innovation in the social, economic, and political structure, in particular the latter with no experimentation on governmental improvement, left a bloated bureaucracy to confound, not serve, its people.

Life was unfair, and unjust. There was no system of justice whenever proscription was used by pathological Emperors who simply put out a contract on one's life and absconded with one's property, leaving one broke or dead, without recourse. The logic and fairness equation of "hard work = success," which forms the basis of any meritocracy was not part of the Roman code. Neither was the minimum required for prosperity: a reasonable code or system of ethical behavior that drew the moral and immoral behavior that applied universally to everyone.

Christianity offered a great promise for justice, fairness, and a kinder form of rule. Instead the Christian prelates sold out their parishioners. The Roman Bishops, instead of pressing for social reform, chose to become the power-elite.

The Church modeled itself after the hierarchies of the Roman Legions, choosing a hierarchical, command & control organizational structure that was used universally in the Roman government and military. This Judas-like betrayal of Christ's desire that the meek may inherit the earth ultimately led to the Church becoming restrictive, unresponsive, inflexible, and top-heavy.

Ultimately Roman society devolved into a win-lose, winner-take-all, caste-based, immobile society made up of patricians, plebeians, and slaves, with no mutual interests.

Sadly and surprisingly, little seemed to be done by anyone to solve the problem, despite the resources available to a once-great empire.

By the end of the 4th century, the Roman Empire was in a death spiral politically and intellectually as its energies were directed toward defense of the faith, self-aggrandizement by a series of Popes who seemed less interested in the spiritual teaching of Christ and more interested in emulating the grandeur of the



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deposed dictatorial Roman despot, or Bishops less interesting in learned minds but dedicated to cleansing their regencies of heretics under the guise of a heavenly religious fanaticism. Authority Kenneth Clark, who studied this period of time from a cultural perspective stated:

*St. Gregory himself is credited with having destroyed many volumes of classical literature, even whole libraries, lest they seduced men's minds away from the study of holy writ. And in this he was certainly not alone. What with prejudice and destruction, it's surprising that the literature of pre-Christian antiquity was preserved at all. And in fact it only just squeaked through.*<sup>36</sup>

## ***Fundamentalism and the Fall of Order***

Either way, the Roman Empire's *will to live* had expired long before its final demise, running strictly on the momentum left from the inertial energy of its once glorious past; its commitment and conviction riddled by greed and self-doubt, poised to be overrun by tough but unenlightened barbarians.

In a world of turmoil and a sea of troubles, what was left of the ancient Greek was left to be preserved by Irish monks who spirited the fragmented remains away to the remote safe haven of St. Patrick,<sup>37</sup> or to the struggling remains of the Empire at Constantinople.

The final chapter in the saga of tragedies was to happen with the fall of the Roman Empire – when libraries and learning became a thing of the past, and destroyed by barbarians and neglect. We then lost so much that will never be retrieved. The secrets of innovative thinking were not just lost to the Dark Ages, we lost one of the basic foundations of what distinguishes us from other animals -- learning, especially higher learning. Thomas Cahill, who explored this frightening period of time in his masterful work *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, writes:

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<sup>36</sup>Clark, Kenneth, *Civilization*, Harper Row, 1974, p 17

<sup>37</sup> See Cahill, Thomas; *Ibid*

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*All the great continental libraries had vanished; even memory of them had been erased from the minds of those who lived in the emerging feudal societies of medieval Europe. The first three public libraries had been established in Rome under the reign of Augustus [25 BC-14 AD], and by the time of Constantine [326 AD] there were twenty eight.*

*By the end of the fourth century, if we are to believe one writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, who may be indulging in hyperbole, "The Libraries, like tombs, are closed forever."<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of the fifth century, no one could foresee the coming collapse.*

*By the end of the fifth century, at any rate, the profession of copyist had pretty much disappeared, and what books were copied were copied personally by the last literate nobles for their own dwindling libraries.....*

*Gregory of Tours wrote this sad epitaph on sixth century literacy: "In these times when the practice of letters declines, no, rather perishes in the cities of Gaul, there has been found no scholar trained in ordered composition to present in prose or verse a picture of the things which have befallen."<sup>39</sup>*

Despite second century AD efforts to transform Greek values into a Christian context, by the end of the fourth century, rigid militaristic thinking prevailed within the Church; by the late fifth century the Roman Empire was in cataclysmic decline. In a misguided last-ditch effort to save the fast-failing Empire, control-obsessed fanatical fundamentalists tried to impose a regime of mindlessness on the realm, while simultaneously the Empire's perimeter was punctuated with tribal incursions of Barbarians. Spiritual Christianity succumbed to the regimented dogma of the hard-line prelates who modeled themselves after their military commanders and psychopathic dictators.

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<sup>38</sup> "Bibliotecis sepulcrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis"

<sup>39</sup> Cahill, Thomas; *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, Anchor Books, 1995, pp 4, 181-183

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Lost were what was left of the traditions, culture, and practices of the ancient Greeks, buried in the dearth of inspiration by the arduous death-march of the Dark Ages.

Rome, whose population was over a million people during its heyday, could barely support 30,000. By the middle of the eighth century, a gruesome darkness had befallen the Western world, one that would last five hundred years – longer than the period the Greeks had to light the spirit of possibility. The Dark Ages, as we would later call this time, was named such because hope for the future had been extinguished. Cultural historian Kenneth Clark writes that during this dreary hole in time:

*It's a shock to realize that during all this time practically no lay person, from kings and emperors downwards could read or write. Charlemagne learnt to read, but he never could write.* <sup>40</sup>

Thus simple expression of one's thoughts could only be communicated verbally, and never recorded for the next generation to know and understand and to build upon.

*Verba volant, scripta manent – Words fly away, writing remains (except when despots and fundamentalists are fearful and intentionally destroy the writings)*

## ***The Unfulfilled Promise***

The promise that was Greece had been transmuted into the Roman context – the symbols of Greece remained, but the soul of Greece had been pillaged. The vestiges of the old culture still held on in Athens and Alexandria, but even these were surrounded by a sea of despair.

Reading through the tremendous volume of learned works of the Romans<sup>41</sup> one is taken by the failure of the Roman scholars, (all of whom studied, spoke, and cherished the Greek,) to imbibe their

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<sup>40</sup>Clark, Kenneth, *Civilization*, Ibid, p 17

<sup>41</sup> see Varro or Livy as examples

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learning into the political culture of the times, nor to turn their learning of science into innovative application.

Yes, the Roman engineers made improvements in construction, exceeding those of their Greek counterparts, but these were only improvements, not breakthroughs in thinking. With the exception of the invention of concrete, there are hardly any new inventions from the Romans over their seven hundred year reign. There were Roman era thought leaders, but virtually all were Greek: Galen, Ptolemy, Plutarch, and Marcus Aurelius, who emulated the Greeks.

One cannot help to draw certain hypothesis as to why the Greek educated Romans failed to fulfill a higher promise:

- Political Turmoil
- Political Oppression
- Lack of Commitment
- Learning for learning sake
- Tremendous Fear and Instability<sup>42</sup>

The innovations in all areas -- science, mathematics, the arts, language, philosophy, and architecture -- diminished and then dried up. Greek *knowledge* was taught in the Roman educational system, but the *drive, commitment, spirit, and vision* failed to transfer over.

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<sup>42</sup> There is an important difference between personal insecurity and institutional instability. Often the most prolific innovators, writers, and entrepreneurs come from a place of personal insecurity that motivates them to achieve, to create to “prove” to themselves and to the world they are worthy. [I must admit I belong to that group]. The feeling one is “#2” is often a spur to innovation, a proverbial kick in the pants. Romans always seemed to feel intellectually insecure in the face of the Greeks, but in this case it does not spur innovation. Why? Because, as I described in Volume Four, too much stress from fear and institutional instability actually shuts down the ability of the brain to create and work together with others, key foundations of innovation.

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The Romans seemed to see a great nation in terms of the *strength and reach of its authority, not by the vision and vitality of the dream of a new, better, and more energizing future.*

Mastering the interplay of harmonies and polarities is an essential skill in the creation of synergies.<sup>43</sup> The Romans in their art were able to create harmonies with their Greek predecessors, but not the unique synergies. Unlike the Greeks who had begun to master harmonies and polarities in their art, geometry, and philosophy, Romans understood the harmonies but were puzzled by the interplay of polarities. The Greek concept of *Unity in Diversity* translated into the Latin culture as a more degenerated form, something akin to *Unity of Authority*.

The Greek experiments with both democratic and republican rule had their rocky spots – the formulations had to be worked out with greater exactness. The Romans thought they could make improvements on the Greek model with their form of Republic. But the ideal of Republican representation, rather than evolving, was a constant power struggle. One can only look at the vast expanse of time from the demise of the Roman Republic about 100 BC

The Romans mastered the illusion of power, believing power was one's ability to command and control people. Ultimately the illusion was no more than delusion.

*Power is the ability to uplift and inspire people,  
to enable them to fulfill their inner greatness,  
to achieve great heights as a team --  
levels they never believed they could achieve alone.*

The momentum of Athenian free thought and innovation did not die immediately with the Roman conquest but continued on inertial energy for another three hundred years. True, the center of effort shifted from Athens to Alexandria, and the record shows that there was still a great deal of innovative and artistic output from Alexandria, but by 200 AD, several hundred years of Roman

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<sup>43</sup> See Volume Two: Dynamic Differential Energy

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rule, the Greek influence on Rome had definitely waned, drained by oppression and opulence.

When was the turning point where the tide of possibility permanently shifted? I would say the period of turbulent civil wars between 50-27 BC to be as precise as possible. This is when the Roman experiment turned deadly, resulting in the deaths of many great leaders, military and intellectuals. The assassinations of Caesar and eradication of Cicero,<sup>44</sup> (who cried out eloquently for justice, honor, rule of law, and the democratic value of republican rule) are just two of the thousands who met their demise, leading up to and during these wars.<sup>45</sup>

But the end of the Civil War period (there were five of them in less than twenty five years), under the iron hand of Octavian-Augustus, marked the end of the dream of the Republic. To his credit, Octavian's iron fist did usher in a century of relative peace – *Pax Romana* – but with was at a heavy cost, and without visionary reforms that Polybius, the political historian of the era, would have

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<sup>44</sup> Cicero, for his valiant efforts to stand for his ideals and act as peacemaker and compromiser, was shot by both sides – by Antony who ordered his execution, and by Brutus and Cassius, who, with their pardon negotiated by Cicero, betrayed him and his values by forming an army to attack Rome and wield power through military might, not civilian justice of the people vested in the Senate.

<sup>45</sup> The practice of each new ruler or ruling Triumvirate practicing “proscription” – a euphemistic word for “eradication” of one's enemies was the normal, accepted practice. One was “proscribed” simply if they were both a vocal leader and chose the wrong side in an upcoming power struggle. Proscription could be compared to the colonial pirate practice of being given the “black spot” (recall *Treasure Island*) or the more modern Mafia practice of making someone a “marked man” targeted to be “rubbed out.” (It's no wonder the Founding Fathers carefully studied the failure of the Roman Republic.) No action of the Roman Senate seemed to intervene to place any system of checks and balances into the process. In reality, there were No Boundaries too despicable to transgress. This mean there could be No Justice, No Fairness, No Trust. In the end, the Rule of Raw Power consistently trumped the Rule of Reason and Justice in the Roman world.

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supported because checks and balances kept “absolute power from corrupting absolutely,” as Victorian Lord Acton was later to say.

Why did the remnants of the Roman Senate not put a system of checks and balances in place? The clue may have had to do with their handling of polarities, innovation, and freedom of expression. With too much fear of betrayal, no solution would be acceptable to a Senate or a Consul or a Magistrate or anyone else, because everyone feared any deal would end in their personal demise.

The intellectual elite (such as Cicero, Varro, and Pomponius) during the violent and tumultuous period of the Civil War were all educated in Athens. Figuratively speaking, they obviously “got the words, but not the music.”

Why? The answer is a bit of a puzzle. The highly respected intellectual, scholar, and prolific author, Varro, was responsible for building the basis of the Latin language. However, as anyone who has ever studied the structure of the Greek and Latin languages, even at a distance, knows that the level of sophistication of the word structure and the nuances of the Greek far exceed the Latin.

For example, take three words that play a central role in the Greek intellectual and innovation culture: *Philotimo* (the Love of Honor), *Metanoia* (Shift the Heart of the Mind to a Higher Level), and *Harmatia* (to Miss the Mark). None of these words migrate successfully into Latin; the first is just “honor” (the passionate “love” component has been dropped); the second was transformed into “repentance” which implies a guilt trip and loses the visionary transcendent component, and the last is “sin” which again lacks any transcendent or redemptive quality intended in the Greek.

Rome’s failure to create a language as transcendent as the Greek continually limited the Latin mind in a multitude of affairs. Latin as a language could and should have been aimed on a trajectory for it to be the universal language of the world for centuries to come, if not eternity. In fact, through the Catholic Church, it almost did. But somehow it got stuck.

It is in word structure that our mind conceptualizes for communication. Words express ideas and ideals. As a modern

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example, modern linguists in the 1980s learned that the Russian language was devoid in certain words, like “cooperation.” The lack of a word to express this ideal construct of humans interacting in alignment for the greater good was severely limiting the Russian mind from understanding the value of nuclear disarmament. Linguists then dug deep into the Russian language, hauling out a then archaic word from the linguistic repertoire: “perestroika” which meant a team of horses pulling together (much like the English word “teamwork” or the Greek words “synergy” (joined energy) or “zyzygy” (yoked together). Linguists then began to create or emphasize new words such as “glasnost” (openness) to anchor more the collaborative constructs into the Russian mind.

In affairs of governance, the hallmark of excellence of any political process and adroit politician is to move forward in the face of opposition without the opposition feeling it was bulldozed or manipulated unfairly. Mastering simple skills of persuasion, settling differences amicably, and mobilizing support across diverse interests is an art practiced by all who hold public office. However, despite the eloquent oratory skills of many of those who served in office (and were highly trained in rhetoric), antagonism in the Roman Senate was gruesome and often deadly. This was further fueled by a military that seemingly had little or no respect for the civil government. Resolution of conflicting ideas in Rome, unlike Greece, seemed always to have foul behavior attached. Betrayal, manipulation, and deceit were expected behavior. When Caesar was assassinated, apparently more than 60 members of the Senate were engaged in the conspiracy.

Disagreements quickly escalated into open bloodshed, such as the one pitting Marc Antony and Octavian. Roman leaders were unlikely to settle their disputes in the best interests of the Roman people; the deciding factor always weighed in favor of self-interest, personal aggrandizement, and power, which sacrificed the lives of thousands as the disagreements erupted into civil war. The ultimate demise of Rome was one of betrayal and self-centered greed founded in fear.



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## *Failure to Build on the Shoulders of Giants*

I am continually compelled to harken back to one of the essential questions: "Why did the Roman culture not continue to carry the Greek culture to a new level?" After all, the Roman intellectual elite, such as Cicero, were all schooled in Athens. Greek was the language of all the ruling class in Rome. We know that even the military commanders spoke Greek fluently. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon and when he was stabbed by Brutus, his words were uttered in Greek, not Latin.

An insightful answer to this question is essential to our fundamental quest to understand how to propel the lead "cultural arrows" of social and scientific progress.

One dimension that is remarkably missing in the Roman era is a dynamic relationship between mentor and student. Here's a good example: Plato was Socrates' student, the person who actually transcribed Socrates' lectures and interchanges, keeping Socrates' wisdom for posterity. Plato took Socrates to a new level by adding phenomenal new insights to the foundation laid by his mentor. Similarly, Aristotle was Plato's student. While Aristotle clearly built upon the shoulders of the giants Socrates and Plato, Aristotle none-the-less *challenged his mentors at every intellectual crossroads*, building on them, but taking a different path if he felt the evidence justified it.

Today we refer to this process as "building on the shoulders of giants." We find this linkage to the next level of thinking is broken during the Roman era (although clearly Greeks of the era continued the tradition). Because there are no thought leaders, there are none who take those thoughts to a new level.

For example, Epictetus was a Greek Stoic teacher of the Roman era, born in the middle of the first century AD. He was a slave, beaten and maimed by his master. When Emperor Domitian banished all philosophers from the Italian peninsula in 90 AD, Epictetus fled to Asian Minor to continue his teaching. He left nothing in writing. His student Arrain, in the tradition of Plato, continued the chain of progression by meticulously recording his

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master's lectures and conversations, now known as the "Golden Sayings."<sup>46</sup> Marcus Aurelius, the finest of the Roman Emperors, attempted to reinvigorate the uninspired Roman system with an injection of Greek wisdom. Studying under Stoic teachers just after Epictetus' death, Aurelius wrote his famous "Meditations" (which are probably far more popular today than in his times). Classic authority George Long commented on Aurelius:

*The Meditations, which Aurelius wrote in Greek, are among the most noteworthy expressions of the Stoic system of thinking, and exhibit it favorably on its practical side.*

*His own precepts he carried out with singular consistency; and both in his public and private life he was in the highest degree of conscientious. He and his predecessor are noted as the only Roman emperors who can be said to have ruled with a single eye to the welfare of their subjects.<sup>47</sup>*

Unfortunately, the progressive linkage between Epictetus, Arrain, and Aurelius was broken upon the latter's death in 180 AD, and the Empire quickly fell back onto the road of perdition with the next Emperor.

The Romans venerated and emulated the Greeks, but failed to surpass them. How pathetic the minds that venerated the Greek thinkers without understanding their nature: which was to push incessantly to new levels, challenging every premise, every theory, every precept to discover higher truths.

For example, over the next fifteen hundred period following the Greek Golden Age, few if any scholars challenged Aristotle's scientific proclamations, (quite a few were proven wrong). From

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<sup>46</sup> *The Golden Sayings of Epictetus*; Translated by Hastings Crossley; Harvard Classics, Collier & Sons, 1909, p 116. Crossley states: The points upon which Epictetus laid chief stress were the *importance of cultivating complete independence of external circumstances, the realization that man must find happiness within himself, and the duty of revering the voice of Reason in the soul.*

<sup>47</sup> Long, George; Introductory Note to *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, Harvard Classics, Ibid, p 192

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the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC until the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD, the great Greek names in science -- Aristotle, Hippocrates, Euclid, Pythagoras – went virtually unchallenged, accepted as demagogues. Not until Copernicus (who studied the Greeks) in the 1500s, and Newton and Bacon in the 1600s do we see the next set of breakthroughs in mathematical and scientific thinking.

What monumental force stopped this inner Greek hunger and compelling search for truth?

It would be easy to blame the Roman Catholic Church of the fourth century for effectively put a halt to this spiritual evolution by making only one mono-syllabic style of thinking acceptable, like having only one musical instrument that could play only one note – not much for making a symphony. The Greek system of thinking and seeking perfection was narrowly harnessed based *not on inclusion but exclusion*. Diversity of Christian thinking was condemned, hence the need to wipe out the Gnostics and Marcions and any others who did not toe the strict doctrinaire line.

But wait! This conclusion, while correct, is incomplete and not fully adequate to explain the realities of stalled innovation in the Roman era. While it is true that the Romans became master road and bridge builders – the very practical elements of technology – there were no real breakthroughs in the sciences or the art that would compare with the Greeks. The Roman Empire had five hundred years before the rise in power of the Church to use its massive wealth to build an innovation engine that would rival the Greeks.

But it failed. Why? .

## ***The Invisible Force that Killed Roman Innovation***

The mysterious force that stopped innovation from materializing was invisible and enormously powerful. No, this invisible force was not a microbial germ or lead in the water pipes (those did cause problems but they didn't stop innovation).

This deadly force? Distrust. How?

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The nature of people to question, to challenge, to debate, to propose something new is severely squelched in an atmosphere of distrust. The risk of having one's integrity challenged, of being falsely accused of a transgression that never happened, or being accused of a heresy against the divine makes innovation extremely difficult because innovation carries the burden of death or assassination of one's character, position, and security.

It wasn't for two thousand years, until the Age of Enlightenment that followed the Renaissance that people had that security to challenge without severe repercussions. Just look to Galileo, a contemporary of Newton. In the 1630's Galileo was accused of heresy by the Catholic Church simply for validating the heliocentricity of the solar system proposed by Copernicus.

Galileo spoke the truth, but for it, he was convicted of heresy against God and locked up under house arrest for the remainder of his life. Had he not been so famous he would have been executed for the crime of seeking the truth. The truth did not set him free in a world of fear, rigid thinking, and repression. In an atmosphere of manic, prosecutorial, dysphoric distrust, innovation will be stillborn, or even worse, never conceived.

How true is this assertion that *distrust kills innovation*? Let's put this assertion through a trust paradigm to see how well the Greeks fare vis-a-vis the Romans:

First, we will use the classical "FARTHEST" framework to judge both cultures:

1. **F**airness & Justice
2. **A**ccountability & Integrity
3. **R**espect & Honor
4. **T**ruth & Honesty
5. **H**onorable Purpose
6. **E**xcellence & Virtue
7. **S**afety & Security
8. **T**ransparency & Openness

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We don't need a protracted analysis to draw some very clear and distinct conclusions. The Greek culture was one where there was a high degree of trust among its citizens, scientists, scholars, artists, and merchants on all eight of the FARTHEST parameters.

For example, anyone in Athens who was not honorable or trustworthy would be ostracized. This was a process by which the citizens voted and one was kicked out of town if they voted unfavorably by throwing the "ostrakon," a large coin that signified disfavor. It was a quick way of ensuring the highest standards of trustworthy behavior.

Compare this to the despicable Roman practice of "proscription" which allowed a ruler to issue a writ of execution without a trial and then abscond with the proscribed person's wealth.

**CHAPTER THREE:  
MORDRED & MACHIAVELLI**

***THE MORDRED FACTOR***

Much of this set of books sprang from my quest to find the roots and source code for synergy and trust, which are deeply imbedded in our collective human psyche.

But to understand synergy and trust, one must understand its polar opposite, just as to understand light one has to understand dark; to understand wealth one must understand poverty; to understand love one must understand hate.

If the opposite of trust is distrust, what type of distrust epitomizes the deepest distrust? When I asked this question of many people; the deepest distrust was consistently: *betrayal*. Its roots are ingrained in our historic literature, where bonding to create trust and synergy is so often broken by an equally forceful betrayal.

Interestingly enough, the opposite of synergy is not individual aggrandizement - that is just the result. Synergy's opposite actually is *Betrayal*, which then results in separation, disillusionment, isolation, and often worse: anger, revenge and vindictiveness.

Our civilization's written history is replete with the Quest for Synergy and the Terror of Betrayal.

***Judeo-Christian Roots of Betrayal***

The Old Testament tells of the trust and synergy between God, Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden. But an evil force, namely the devil, interceded to break the synergistic bond.

This force for self interest, rather than the force for the greater good, became our first documented betrayal, forcing Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden.

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The next story of betrayal is of two brothers: Cain and Able. Cain, rather than bond with his brother and try to re-bond with God and reenter the Garden of Eden, takes betrayal another step farther, slaying his brother for his own self interest. With so few people on the earth, he chooses to take it all for himself rather than create more together.

Later in the Old Testament, Abraham is called upon to sacrifice his only son for God to show his faith. It is a horrible choice, but God does not fail the synergy test and keeps Abraham's bond with God and son by lifting their sacrificial burden. Later Abraham betrays the King of Egypt by telling him that his wife, Sarah, is his sister, and the King, unknowingly betrayed, illegitimately marries Sarah. Years later when the King learns of the betrayal, he becomes (with good reason) quite angry, and God reigns a plague upon all of Egypt as a consequence.<sup>48</sup>

Abraham's brother Lot, to protect the angels sent as messengers to forewarn of God's impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, betrays his two daughters, sacrificing their virginity to the guards outside his house. As the family makes its escape, Lot's wife Ruth is turned into a pillar of salt as punishment for her betrayal of her oath to God not to look backwards toward the city being leveled to ruins. Now alone and hiding in a cave to elude detection, Lot is lured into a seduction by each of his two daughters on successive nights in the cave.<sup>49</sup>

While covering only a few years in the adult life of Christ, the stories of the New Testament are filled with trust (faith), synergy and betrayal. For Christ, the ultimate form of synergy was first to *love God with thy whole heart, thy whole mind, and thy whole soul*, and then to *love thy neighbor as thy self*. Christ's antidote for disconnectedness was forgiveness, not more punishment: *Judge and*

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<sup>48</sup> With strange justice, God takes out his wrath on the Pharaoh, not Abraham, who was the culprit. The God of the Old Testament is not generally prone to forgiveness, which is a New Testament idea.

<sup>49</sup> God doesn't seem to have a problem with this behavior!

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*ye shall be judged, condemn and ye shall be condemned, forgive and ye shall be forgiven.*

However, Christ, in his Quest for Synergy as symbolized by his unity with God, was perpetually being stalked by betrayal. His own church leaders, as well as the Pharisees and Rabbis were masterminding a series of manipulative tricks and traps, attempting to lure him into making statements that would condemn him as a heretic. He eluded these maneuvers, but was ultimately betrayed by one of his own disciples, Judas, which led to the decisive price for betrayal: death by crucifixion.

### ***Betrayal in Greek Literature and Culture***

The themes of betrayal are deeply imbedded in the Greek writings of Euripides, Homer (Scylla & Charibdys), (Abduction of Helen of Troy), and Aesop, among many others.

Socrates, who had practiced the synergy principles so carefully, had bonded closely in a big brother-little brother relationship with his students. This closeness between master and student could not be understood by outsiders. Threatened by their intimate intellectual sense of internal community, some Athenians accused Socrates of having an intimate homosexual relationship with his students.

The accusation alone was the most horrific of betrayals, because the nature of the accusation meant interminable defenses and lingering innuendo, regardless of the outcome of any trial.

Socrates commented that his accusers have spoken such persuasive words; they almost made him forget who he was, although not a word was the truth. Rather than suffer such degradation of character, he chose hemlock (poison), death being a better alternative than living dishonorably.

Archimedes, the great mathematician and inventor, lived at the time just as Roman conquerors were invading their Grecian neighbors. Knowing of his great capabilities, a Roman general ordered his troops to find Archimedes and bring him to headquarters, where he might be a valuable asset in inventing war



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machines. When a soldier found him, Archimedes told the soldier to get lost; Archimedes was too busy trying to solve a mathematics problem. Angered by this disobedience to an order, the soldier lopped off Archimedes' head and brought his dead body to headquarters.

## ***Medieval Betrayals***

Despite the onslaught of despair during the Dark and Middle ages, it did not mark the death of the synergy quest. The search for the Holy Grail and the codes of chivalry were all stories or allegories of the quest for synergy, and, true to form, these were accompanied by tales of betrayal and intrigue.

Perhaps no story imbedded in our collective psyche could be as compelling as the medieval legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. As the legend has evolved, it may be the ultimate story of the Quest for Synergy and the Tragedy of Betrayal.

Originally written by Sir Thomas Mallory over a twenty year period from 1450 to 1470 as *Le Morte d'Arthur*, (The Death of Arthur), nearly 600 years after the presumed Arthur lived, the legend portrays King Arthur as the man with the vision for a Round Table of honorable and chivalrous knights who, united in a common vision and ideal, would save their kingdom, prosper, and flourish. Joy would prevail throughout the land.

Rewritten in the apocryphal tale in the twentieth century with the prophetic title *The Once and Future King*, then transformed into the play and later movie *Chamelot*, the story dramatically portrays Arthur's holy synergy with his Queen Guinevere, and his brotherly synergy with his fabled knight and friend, Lancelot du Lac.

However, in a series of traumatic betrayals, Lancelot has an affair with Guinevere, destroying the beauty and bliss of most passionate of trios.

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But yet, the penultimate betrayal is revealed with the unkindly arrival of Mordred, who is Arthur's illegitimate son (and thus heir to the throne) into the court of Camelot.

Born of a deception seduction by the witch Morguise,<sup>50</sup> Mordred is the classic conniver, a no-holds-barred schemer whose only intent is to relentlessly destroy every trusting relationship among the Knights of the Round Table.

Playing one off against the other, setting each out to destroy Camelot's values and ideals, Mordred systematically destroys everything that Arthur dreamed or created.

Portraying himself as a realist who can act appropriately in the arena of *real politic*, Mordred, in the most sinister of plots, excommunicates nearly all of the knights, who, now marginalized, join forces with Arthur's enemies and overthrow Camelot, destroying the ever-present and forever lingering dream of synergy.

Despite Arthur's passionate but unrequited hope that Mordred might have a spark of goodness in him, Mordred persists on his destructive path. Lancelot's offer to thrust an iron spike through Mordred's heart is rejected by Arthur, for whom hope for man's salvation reigns eternal.

Arthur remains the dreamer, the idealist, and ultimately jeopardizes the entire dream of Camelot, for there is neither hope nor salvation for Mordred – only death or isolated incarceration (like Napoleon's exile to St. Helen's island) is the only workable fate.

Like the allegory of the frog carrying the scorpion across the river, then being stung to death by the unappreciative passenger who says to the dying frog "it's in my nature," there is no alternative to dealing with a Mordred than to cut him out like a cancerous tumor.

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<sup>50</sup> Note the close connection to the word *morgue*: a tomb (womb?) of death

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Mordred is the embodiment of the sinister. His evil essences is destructive, not through direct aggression and attack, but undermining, by indirection, manipulative abuse to cause others to do his wicked bidding, guise and guile.

Several of the quotes from the movie *Camelot* (1967) are highly insightful into the nature of the character of Mordred and King Arthur's response:

Queen Guinevere:

*Not having Mordred for dinner makes it a party.  
He mixes wine and disloyalty like a witch over caldron!*

King Arthur:

*We must not let our passions destroy our dreams.*

*Mordred is my son – I hope there is something in him I have never reached*

Mordred's name is indicative of his personae. *Morde* is the Old French word for *Death*, and *Dred* is the Old English word for *Fear*. Mordred is the personification of *Death & Fear*.

It is Mordred's characterization as a person whose values are the archetypal antithesis to the Arthurian Quest for Synergy that I term *the Mordred Factor*.

Not only do these people have neither the desire nor ability to collaborate, synergize, and synchronize, but go to the opposite extreme, and purposefully (either intentionally or unintentionally) destroy synergy, teamwork, co-creativity, and spiritual community.

When done unintentionally, it usually takes a variety of forms, such as selfishness or insecurity, and manifests as: blame, criticism, attack, negativity, complain, or fault finding.

When done intentionally, the result is usually far more insidious, destructive, and often horrifying. To reveal the nature of the intentional Mordred, a particularly unique characterization emerged during the Renaissance.

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## **MACHIAVELLIAN LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP**

### ***Betwixt the Middle Ages and the Renaissance***

A hundred years after Mallory's classic tale, as a prelude and warning to the emerging Renaissance, Niccolo Machiavelli<sup>51</sup> wrote his own classic, *The Prince*, as a handbook for power and control.

One of the most important thought leaders of our modern world, Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* has influenced many of today's leaders, who have modeled their actions on his advice. Gravitating to his cultural roots, he used both contemporary Italy and Roman history as the source of his conclusions about human nature. Seeing the same confounding behaviors in Roman history that he saw in Medieval Italy, Machiavelli naturally assumed he had found "the truth."

All writers are products of their times. (A few, a very few, writers are able to transcend their times. Plato and Socrates are two; Madison and Jefferson are two others.) Machiavelli was not one of those transcendent thinkers. His thinking was deeply influenced by the times and his patrons. His sources of Roman history such as Livy (Titus Livius)<sup>52</sup> and Seneca are suspect

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<sup>51</sup> It's worthwhile to note the important distinction between Mordred and Machiavelli. The former was insidious, self-centered, and evil; the latter amoral and practical.

<sup>52</sup> See Machiavelli, *The Discourses of Livy*. He based his understanding of how republics could or should operate from Livy's History of Rome, written over one hundred years after the era of the Roman Republic. Livy was related to Octavian's (Caesar Augustus) wife, Livia. Livy began writing his history of Rome in 27 BC, the same year Octavian solely becomes Emperor, and the same year Virgil is commissioned by Octavian to write the Aeneid. Historians have said that Livy and Virgil coordinated their writings to ensure that what Livy was saying in prose was consistent with what Virgil was saying in poetry. It is highly likely that Octavian commissioned Livy to write these histories. Most of Livy focuses on war, war, and more war. The organization of his history reads more as a military history than a social or political or philosophic history. Unlike the most highly regarded Roman scholars of the time, Livy was not trained in Athens, and his command of the Greek language was mediocre. He never

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because both these authors worked for the ruling dictator of their times: Octavian (Augustus) and Nero, respectively. The Emperor (a euphemistic term for Dictator) paid their salaries; the wrong word, or even the wrong false accusation, and death was proscribed. Thus, the insights and possibilities of a world of honor and dignity, such as those that were commonplace in the Greek experience, carried little weight compared to the preponderance of evidence he saw in ancient Rome and his own Italy.

Machiavelli, a student of *real politic*, details the use of initiating manipulative techniques to offset, counter-balance, overthrow, or combat others engaged in Mordred-like activities. In *The Prince*,

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served in the military nor in the government, which some historians say made his history of these subjects rather superficial and subject to errors. However, Livy's accounts are all that remain of some of the earliest of the Roman era.

From Wikipedia: He wrote his history with embellished accounts of Roman heroism in order to promote the new type of government implemented by Augustus when he became emperor. In Livy's preface to his history, he said that he did not care whether his personal fame remained in darkness, as long as his work helped to "preserve the memory of the deeds of the world's preeminent nation." Because Livy was writing about events that had occurred hundreds of years beforehand, the value of his history was questionable, although many Romans came to believe what he wrote to be the true history of Rome's foundation. Livy's enthusiasm for the republic is evident from the first pentade of his work, and yet the Julio-Claudian family (the imperial family) were as much fans of Livy as anyone. He could not have been an advocate of any sort of sedition in favor of restoring the republic; he would have been put on trial for treason and executed, as many had been and would be. He must have been viewed as a harmless and relevant advocate of the ancient morality, which was a known public stance of the citizens of Patavium. His relationship to Augustus is defined primarily by a passage from Tacitus in which Cremutius Cordus is put on trial for his life for offenses no worse than Livy's and defends himself face-to-face with the frowning Tiberius. To avoid conviction, while waiting for a verdict Cordus committed suicide by self-starvation. His worst fears were realized in absentia: his books were sentenced to be burned by the aediles, but they performed the task without zeal and many escaped.

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Machiavelli formalized and codified the Age of Intrigue, making betrayal, conniving, conspiracy, and scheming an art form.

Machiavelli could draw no inspiration or even guidance from the Dark Ages - a time when humans produced nothing significant.

Neither could he draw guidance from the leadership of the Christian Church of the last thousand years. Since its inception under the reign of Constantine in the fourth century, a long string of Popes had replicated the grandeur, dictatorial arrogance, and distance from the people that was the hallmark of the Roman Emperors. While certainly Christianity in the timeline between the Fall of Rome and the Renaissance (Rebirth) did produce monks in monasteries who were humble servants of God and their people, such as Francis of Assisi, this style of servant leadership was lost on the hierarchy of monsignors, bishops, cardinals and their succession of Popes. Between the Fall and the Rebirth, Christianity as a religion was usurped by authoritarian despots and firebrands who either conspired with crooked emperors devoid of conscience and possessed with greed, or using guilt and fear as a weapon manipulated their following to false truths, leaving no room for creativity and innovation.<sup>53</sup>

Machiavelli's *Prince* is not strictly evil, he is a fox. And a fox he must be in a world of Mordreds, where there may be limited options to slay the dragon Mordred. Outfoxing a kingdom well populated with Mordred's takes the cunning of a fox.

Many authorities have said that Machiavelli is one of the ten most influential writers in history and his influence on the world's leaders has been more than substantial. For this reason, I decided to get to know Machiavelli better and understand what he really said. What I found, frankly, surprised me, even after having read *The Prince*, once in college, and again several years ago. .

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<sup>53</sup> It is not coincidental that the Reformation came on the heels of the Renaissance. Just as Machiavelli had foreseen, the tyranny of despotism evokes hatred and reform, with which comes inherent dangers.

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## *How Machiavelli Saw His World*

Machiavelli,<sup>54</sup> a young man of twenty-nine began his professional career in 1498 as a secretary for the Second Chancery, an office he was to hold for fourteen more years. As he began his job, the streets of Florence were abuzz with the execution of Friar Savonarola. This story well sets the stage for Machiavelli's view of humankind:

Savonarola was an Italian Dominican friar, Scholastic, and an influential contributor to the politics of Florence from 1494 until his execution in 1498. He was known for his book burning, destruction of what he considered immoral art, and his perception of what he thought the Renaissance – which began in his Florence and was at its beginning – ought to become. He vehemently preached against the moral corruption of much of the clergy at the time, against his main opponent, Rodrigo Borgia otherwise known as Pope Alexander VI.

A student of the Bible, St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, Savonarola stood against morally corrupt clergy and prophesized the end of the world. Wanting to correct the transgressions of worldly Popes and secularized members of the Church's wayward Roman Curia, he vehemently expressed his contempt for the Curia by terming it 'a false, proud wench'.

In Florence in 1490 he began to preach passionately about the Last Days, accompanied by testimony about his visions and prophetic announcements of direct communications with God and the saints.

Finally, with the year 1500 fast approaching, Savonarola saw the Last Days were impending. Eventually, the ruling de Medici family became targets of Savonarola's fiery preaching, not uncommon at the time. But a series of circumstances quickly brought Savonarola great success, as an epidemic of syphilis gave credibility to his proclamations.

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<sup>54</sup> It is thought that he did not learn Greek, even though Florence was at the time one of the centres of Greek scholarship in Europe

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After Charles VIII of France invaded Florence in 1494, the ruling Medici were overthrown and Savonarola emerged as the new leader of the city, combining in himself the role of leader and priest.

He set up a republic in Florence. Characterizing it as a “Christian and religious Republic,” one of its first acts was to make sodomy, previously punishable by fine, into a capital offence. Homosexuality had previously been tolerated in the city, and many homosexuals from the elite now chose to leave Florence. His chief enemies -- the Duke of Milan and Pope Alexander VI -- issued numerous restraints against him, all of which were ignored.

In 1497, he and his followers carried out the *Bonfire of the Vanities*, sending boys from door to door collecting items associated with moral laxity: mirrors, cosmetics, lewd pictures, pagan books, immoral sculptures (which he wanted to be replaced by statues of the saints and modest depictions of biblical scenes), gaming tables, chess pieces, lutes and other musical instruments, fine dresses, women’s hats, and the works of immoral and ancient poets, and burnt them all in a large pile in the Piazza in Florence.

Many fine Florentine Renaissance artworks were lost in Savonarola’s notorious bonfires – he is alleged to have thrown some of the artworks into the fires himself.

Florence soon began to riot and revolt against Savonarola because of the city’s continual political and economic miseries partially derived from Savonarola's opposition to trading and making money. When a Franciscan preacher challenged him to a trial by fire in the city centre and he declined, his following began to disappear. Dancing and singing returned as taverns reopened, and men again dared to gamble publicly.

Finally, a year before Machiavelli assumed his official duties, Savonarola was excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI. The following year, in 1498, Alexander demanded his arrest and execution.



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As Machiavelli was waiting for his appointment, Savonarola surrendered along with two other friars, his two closest friends. Savonarola was charged with heresy, uttering prophecies, sedition, and other crimes (called religious errors by the Pope.)

During the next few weeks all three were tortured on the rack, the torturers sparing only Savonarola's right arm in order that he might be able to sign his confession. All three signed confessions.

On the day of their executions, they were ritually stripped of their clerical vestments, and degraded as heretics. The three were hanged in chains from a single cross and an enormous fire was lit beneath them. They were thereby executed in the same place where the "Bonfire of the Vanities" had been lit, and in the same manner that Savonarola had condemned other criminals himself during his own reign in Florence.

The historian of the day who was present at the incident wrote that his executioner lit the flame exclaiming, "The one who wanted to burn me is now himself put to the flames." The burning took several hours, and that the remains were several times broken apart and mixed with brushwood so that not the slightest piece could be later recovered, as the ecclesiastical authorities did not want Savonarola's followers to have any relics for a future generation of the rigorist preacher they considered a saint. The ashes of the three were afterwards thrown in the river that ran beneath the Ponte Vecchio.

In the intervening period, Machiavelli was deprived of office in 1512 by the returning Medici rulers. In 1513, Machiavelli was accused of conspiracy, and arrested and imprisoned and tortured ("with the rope", where the prisoner is hanged from his bound wrists, from the back, forcing the arms to bear the body's weight, thus dislocating the shoulders). Denying any involvement, he was released. (As the record contains no details, we can only image he was physically and spiritually damaged by this horrible incident.)

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After being tortured, he wanted to ingratiate himself to the Medici family and become an advisor to them. At this time he wrote *The Prince*, which he described as being the unembellished summary of his knowledge about the nature of princes and "the actions of great men", based not only on reading but also, unusually, on real experience.

### ***Advice to the Prince***

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli shares his insights about power and leadership:

**Advice of Greatest Importance:** In the actions of men, and especially of Princes, one looks at the result; and the end justifies the means.

**Ambition:** Ambition is so powerful a passion in the human breast, that however high we reach we are never satisfied. Men rise from one ambition to another; first they seek to secure themselves from attack, then they attack others.

**Appearances:** A leader must take great care to say only the words of mercy, faith, humanity, and morality, for men in general judge more by what they hear and see, than by what they experience. Everybody sees what you appear to be, few know who you really are. And the few who know who you really are will seldom dare to oppose you in light of the many who support you.

**Arms:** There is no comparison whatever between an armed and disarmed man; it is not reasonable to suppose that one who is armed will obey willingly one who is unarmed; or that any unarmed man will remain safe....

**Conspiracy:** Whoever conspires cannot act alone, and cannot find companions except among those who are discontented; and as soon as you have disclosed your intention to a malcontent, you give him the means of satisfying himself, for by revealing it he can hope to secure everything he wants.

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**Cruelty:** A leader must not mind incurring the charge of being cruel if it is for the purpose of keeping his subjects united and faithful.

**Deception:** So simple-minded are men and so controlled by immediate necessities, that a prince who deceives always finds men who let themselves be deceived.

**Fear:** It is much better to be feared than loved.<sup>55</sup>

**Fighting:** There are two methods of fighting, the one by the law, the other by force: the first method is that of men, the second of beasts; but as the first method is often insufficient, one must have recourse to the second.

**Hate:** Hatred is gained as much by good works as by evil.

**Human Nature:** Man is semi-animal, semi-beast. The leader is thus obliged to know how to act as a beast, and must imitate the fox and the lion, for the fox can recognize traps, and the lion can intimidate. If all men were good, this would be poor advice; but as they are bad and will not be loyal to you, you are not bound to be loyal to them.

**Judgment:** Men in general judge more by the eyes than by the hands, for everyone can see, but very few have to feel.

Everybody sees what you appear to be, few feel what you are, and those few will not dare to oppose themselves to the many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them.

**Leadership:** A prince who is ignorant of military matters, besides other misfortunes... cannot be esteemed by his soldiers, nor have confidence in them.

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<sup>55</sup> Author's Note: It is important to see Machiavelli's logical manipulation here: He offers only the either-or choice between fear and love, as though these are the only choices. A more enlightened and realistic choice would also offer 'to be trusted and respected' as a third alternative to the Prince, thus enabling the Prince to be a true builder of civilized institutions and serve the best interests of his people.

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**Public Policy:** A prince must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the purpose of keeping his subjects united and faithful; for, with a very few examples, he will be more merciful than those who, from excess of tenderness, allow disorders to arise, from whence spring bloodshed; for these as a rule injure the whole community, while the executions carried out by the prince injure only individuals.

**Training:** The wise Prince never withdraws his thought from training for war; in peace he trains himself for it more than in time of war.

**Virtue:** It will be found that some things which seem virtuous, if followed, lead to one's ruin, and some others which appear vices result in one's greater security and well-being.

It cannot be called virtue to kill one's fellow citizens, betray one's friends, be without faith, without pity, and without religion; by these methods one may indeed gain power, but not glory.

**War:** A prince should therefore have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organization and discipline, for that is the only art that is necessary to one who commands.... And one sees, on the other hand, that when princes think more of luxury than of arms, they lose their state. The chief cause of the loss of states, is the contempt of this art.

To the modern reader, the advice in *The Prince* seems immoral, manipulative, and perverse. Machiavelli's name is now indelibly associated with treachery and deceit.

The next book he wrote, the *Discourses on Livy*,<sup>56</sup> Machiavelli presents a series of lessons on how a *republic* should be started and structured. It is more than four times larger than *The Prince*, and it more openly explains the advantages of republics. It includes early

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<sup>56</sup> Today, while *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are often packaged as a single book, most people just read the earlier portion (first in the book) – *The Prince*. The second portion, which is less interesting, goes unread.

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versions of the concept of checks and balances, and asserts the superiority of a republic over a principality. It became one of the central texts of republicanism in the Age of Enlightenment. French Enlightenment philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau considered the *Discourses* to be more representative of Machiavelli's true philosophy:<sup>57</sup>

*Machiavelli was a proper man and a good citizen; .... he could not help veiling his love of liberty in the midst of his country's oppression. ... The contradiction between the teaching of the Prince and that of the Discourses on Livy shows that this profound political thinker has so far been studied only by superficial or corrupt readers. The Court of Rome sternly prohibited his book. I can well believe it; for it is that Court it most clearly portrays.*

Unfortunately, the more licentious *Prince* is the one that nearly everyone associates with Machiavelli. Those who take the time to read the more principled *Discourses on Livy* discover another side of Machiavelli that advocates a more just government and understands the value of democratic justice. Perhaps the five years that it took to write the *Discourses* allowed his mind to heal from the torture at the hands of the Medici family.

If only more of today's leaders would give equal time to reading both *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, we would have a more balanced view of reality. (In Volume Six, I will quote from *The Discourses*.)

## ***Machiavelli becomes imbedded in our culture***

As the Italian Renaissance evolved a century later into the English Age of Enlightenment, Shakespeare took Machiavelli to the theatre. Shakespearean tragedy is the personification of betrayal. *Romeo and Juliet*, is the story of the Quest for Synergy in the form of love betrayed by class distinction.

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57 From Savonarola and Machiavelli, excerpted, condensed, and edited from Wikipedia & Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book III.

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In *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* the audience is bedazzled by a string of multiple betrayals that enfolds us in the tragedy of a denied dream of collaboration, honor and joy.

In the *Merchant of Venice*, the hope for synergy<sup>58</sup> in Portia's Quality of Mercy speech is contrasted with Shylock's betrayal of the code of fairness in his desire to extract a pound of flesh.

*Julius Caesar* pits the betrayals by the conniving Cassius and the murderous Brutus against the vision of patriotism and honor of Mark Antony. As Cassius observes to Brutus of the evil:

*Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world ....  
Peep[ing] about to find ourselves dishonorable graves.  
Men at some time are masters of their fates:  
the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.*

(Act I, Sc 2)

*Think of him as a serpent's egg,  
which hatch'd, would, as his kind,  
grow mischevious, and kill him in the shell....*

*O Conspiracy,  
Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,  
When evils are most free?....*

*How many ages hence  
shall this ... be acted o'er,  
in states unborn and accents yet unknown!..  
Oh! Pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,  
that I am meek and gentle with these butchers!*

(Act II, Sc 1)

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58 In *Henry V*, Shakespeare stakes out another one of his visions of synergy:

*From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered:  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother...*

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Then Caesar's friend, Mark Antony proclaims:

*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;*

*I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.*

*The evil that men do lives after them;*

*The good is oft interred with their bones....*

*Caesar ... was my friend, faithful and just to me.*

(Act II, Sc2)

Here Shakespeare leaves us with an epic struggle with no classic heroes, no optimism for defeating Mordred or disarming Machiavelli.

In Henry VI, written in 1596, Shakespeare speaks of the *Machiavellian Prince*, a clear indication that Shakespeare had read Machiavelli, and more than likely had actually modeled many of his plays on the themes and strategies outlined in Machiavelli's writing.

Queen Elizabeth, who reigned over England in Shakespeare's day, was so concerned about Machiavelli's *Prince* that she banned the book. Certainly, this factor alone would encourage Shakespeare to obtain a personal copy. Many scholars now believe that Shakespeare used *The Prince* as his handbook upon which to draw the characters of many of his tragic figures – role models for modern society to draw its view of life, now firmly implanted in movies, television, and theatre.

Consequently, despite the great artistic vision of the Renaissance, as a practical matter, western society was left with a helpless archetype for a role model, a modern Hamlet bedeviled by treachery, cunning, and manipulation, with few tools or strategies to create a sustainable Camelot. Only by combining iron will with the cunning of the ruler can the forces of Mordred be held back.

Literature that prevails in our hearts today like Alexander Dumas' *Three Musketeers* tells the tale of friendship through

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adventure. What could be more synergistic than the exploits of D'Artagnon, Athos, Portos, and Aramis?

### ***Mordred & Machiavelli in the Modern World***

As the Age of Enlightenment unfolded in America, the synergy quest became the united passion of the founding fathers. Blessed with a deep understanding of the fundamentals of the Greek experiment with democracy and trained in reading the ancient Greek language, coupled with a strong foundation in Christian theology, a unique group (Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Franklin, et al) converged to frame the Declaration of Independence and later the Constitution.

Each document carefully outlines the vision for a synergistic new republic based upon a rebirth of Plato's Republic. The system of rights was designed to produce a win-win relationship between people and their society, while the system of checks and balances prevented tyrannical abuses from the Mordreds and Machiavellis that continually prowl and prey upon the idealistic vision of democracy.

The American Revolution produced its Mordred in the personage of Benedict Arnold. In the fifty year period after the revolution a string of Mordred's appeared, the most recognized today being Aaron Burr, or the scandalous theft of the presidential election of 1824 by John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, along with other scoundrels of equal magnitude, despite their relative historical obscurity today.<sup>59</sup>

The American Civil war, with its monumental loss of 600,000 lives, is deep testimony to the commitment by Abraham Lincoln to the vision of unity and community, and the betrayal of those values by the South with its rigid adherence to an anachronistic system of economic piracy reliant upon the enslavement of others.

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<sup>59</sup> The amateur historian may look to the actions of James Wilkinson or Jesse Duncan Elliott as epitomes of more modern Mordreds in the early 1800s.



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In Europe Marx and Engels produced a highly idealistic (and equally unrealistic) Communist Manifesto based on other movements in Europe and America to form economic communities and collaboratives based on common ownership and interest. Not having reconciled the relationship between common and self interest, and reacting more to the perceived enslavement of the working class by capitalism, Marx sought the unity of interest and the release from economic bondage of those less fortunate.

Similarly, the massive union movement of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew passionate cries among the oppressed. Sharing in the wealth stimulated Robin Hood behavior in public policy.

## *Dictators as Modern Mordreds & Machiavellis*

But the ultimate betrayal of the Communist Movement came not at the hands of the dreaded capitalists, but from the Mordreds and Machiavellis within. Lenin, then Stalin and Mao Tse Tung, under the guise of noble idealism, slaughtered or imprisoned tens of millions (perhaps over 100 million all tolled) in the name of justice falsely intended.

During that same era, Hitler, and later Pol Pot became the unapologetic manifestations of Mordred, setting a new standard for hideous and uncompassionate disregard for human life.

In America, the Mordred of the mid-twentieth century was Senator Joe McCarthy, who abusively spread fear, hate, and distrust across the land with the campaign to find a communist in every closet.

From the ashes of ages of continental strife, the nature of the European Economic Union is based on a desire for synergy among compatible differences to predominate.

In Israel, the Kibbutz movement has attempted to keep Marx's values alive in a quasi-communistic-capitalistic economic world.

## *Mordred & Machiavelli Today*

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As the latter half the twentieth century unfolded, the Quest for Synergy became more and more manifest. The Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King, dramatically envisioned unity, community, belonging, and equality. His language was Arthurian in scope:<sup>60</sup>

*We must learn to live together as brothers  
or perish together as fools.*

At the same time King was uttering these words, President John F. Kennedy was in the White House and American was talking about building a Camelot. Both men were assassinated. Mordred and Machiavelli struck again.

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### ***A Personal Note***

The Mordred Factor is highly visible in today's sports arena. Several coaches are notable in their ability to eliminate the Mordred's from their teams, thus producing a synergy of performance excellence. Take the following sports examples:

Basketball: Red Auerbach of the Boston Celtics was a mastermind in building team players who create mutual value in each other. His teams had players like Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, Tommy Heinson, Jim Havlichek, Larry Bird, Robert Parrish, and K.C. Jones, whose selfless commitment to team synergy created an unparalleled string of championships. Coach Krzyzewski at Duke, John Wooden at UCLA or Pat Riley (Lakers, Knicks, Heat) are adherents of ensuring there are no Mordreds or Machiavellis on their teams.

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<sup>60</sup> The entire *I have a dream* speech is the embodiment of the Quest for Synergy.

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Football: Bill Belichick of the New England Patriots has carried on the Celtic tradition into football. Joe Paterno at Penn State was a “character coach” By contrast, Terrell Owens is a classic Mordred, has been cast off from many teams for inciting internecine, self-interest warfare on teams. The New Orleans Saints (ironic name) put a bounty on opposing players, seeking to maim their opponents, which is simply psychopathic.

Teamwork: Arguably, the greatest athlete of the twentieth century was hockey's Wayne Gretzky, because he not only led his sport in points scored, but also in assists – handoffs to other players who then scored. Watching this man play was synergy in motion.

Every leader, whether of a family, a team, or an organization, must be ever-vigilant; cutting out the Mordreds and Machiavellis like one gets rid of a cancer. As one respected leader told me recently:

*“I'm leaving my organization to join another. My boss hired a person for our team who has been so disruptive that now everyone is being played off against the other. I spend all my time now worrying about who is going to put a knife in my back. I used to be a high flyer. Unless I leave I'll have no future.”*

Another executive lamented about her subordinates:

*“I hired the most qualified people I could afford. But they are always breaking down, working for their own self interest. There is no teamwork, no synergy, and no synchronicity.*

*We don't coordinate well. No amount of team building seems to work.”*

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Unknowingly, she made the mistake of hiring her team based on competence, not character,<sup>61</sup> resulting in a majority of people being or becoming “Marginal Mordreds.”

How an organization creates a culture of innovation and collaboration is critical in either stimulating or repressing the Marginal Mordred and the Machiavelli Maneuver. As I was editing this piece, the phone rang. It was a senior manager from a large corporation who lamented:

*“There is no real innovation here and little collaboration. We all have a fear of failure because people are fired if they fail. If we do make a mistake, we are criticized in front of others.*

*So no one takes any risks.*

*We talk of innovation, but we don’t walk it. No one collaborates unless someone else is willing to take the risk and responsibility if something doesn’t work out.*

*When we try to work in alliance with other companies, there’s an attitude that our products are always better, and theirs are junk. We see only a very limited set of options.*

*If someone does have something good, our approach is arrogant: ‘We’ll just buy them.’ When we do, we kill all their innovation.”*

This was said by a man of courage and vision who had been struggling for years to rally his small team against the overwhelming power of an antithetical culture. Yet we cannot expect those of vision and courage to act forever like fools. Unless new leadership is brought in, or alternatively, those of courage join forces as a “band of brothers,” each of the courageous visionaries will be picked off, one-by-one, or be relegated to live a sorry life of disillusionment and despair.

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<sup>61</sup> Japanese corporations are more skilled at getting teamwork to prevail. They hire on the basis of character weighing in at 80% of the person’s value, and competence at 20%. American companies typically base their decision on just the opposite proportion.

# History's Hidden Lessons

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Leaders play an enormous role in determining attitudes and behavior.

Unknowingly, many leaders unintentionally betray their subordinate's expectations for being acknowledged and rewarded for excellent work, innovative thinking, and willingness to take risks for the greater good of the organization.

When these expectations are unfulfilled, their morale takes a long, low road to disappointment and despair. The climate of excitement and innovation yields to an attitude of complaint, blame, and resentment. It is in this swamp of despair the Marginal Mordred breeds like a mosquito.

If the ghosts of Mordred and Machiavelli are rampant in an organization, look to the top where their spirit may reside. And also look within to see if you are trapped in a culture of intrigue, innuendo, and doubt in which you've become one of the principal or supporting actors.

Like the smoker who gets a momentary nicotine high, leaders who feast on a diet cynicism, criticism, blame, negativity, and rule by fear may get an emotional power-high, but in the long run, with each passing day, sustainable energy is drained from the organization on its slow decline to death. Work then becomes nothing more than a bitter-sweet travail with neither victory nor valor, honor nor heroics.

**CHAPTER FOUR:  
REALITIES & DELUSIONS OF HISTORY**

***IMPACT OF CULTURE ON BEHAVIOR***

It would not be until the Renaissance, one thousand years after the fall of Rome, that the writings of the Greeks would be rediscovered and again revered. In that intervening period, countless documents were lost forever; and more importantly, the love for knowledge, learning, and wisdom withered under the stranglehold of ignorance, barbarism, fundamentalism, and lust for power.

But again the tide of human history would turn from ebb to flow with the Age of the Renaissance. It was not an easy shift, and throughout the many years since, we always seem to be at the precipice – powerful forces wanting to turn the tide backward again.

We need to understand the Renaissance, because the contrast between Greece, Rome, the Dark Ages, and the Renaissance gives us deep insights about the future ahead and the course of action we are compelled to take.

Had people changed genetically between the Dark Ages and the Renaissance? Undoubtedly not. Human brain structure is the same today as our ancestors several thousand years ago. It's been proven that knowledge is not inherently transmitted genetically from one generation to another. Each child must learn anew.

***Culture and Civilization***

But how and what do children learn? Culture is the mechanism society uses to transmit learning from one generation to the next. – what we choose to teach and what we reward. The function of choice is critical – freedom of choice is one of humanity's most prized treasures. In the words of Sophocles:

*He that once enters the tyrant's door  
Becomes a slave, 'though he were free before.*

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The tyrant Sophocles speaks of is not just a person, but just as appropriately refers to a *belief system* or a community culture that usurps our freedom to explore or express ideas and ideals that open avenues to bring out the greatness in people.

The brilliant English architect and philosopher of the Victorian era, John Ruskin, said:

*“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts:*

*the book of their Deeds,  
the book of their Words, and  
the book of their Art.*

*Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last.”*

To this, I would add an important qualifier: that the real book of Art is not about art as “entertainment” or even “beauty,” but rather as an *expression of the creative soul of the civilization*; thus:

*The greatest books of a civilization's Art  
are neither their Paintings*

*nor Literature*

*nor Music,*

*nor Edifices,*

*but rather their willingness to push the edges of their*

*... Learning,*

*... Wisdom,*

*... Creativity,*

*... Humaneness, and*

*... Leadership,*

*for these are the Art of Arts that*

*... define the Spirit and Future of a Civilized Nation;*

*... determine the Course of History; and*

*... set the Fate of its People.*

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# *Learning from the Good, Bad, and Ugly*

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## ***The Role of Beliefs and Fears***

Civilization itself has tended to ebb and flow. The Greek civilization was one where clearly the tide was in great flow. The Roman period was the time between flow and ebb, while the Dark Ages were the ebb at its worst.

The Dark Ages could also be described as the Fear Ages -- rampant, incessant, tumultuous fear where some petty despot would inflict corporal punishment at a whim, or a marauding band could destroy a village or a family in a merciless raid with no forewarning. Life was a struggle; every day could be one's last. The reward for the pain of existence was the Kingdom of God in the after-life.

The Greek world believed in the ultimate potential of rationality, the nobility of honor, and mercy of fair justice. This belief system then was sustained by institutions and a culture that created a self-fulfilling society. This did not happen by accident, but by conscious design that reinforced a synergistic relationship between body, mind, and soul. Life was a glorious adventure; every day was an unveiling of new dimensions of beauty, humaneness, and understanding.

Rome, on the other hand, held a belief system that aspired for the force of power held in place by fear, unbridled materialism, personal aggrandizement, and the value of financial wealth over virtue. These institutions supported this belief system, which could only be sustained by slave labor and complacent acquisitions, both untenable in the long run. Life was a conquest, every day was either a victory or defeat.

Across the three cultures -- Greece, then Rome, then the Dark Ages -- the more uplifting the belief in uniting the worldly with the divine, the less the daily dose of fear, and the better the result.

## ***A Caution about a Fundamentalist Future***

In all my study of innovation, synergy, and the search for truth, I find their greatest antagonist is fundamentalism of any sort, for fundamentalism assumes that truth is static and only held



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by those “in the know.” In reality, truth is dynamic, an evolving set of insights revealing a higher, deeper, and broader truth.

The future of Christian Spirituality lies not in orthodoxy and fundamentalism; it never did and never could. The purge of Christian diversity in an attempt to create unity did just the opposite, creating more divisions, first with the Great Schism, and later with the Protestant Reformation. The future is beheld in regaining the energy of Greek Spiritual Trajectory, focusing on the Divine energies of Creation and Love, and the magical glory of the Holy Spirit.

As with all innovative ventures, the prerequisite for this exploration is an environment of trust, where people can explore, develop insights, and experiment without risk of being excommunicated for presumed heresy.

It was not Christianity that brought on the Dark Ages. If it were, we could never have had the Renaissance (which was deeply Christian as anyone viewing the Sistine Chapel can attest) nor the Age of Enlightenment (which also was deeply Christian). Rather, as Gibbon had suggested, it was the *abuse* of Christianity. The abuse was not an inherent defect in the essence of Christianity, but a defect in the nature of the Roman culture; and that abuse was the final nail in the Roman coffin

When Constantine made Christianity the religion of the realm in 325 AD, it was not the belief in Christ nor his teachings that ushered in a thousand years of stifling narrowness. It was the fundamentalist Bishops that purged the libraries of knowledge and wisdom; that burned those who cared more for the Holy Spirit of Christianity than the Heavy Strictures of Religion.

Why? Because one's only salvation is to recognize one's soul. When one poisons one's own soul, even the forgiveness of God Himself cannot restore it. The Greeks had a word for it: “Suicide of the Soul.” It is one other means of blasphemy of the soul.

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## **AGE OF ENLIGHTENED REALISM**

As Christian fundamentalism was one of the major determining factors [but not the sole factor] in bringing on the Dark Ages, perhaps it's fitting to find, in the soul of Christ's teachings, the spiritual insights that were intended to keep us all in a boundless Age of Enlightenment – not an age of childlike innocence that exposes us all to the psychopathic dangers of evil – but an age of enlightened insights and decisions in the context of both the evil and good that can be brought forth from the psyche of all normal human beings. We might call this *Enlightened Realism*.

### ***The Future of Civilization***

In graduate school, one of my professors, Jay Featherstone, spoke frequently about the *United States of Amnesia*, the awful tendency of Americans collectively to forget what happened in the past. Looking at this positively, perhaps we forgive and forget. Or, alternatively, we never learn our lessons.

In his first chapter of *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, which addresses the last century of the Roman Empire and its incipient decline, author Thomas Cahill asserts:

*The earlier interpreters ...-- Augustine, Petrarch, Machiavelli, and Gibbon – have all defined the limits of all later interpretation:*

*Rome fell because of inner weakness, either social or spiritual;  
or*

*Rome fell because of outer pressure – the barbarian hordes.*

*What we can say with confidence is that Rome fell gradually and that Romans for many decades scarcely noticed what was happening.<sup>62</sup>*

To this, I might add that the outer pressure had always been there – Rome had always experienced pressures on its borders, and the wider the borders the more perimeter and interior to defend. And it clearly was not the inherent pacific nature of Christianity

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<sup>62</sup> Cahill, *Ibid*, p 14

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that undermined Roman might, as any study of the Spanish Conquistadores will validate. It was *not the essence* of Christianity, but the *abuse* of Christianity that was the final nail in the Roman coffin.

While Cahill is correct in his assessment that the last days of the Roman Empire were more *gradual* than cataclysmic, this is similar to the argument that the Romans declined because their plumbing pipes contained lead which leached into the water supply and poisoned them, which is also true.

The fall of the Roman Empire was due to an inner decay caused by an internal structural defect in the culture itself. Like a leaky roof that is never fixed, the problem became worse over the centuries, and the structural rot was patched over to look good on the surface. Today there is still an Italian expression: "It doesn't matter how well it works, as long as it looks good!"

Like a bridge that's rusting and rotting, at some point a large load brings the bridge down. The Roman rot occurred early in the history of the Empire, and no leader fixed the structural defects. Not even Marcus Aurelius, whose high-minded philosophy and elegant prose inspired Romans then as people today.

What were the structural defects? Answering this question is important to us today.

One theory put forth by historian William McNeill postulates a combination of plagues and economics made the Roman system unmanageable. The search for food meant the Romans had to expand their realm of control. While there is probably some truth to this, the enforced use of slaves could prolong the economic inequities. As one looks at the motives of the Roman leadership, they continually choose power and money over the acquisition of slaves. For example, if slaves were highly prized for their economic value, Crassus never would have crucified them by the thousands.

Cahill answers the structural defect questions with some important dimensionality (which I will also add to in the following segments). Inevitably it's obvious that many of these structural defects are also in modern society.

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- Excessive Bureaucracy: Rome was packed with hundreds of ornamental, but meaningless positions filled with impotent people flaunting weighty titles, but producing nothing of value. This burden grew and the needless ceremonial offices created more and more work for each other. Ultimately, its own survival became its sole goal.
- Excessive Taxes: The burden of valueless bureaucracy piled on the top of the cost of maintaining a far-flung army guarding a vast perimeter created massive tax burdens on the people. The army had to put down invasions from enemies in Africa, the Middle East, Northern Europe, and Spain. And within the borders, revolts from the oppressive Roman rule required intensive levels of intervention.
- Disappearance of the Middle Class: The inequities of Roman rule drove people either into poverty or the quest for wealth. “By the fifth century, in the years before the complete collapse of the Roman government, the imperial approach had produced a [poverty] caste of as hopeless as any in history. .... The rich became even richer. The great landowners ate up the little ones, the tax base shrank still further, and the middle classes, never encouraged by the Roman state, began to disappear for the face of the earth. Nor would they return till the appearance of the Italian mercantile families of the Middle Ages.”<sup>63</sup>
- Moral Decay: the “complete extinction of social concern.” Never a strength in the Roman society, by the end, there was virtually no compassion for the plight of the people. Leaders became increasingly removed from the people over whom they ruled. The ideal of a republican form of government had become so remote that it was not even a considered lament by the time the end came. “Lip service was paid to values

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<sup>63</sup> Cahill, *Ibid*, p 27

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long dead under the pretense that we still are what we once were." (And what we once were was then just a delusion which we forgot we first created as a illusion in the first place!.)

The progressive accumulation of these burdens cumulatively becomes too much of a burden for society. People become disillusioned, filled with the despair that life is just too unfair. Hard work and an education just don't pay. It's akin to societal depression. With no motivating vision for the future and no payoff for hard work, and no values to provide a set of boundaries of reasonableness, life for the average Roman simply becomes "unfair." While the Greeks often wrote about justice, the Romans only justice became embodied in Machiavelli's admonition: "might makes right."

With no values and no vision, there can be no courage to defend the great principles for which a person or a society exists. With no courage, the passionate energies of life are depleted. Good people had no energy to fight for a cause they believed in. They were pitted against bad people who had the passionate energies of a hungry predator, like Attila the Hun. It was no match. Life had no meaning. Romans, rather than stand and fight, depleted of all its will, opened the city's gates to an even deeper emptiness.

## ***Renewal, Passion, and Regeneration***

Renewal and regeneration requires a grindstone to keep the edge of innovation and conviction sharp. Alfred North Whitehead said it well:

*The vitality of thought is in adventure.  
Ideas won't keep. Something must be done about them.  
When an idea is new, its custodians have fervor,  
live for it, and, if need be, die for it.*<sup>64</sup>

He then went on to say that *a culture is in its finest flower before it begins to analyze itself*. This of course can be said of the Greek

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<sup>64</sup> Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead, 1953, p 16

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culture, which was in a perpetual state of inventing itself, questioning what it did, and starting a new experiment.

In his brilliant analysis of the Greek culture that surrounded Plato, Jerry Dell Ehrlich notes:<sup>65</sup>

*This passionate love to know all and to know it perfectly led to achievements in every field of knowledge that created mankind's way of thinking. In short, the Greeks taught us how to think, and gave birth to modern man. They ...changed the course [of history] through the contribution of its magnificent people, enabling all to see more clearly the beauty and joy of life. Edith Hamilton said:*

*"None of the great civilizations that preceded them and surrounded them served them as model. With them something new came into the world. They were the first Westerners; the spirit of the West, the modern spirit, is a Greek discovery and the place of the Greeks is in the modern world.... the Greeks came into being, and the world, as we now know it, began."*

*Commenting on a piece of knowledge the Greeks learned from the Babylonians, John Burnet said:*

*"this piece of knowledge doubtless had a great deal to do with the rise of science; or to the Greek, it suggested further questions such as no Babylonian had ever dreamt of."*

*He further declared that it was their great curiosity and wonder of all things both natural and created by man that drove them on to such knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them:*

*"No sooner did an Ionian philosopher learn half a dozen geometrical propositions, and hear that the phenomena of the heavens recur in cycles, than he set to work to look for law everywhere in nature."*

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<sup>65</sup> Dell Ehrlich, Jerry; *Plato's Gift to Christianity*; Academic Christian Press,

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*This passionate love of knowledge was pursued by disciplined and logical reason, for without it life was empty and one could not know God. H.D.F. Kitt<sup>66</sup> put it this way:*

*“it is something much richer and wider than our current, purely intellectual ‘knowledge,’ for a moral as well as an intellectual passion is its driving force, and its object is the truth that embraces everything; it belongs in fact the same order of things, however different it may be inclined, as the Christian state of grace. Here is the culmination of the search made by Greek thinkers for the inner reality, the ‘logos;’ the Word as God.”*

*In every aspect of life this drive for the ultimate truth, both physical and metaphysical, led [the Greeks] and mankind to a way of thinking and learning that has forever deepened our love and joy of life as well as giving us insight as to how the world works and how to use its gifts to beautify our existence.<sup>67</sup>*

Scholars who study the Greek culture far more extensively than I consistently come to this same compelling conclusion.

Today, as we examine our own society, can we say the same about modern America? Most suspect not. Then what must we do to sustain the commitment and the energy. What the Greeks created was no less than an engine that ran on human energy, a fuel composed of vision and vitality, and supported by a system of trust that prevented it from running amuck.

## ***The Power of Progression***

We see the power of progression in many ways. In today's companies, we see it when Apple introduces an *iPod*, then in rapid succession launches an *iPhone* and then an *iPad*. Remember the fanfare when, every eighteen months, Intel would announce a 286 *chip*, then obsolete it with a 386 that would run at twice the speed and half the cost per byte, then make it seem slow and sluggish compared with a 486. In the 1920s and 30s, people would revel in

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<sup>66</sup> H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, Penguin Books, p 194

<sup>67</sup> Dell Ehrlich, *Ibid*, pp 2-3

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knowing that at any moment some daredevil would push an airplane to its outer limits and break the speed or altitude record.

The power of progression inspires and personifies vitality – life itself.

The Greeks were the first masters of the power of progression. Dell Ehrlich captures the unique spiritual nature of the Greek quest for wisdom that gave the culture its vibrancy:

*2000 years ago,.... why would Romans, who were the imperial masters of the Mediterranean world, seek out Greek culture, learn the Greek language, and study Greek philosophy, instead of preferring their own ways. The answer is simple. The Greeks were a very special people who penetrated the wholeness, the wonder, and the beauty of life with far more enthusiasm and joy than any other people before them.*

*They were deeply inquisitive to know what things in life really were, why they were, how they were, and that it could not be otherwise.*

*In all aspects of life they pursued perfection and excellence. Their brilliance simply overpowered and charmed all the people with whom they came into contact.*

*The Greeks themselves knew they were very special among men, not because of race or power, but because of their desire to know and to perfect that portion of the cosmos that was given into their hands by the Craftsman and the Father of the universe. The wisest man cannot turn away from the search, but loves it passionately, and cannot be fulfilled.*

*Plato does not let his fellow Greeks forget it, stating ...that they must [be compelled] to continue the long-held desire among the Greeks for wisdom that they might obtain as much is possible through dialogue, education, discovery and all forms of the learning process, for the Greek culture has "a native supreme authority and is equal to the learning of the highest and noblest truth, if there were but one to teach them. But there will be no such teacher unless God leads the way.*



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*"It was their quest to improve everything and every thought that they receive from others. They even attempted to worship borrowed gods better than the people from whom they borrowed them. Confident that they could improve and bring to perfection even the mental images of other people's deities, they borrowed and improved and sought to perfect that which was divine and holy, also claiming that God himself would not be offended with their great desire to know Him, but, on the contrary helps men in the effort to know Him and worship Him in the most beautiful and honorable ways.<sup>68 69</sup>*

Reflecting on this commentary, it is clear that the Romans did not have this sense of *Power of Progression*; instead the Romans were advocates of the *Power of Unlimited Expansion*. Like an auto maker that's lost its way and can think of nothing to do for next years' model but put a bigger engine in it, more chrome, and a flasher paint job. Similarly, Rome's vision was more land, bigger buildings, stronger fortresses.

Where are we today? Is there any sense that, as a culture we are on the journey of progression? How about our children? Do they think their lives will be better than their parents?

Again, Kenneth Clark makes some astute observations:

*At certain epochs man felt conscious of something about himself – body and spirit – which was outside the day-to-day struggle for existence and the night-to-night struggle with fear; he has felt the*

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<sup>68</sup> Dell Erlich, *Ibid*, p 1-2

<sup>69</sup> This was the essence of how the Greeks created synergy, which is the deepest yearning of the human soul. Few people do not have a heartfelt desire to create a synergistic relationship between others, their God, nature and, ultimately their inner selves. It therefore should be no wonder that, when Christ preached the overarching commandment "Love God with thy whole mind, and whole spirit, and love thy neighbor as thy self, he was exhorting people to engage in synergy. Early Greek Christians, already practicing their core cultural values would not be as perplexed as we are today by the passage in John 14:12-16 "I leave you so that the Great Comforter, the Holy Spirit (Sophia) may come to you ... And these work that I do so shall you do, and greater works shall you do than I."

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*need to develop these qualities of thought and feeling so that they might approach as nearly as possible to the ideal of perfection – reason, justice, physical beauty, all of them in equilibrium.*

*Western Europe inherited such an ideal. It had been invented in Greece in the fifth century before Christ and was without doubt the most extraordinary creation in the whole of history, so complete, so convincing, so satisfying to the mind and eye, that it lasted practically unchanged for over six hundred years. .. [then] of course, its art became stereotyped and conventional.<sup>70</sup>*

Today, how would we rate 21<sup>st</sup> century America or Europe against this standard of societal excellence? Perhaps grappling with the question makes us uncomfortable because of the inadequacy of the answer. We once had an answer, two hundred years ago. It would seem the Romans had the opportunity during the first years of their Republic and let the opportunity go. The results of not having such a standard of excellence can have tragic consequences.

Sports teams that don't think they have a chance of making the playoffs in a year or two, don't. Neither do companies that see themselves only as a means of making a profit for their shareholders. In my experience revitalizing deteriorating communities, the first thing in turning the tide was to create a mission to build a future for the people, a sense of hope to cure the despondency that manifests after suicide of the soul.

The trajectory for the future must be propelled not simply with intellectual logic but also with emotional passion – an inner commitment and a powerful belief that a positive future will become a reality. In generating progressive power, each who touches the vision must add something of value – making it better or broader or more universal or more accessible.

The importance of trust is inextricably connected to the *Power of Progression*. With trust, people see that such progress will be the inevitable of the struggle to overcome obstacles. The Romans tried

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<sup>70</sup> Clark, Kenneth, *Ibid*, p 3.

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to live this belief as an illusion, and the longer the illusion was unfulfilled, the more elusive it became, until the dream drifted away, to be replaced with a progression of psychopathic leaders like Caligula or Nero.

## *The Fallacy and Delusion of War*

In the early years of the Roman Republic, civil war became not a horrible tragedy but a normal routine – the price of doing business, so to speak. In the final analysis, the only way to sustain the Roman system was by ever-expanding the borders of the Empire, perpetuating the conquest, subduing revolts, and garnering more slaves. Every edge of the Empire was in constant revolt. It's no wonder that Christianity with its promise of peace, justice, and love – all the elements missing in Rome – was so embraced by a society yearning for something else.

The figure below shows that over time, the Greeks attempted to avoid the high cost of war, but the Romans were depleted year after year.

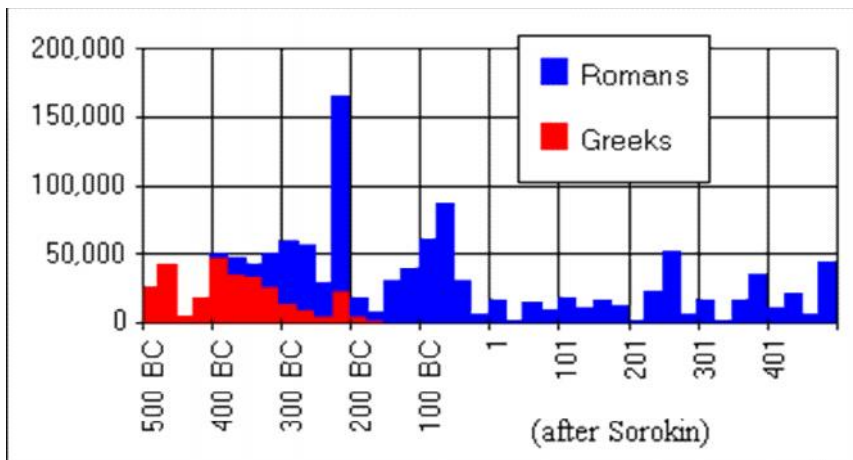


Figure 1: Battlefield Deaths During Greek & Roman Era

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Another study came up with these very rough estimates of the Total Losses (all sides) from the carnage:

○ Decline and Fall:	3.0M
○ Jewish Wars:	1.9M
○ Gladiators:	1.0M
○ Gallic War:	1.0M
○ All Punic Wars:	1.0M
○ Civil Wars:	0.3M
○ Cimbri-Teutoni War:	0.3M
○ Boudica's Revolt:	0.15M
○ Juleo-Claudian Paranoia:	0.028M
○ <b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>over 8M</b>

Virtually every Roman generation was embroiled in a Civil War. The Romans seem to have chosen Civil Wars -- wars of power without vision or purpose, not Revolutions which were based on ideas and ideals. Why? Because a nation without vision, purpose, and ideals cannot trust itself – its people are always seeking the low safe ground of security and wealth, not the high challenging peaks of possibility and revelation.

Thus the Roman culture created enormous amounts of material opulence built on the backs of slaves, but did not produce the social or technical innovations that are part and parcel of a truly great nation.

Destruction, in and of itself, is only bad if it that which is destroyed fails to be replaced or renewed with something better. This is the principle of the seasons. On this matter, Rome as a civilization failed.

Kenneth Clark comments on a civilization's willingness to fight. He states:

*All great nations, in their early stages, are based on success in war.....Fighting, fighting, fighting. ...  
Rome collapsed ... [because] it was exhausted. ... they created chaos; and into that chaos came real barbarians like the Huns,*

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*who were totally illiterate and destructively hostile to what they couldn't understand.*

*The early Christian Church had dissipated its strength by theological controversies, carried on for three centuries with incredible violence and ingenuity. In the middle of the seventh century there appeared a new force with faith, energy, a will to conquer and an alternative culture: Islam....In a miraculously short time – about fifty years – the classical world was overrun. Only its bleached bones stood out against the Mediterranean sky.<sup>71</sup>*

For Romans, the fight was always about power, dominance, and control, not about principles and ideals. A fight without purpose or meaning is meant only for fools and bullies, not for those courageous enough to stand for their values and vision.

The Greeks did try to resist, and their last ounce of spunk left them in 85 BC when Sulla laid siege to the Athens and the people succumbed as famine and disease racked their remaining spirit. What was left of Greek independence in Alexandria, the last remaining bastion of Greek culture, was foolishly bargained away in the lurid romance of Antony and Cleopatra in 39 BC.

A nation that defines itself principally by either its wars or its conquests will be lost. This is as true today as it was then.

One characteristic that distinguished the classical Greeks from the Romans was how they addressed differentials in thinking and culture. From the time of Heraclitus in 500 BC, and then later with Socrates, and epitomized with Alexander, the Greeks danced with differential energy, seeing polarities and diversity as part of the great majesty of unity and synergy. When they conquered a culture, they embraced its culture.

Rome never mastered this art of differential energy, and never seemed to want to. For the Romans, differences were a contest of wills, a winner and a loser, a time for the conqueror to vanquish and subjugate for might always made right.

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<sup>71</sup> Clark, Kenneth, Ibid, p 18,4, 7

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## ***KNOWLEDGE IS NEITHER WISDOM NOR CREATIVITY***

The Romans filled themselves with the knowledge of the Greeks, but never their wisdom, particularly the creative inquiry that produces breakthroughs. They mimed Aristotle, but no Roman accepted the challenge that Plato did with Socrates, or Aristotle with Plato – to build a new construct based on their mentor, but in doing so, challenge their mentor’s beliefs, accepting some, but generating the next level of thinking.

Shame, sorrowful shame.

As we look around at our institutions, we see so much of this happening today. How many teachers give our young the knowledge of the past, but fail to provide the wisdom, and more importantly a sense of the passion that drove civilizations of the past to greatness.

The truth is never fully contained in knowledge, because knowledge is inherently about what has past. The real truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth is equally held within the explorations and the discoveries of the future.

To fulfill the quest for the freedom truth will bring, we must also brace ourselves for the disturbing revelations the truth will bring, as the Gospel of Thomas foretells. Real truth often is destructive of old truths, and thus tumultuous.

### ***The False Ideal of the Power Elite***

Neither did the Roman intellectuals seem to be able to sway the political process. Certainly they did try, Cicero was the most eloquent example and he paid dearly with his life, being exterminated by the Second Triumvirate.

Yet in Rome there seemed not to be enough of the defiant ones to stoke the flames passionately and persuasively like the heroes of the American Revolution:

Nathan Hale: *“Give me liberty or give me death;*

Thomas Paine: *“Government is at best a necessary evil, and at worst an intolerable one;”*

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John Hancock – *“I’ll write my name so large that King George is sure to see it!”*

As Kenneth Clark looked back across the eras of time, he noted that the Roman Empire expired because it was exhausted. So too the Christian Church. It stressed themselves out fighting to maintain a control of people who didn’t want their rule.

The best way to keep a civilization from becoming exhausted is to retain an idealism and enlightenment as the capstone of our realism.

The American ideals -- *of the people, by the people, and for the people* -- never took root in the Roman culture, perhaps because the power elite was threatened by such an aspiration. They never seemed to understand, as in the words of Henry Clay:

*“Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the people.”*

Often we use the term “Law and Order” as the symbolic way of addressing what makes for good, stable governance. After studying the Roman system, I come to a different conclusion. The concept “Law and Order” came from a ruling class of people, wishing to impose the power of authority on their subordinates.

The average person only wants law and order if they have been experiencing a world of chaos and confusion. What people really want, and so seldom get from government, is to be able to *trust their government to provide safety and fairness*. If the people don’t receive *trust, safety, and fairness* from a government or judicial process, then they fall back on *law and order* as a poor substitute, like a starving man will gladly eat mere bread and water.

A hundred years after the fall of the Roman Republic in 100 BC, Livy considered the Republic to be one of the great innovations in governance. With great pride historians told the story of how the Republic dated to 500 BC. With pride they extolled the Republic’s Constitution, not mentioning it was never written. The historians bragged how the Republic had put a

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system of checks and balances was in place, suggesting, perhaps that the Roman Dictatorships might consider such a reform, but no widespread movement ever seemed to materialize, or, if it did, it was quickly repressed.

However, by 133 BC, a continuing series of crises, changes in the slavery, land ownership, and civil rights triggered power plays proved too much for the Republic. The fundamental ideal of *res publica* – the essential thing of the people – was being lost. Assassinations, slave riots, and wars pushed military leaders into the forefront, and they suspended the normal functioning of the government in favor of military rule. With no written constitution, reforms became more difficult as various military, patrician, and plebian forces jockeyed for power.

By 100 BC, the Republic was finished, although it continued to operate symbolically in spite of Dictators like Sulla and Caesar and later the Emperors all had full veto power over the Senate, which meant it had no power to do anything.

The nature of the political system of governance was carefully laid out by Greek historian Polybius (whose analysis was instrumental in the design of the United States Constitution and the separation of powers). Polybius was the first historian to insist on interviewing primary sources – the leaders of the day – in developing his understanding of how things worked and why people did what they did.

Polybius clearly defined the powers of different components of the government (republic), the rights of people, the process of voting, and the nature of the unwritten constitution. Importantly, Polybius lays out what he believes is the source of Roman power, which had just defeated its rival, Carthage, stating it was because Rome had become a melting pot of people in which all people have a say and contribute. Therefore the way of thinking is varied which ultimately sparks more individuality and creativity and ultimately contributes to the greater good of Rome.

Polybius' writing was available to all subsequent Roman historians, such as Livy, as well as members of the impotent



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Senate. Despite having this knowledge available, no one took action between 100BC and the fall six hundred years later to restore the system that made Rome great. Thus innovation in a system of governance took a back seat to power, greed, and fear, which captured the attention of Rome to its ultimate demise.

## ***Conviction and Innovation or Mimicry***

Conviction and commitment are central themes in the success of a flourishing civilization. But these must be born from something deeper than an achieving a materialistic goal or faith in an ideal. Great nations achieve great things because their vision and trust instills greatness in its people. A society that aspires greatness finds its energy not in the enforcement of its might but in inspiration of its motives.

This greatness is birthed by parentage -- from a mother with wisdom and a father with courage, both conceiving their to-be-born with an inspired vision of what will be brought forth.

In Rome, the lack of conviction also brought with it the lack of focus and intensity, all necessary for successful innovation. The Romans knew the Greek words, but felt not the song, they wore the clothes, but dreamed not the ideals. The Roman Empire ended up being a shadow of the Greek. There are emulators but few original thinkers, save Augustine. The scope of their vision narrowed to nothingness. Homer is emulated by Virgil, Demosthenes by Cicero, Alexander by Caesar, Pericles by Fabius, Hippocrates by Galen. While emulation is the greatest of complements, the Roman civilization in its 700 years of dominance produced little that was original. Clark comments that:

*Civilization means something more than energy and will and creative power....*

*[It too means] a sense of permanence...*

*Wanderers are in a continual state of flux.*

*They don't feel the need to look forward or backward, beyond [today or tomorrow].*

Understandably the rapid change in today's world, what Schumpeter referred to as capitalism's *creative destruction*, has

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created a tragic sense of impermanence, a transiency resembling a shuffling through life, rather than having a sense of purpose or destiny along with a commitment to that vision.

Following Ruskin's advice, we must turn to examine Roman Art - while beautiful, at best it's just that: it's "pretty," -- but Roman art is simply not imaginative; it copies the Greek, but lacks the passion and commitment of the originators'.

The result: in their literature, for every Homer's *Odyssey* & *Iliad*, the Romans had to create Virgil's *Aeneid*. In comparing the two, Homer's work is a spontaneous story, a folk epic, while Virgil's work is a contrivance to give Rome a place and beginning in history, it's beautiful, but created as a conscious effort to stand as a literary epic.

Virgil's version is like a remake of a movie, and you know the ending before you start reading.

For a modern example: Film star Errol Flynn played *Robin Hood* in the first 1938 version. He was dashing, dynamic, and excited audiences everywhere. The movie is a classic. I'm never bored watching it.

Kevin Costner was cast in Flynn's role for the movie remake in 1991. The cinematography is better, the special effects more dramatic, but the performance is hollow compared to the original. Or compare Sean Connery, *James Bond* in 007 to more recent characters playing the role.

### ***Mimicry turns to Delusion by Design***

The problem with mimicry is that it runs the risk of becoming delusional, based on a myth that people start believing. (A myth is half lie, half truth, paraded as a full truth). This is what happened in Rome. Even the astute Cahill got trapped in some of this delusion, as we will see from his commentary:

*Having absorbed, both politically and culturally, the lofty civilization of the Greeks...*

[no this is only a half truth - Rome "got the words but not the music" -- the "brain but not the soul" -- of Greece] *the*

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*Romans needed to establish its own legitimacy to rule and to overwhelm. To the Greeks, the Romans were cocky and underbred. To the Romans, the Greeks were too clever by half, and more than a little unsavory.*

*Simplicity is the virtue and complexity the vice. [the Greeks had discovered that synergy, not contrivance, is the best answer to complexity, something lost on the Romans]*

*In Virgil's new myth, the forthright Rome is the moral superior of sneaky Greece .... the Greeks won through duplicity what they could not win fair and square on the battlefield.... and (surprise!) actually the older civilization ... Virgil makes his new myth unforgettable by framing it in a new language that rivals anything Greece ever produced: a heroic but flexible Latin that still rings down the ages. [Yes, but the simpler Latin lacked the spiritual insights and progressive thoughts of the Greek.]<sup>72</sup>*

Virgil is delusion by design. It was not an artistic piece, like Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, or Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, but instead it was a work commissioned by none other than Octavian, the Emperor of Rome

To be sure, when Octavian commissioned Virgil to write the *Aeneid*, Octavian must have set the requirements and specifications the work must meet -- most probably: "outdo the Greeks, make the story older and bolder than Homer, glorify the Romans over the Greeks to help erase the Roman insecurity complex."

Thus the *Aeneid* was an artifice: a guilefully crafted contrivance designed as a stratagem to bolster a legitimacy for the illusion of grandeur, not provide a vision essential to the future of the people. (In psychiatry this is now called "delusions of grandeur.") Then be sure the myth was taught and flaunted all over the Empire and stocked on every library shelf, public and private.

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<sup>72</sup> Cahill, *Ibid*, p 43-44

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The problem then, like today, people start drinking their own bathwater. After a generation or two passed, people inevitably forgot the *Aeneid* was just a commissioned contrivance with some basis in reality, but not really true, much like a movie such as *Gone with the Wind* or *Camelot*, and like a movie, children begin to believe it is historical fact. Now myth becomes delusion which becomes reality, the fiction is now fact.

Myth being taken as fact can have ever-lasting implications. Writing fourteen hundred years later, Machiavelli, a scholar and political advisor, seeking to understand the nature of political power, turned extensively to whatever writings of the classical scholars was available to him. Machiavelli, using Livy's (Tacitus Livius) account of the founding of Rome, mistook selective facts mixed with myth and hyperbole for fact.

This is not necessarily bad if the myth contains the highest standards, like our myths of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and a society aspires to that standard. But that's not what happened in Rome, as the story of Cicero will illustrate. Again, we continue with Cahill's insights:

*If Virgil was the great teacher of language and style, Cicero was the great teacher of argument and disputation. As Virgil's Greek counterpart was Homer, so Cicero's was Demosthenes ...studied ...as paragons of the "art" of persuasion.... If the Aeneid is language as metaphor, as the sacramental ritualizing of human experience, Cicero's speeches are language as a practical tool.... The ancients held the practical use of words in much higher regard than we do.*

*But we are made uncomfortable and bored by Cicero's elaborate coaching of us in all tricks of his trade – the many techniques for convincing others to act the way we want them to. For Cicero, "to speak from the heart" would be the rashest foolishness; one must always speak from calculation: What do I want to see happen here? What are the desires of my audience? How can I motivate them to do my will? How shall I disguise my weakest arguments? How do I dazzle my listeners so they are no longer able to reason*

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*matters through independently?*<sup>73</sup> [Does this sound like today's "spin doctors?"]

Ancient historian, Plutarch adds to this assessment of Cicero that his character was impeccable, considered a man of honor and integrity, but Plutarch not so generous about Cicero's personality:

*Cicero's love of mockery often ran him into scurrility ... paying too little regard to what was decent, ... making long series of jokes upon absurd paradoxes .... boasting of himself in his orations ... extolling not only his deeds and actions, but his orations also ... guilty of an uncontrollable appetite for distinction. ...*

Earlier I added a qualification to Ruskin's commentary about the books of civilization:

*The greatest books of a civilization's Art  
are neither their Paintings  
nor Literature  
nor Music,  
nor Edifices,  
but rather their willingness to push the edges of their  
... Learning,  
... Wisdom,  
... Creativity,  
... Humaneness, and  
... Leadership,  
for these are the Art of Arts that  
... define the Spirit and Future of a Civilized Nation;  
... determine the Course of History; and  
... set the Fate of its People.*

Of Learning, Wisdom, Creativity, Humaneness, and Leadership, these five are so essential. Learning, if it continues on a progressive trajectory enables a civilization to Create, to evolve and adapt. Wisdom integrates the knowledge from the learning

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<sup>73</sup> Cahill, Ibid, p 47

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into Humaneness, the compassion and conscience that leads to trust and justice. And Leadership ensures that our learning and wisdom is translated into inspired action that produces meaningful results. One can only truly know a leader's soul by the quality of the decisions they make, not the values they espouse.

As we launch into our own futures, we must think about our own learning, wisdom, and leadership, which seems severely lacking today. One in particular is trust, about which I will comment more below.

### ***Power of Expression of Ideas in Language***

Language determines much of the way we think. It can open or close the mind. As German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said:

*The limits of my language are the limits of my world.*

In language, while Varro labored to create the multi-volume *Lingua Latina*, Latin's expression of key concepts in human relations were stripped of their real spiritual meaning. Elegant, idealistic, and spiritual words were replaced with horribly debased Latin equivalents. To name just a few:

Greek word: *Metanoia* -- Shifting the heart and mind to a higher level; to understand beyond

Latin version: *Repentance*.

Or the Greek *Harmartia* -- to miss the mark; to aim too low

Latin: *Sin*.

Or the Greek: *Philotimo* -- Love of Honor

Latin: simply *Honor*.

In matters of the heart, soul, and spirit, simplicity of word may not be an asset as it strips deep meaning away and leaves us with the version "for dummies." The Greek words were a rope to climbing out of a sea of storms, while the Roman word left us then to drown, and that's what happened.

As we proceed into the future and look back on our recent past, we can take small solace in the invention of many new words

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for our science, but so very few for our spiritual and social relationships. The Greeks were masters at the creation of words to reflect the nature of the world they imagined for their future. The Romans clearly were horribly deficient in this skill, not because they lacked the intelligence, but because they lacked the divine inspiration and the will to carry it to fruition.

## ***Fundamentalism as a Guise for Authoritarianism***

Anywhere fundamentalism prevails, darkness, despair, and depression is sure to follow. That is most evident in today's Muslim world where the limits of thinking impact the limits of compassion as well. Christian fundamentalism also imposes severe constraints on thinking, interpretation, and progression of thought.

As John Dean states in his book: *Conservatives Without Conscience*:

*"How have conservatives succeeded in coalescing as a political force?*

*The simple answer is through the power of negative thinking, and specifically the ability to find common enemies.... Today's conservatives ... define themselves by what they oppose, which is anything and everything they perceive to be liberal....*

*Without the enemy of [Liberalism] to serve as nemesis and model, conservative politics would lack its organizing principle."<sup>74</sup>*

The personality of the authoritarian, whether it was Caligula or Hitler, exploits fears and needs for security, holding power over people by fear, not vision.

Innovation is the first virtue to disappear in the shadow of fundamentalism, for there is no room for the frictional questioning that innovation requires. Questions are the heart, head, and soul of innovative inquiry. In an atmosphere of inquisition, the risks of inquiry are replaced by the fears of prosecution.

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<sup>74</sup> Dean, John, *Conservatives without Conscience*, Penguin, 2007, p 23

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The closing of the Roman Libraries in 391 AD did not *cause* the fall of the Empire, it was already dying a slow death. But the closing did *accelerate* its demise, because the world was closing in on Rome, and learning, real learning not rote learning, starts with asking disturbing questions that reveal another layer of truth and insight. Freezing out any critical thinking at a time of increasing stress was exactly the *wrong* direction for the declining Empire.

### ***THE SCOURGE OF FEAR AND THE ROOT OF EVIL***

Few classical experts address the issue of rule by fear in the Roman world in any meaningful way. However, the amplitude of stress in Rome, particularly for leaders must have been overpowering to many, who preferred a more safe and just world. (I must confess, I am filled with compassion, anxiety, and anger writing about this two thousand years later: the magnitude of the atrocities is so overwhelming.) I've already told the story of Crassus crucifying 5-7,000 slaves to line the Appian Way in 73 BC. Just prior to that, General Sulla had marched on Rome, and installed himself as Dictator and issued a proscription<sup>75</sup> list of his enemies earmarked for execution. It's estimated that between 86-80 BC he annihilated 4,700 Romans who were loyal to his dictator, Marius.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The new dictator introduced a non-judicial edict: proscription. The list of people represented either his personal enemies or wealthy individuals whose money and possessions were earmarked for transfer to the dictator for personal use or to pay his army. When the proscription list was publicly posted, a reign of terror ensued with rewards offered for the death or capture of any name on the list. Sulla's eventual death toll would reach epidemic proportions. In the first series alone, as many as 40 senators and 1,600 members of the equestrian class were murdered. Before long, in order to exact extreme control the list grew exponentially. There was simply no place to hide or run. People taking refuge in the temples were murdered; others were lynched by the Roman mob. An intricate network of spies kept Sulla informed and at his whim, tracked down anyone who might be considered an enemy of the state.

<sup>76</sup> Stuart Flexner, *The Pessimist's Guide to History* : Cannae (216 BCE): 50,000-70,000 Romans and 6,000 Carthaginians Spartacus Revolt (73



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In suppressing the Jewish revolt of 66-70 AD and the Bar Kokhba revolt 60 years later, it's estimated that at least 500,000 and probably closer to 1,000,000 Jews were slaughtered, the worse killing of Jews prior to the Holocaust. These were just an example of the continuing saga of civil wars – wars within the Roman boundaries of the Empire against people so dissatisfied they were willing to risk their lives to overthrow the Roman yoke of oppression.

Just for sport, roughly 3,000 gladiators a year were killed, principally in Rome during the period of 106-114 AD.<sup>77</sup> What kind of person would revel in watching others suffer such carnage?

The history of the Roman Empire reads like a continuous round of slaughter. Here is a story from the reign of Theodosius from 390 AD: The population in Thessalonica (located in what is now Greece) were upset with their treatment by a Roman garrison. In the riots, the garrison commander was killed. Theodosius was outraged and, in retaliation, ordered all the spectators in the local circus maximus (arena for chariot races) to be slaughtered. Theodoret, a contemporary witness to these events, reports:

“...the anger of the Emperor rose to the highest pitch, and he gratified his vindictive desire for vengeance by unsheathing the sword most unjustly and tyrannically against all, slaying the innocent and guilty alike. It is said seven thousand perished without any forms of law, and without even having judicial sentence passed upon them; but that, like ears of wheat in the time of harvest, they were alike cut down.”

Civil wars were rampant in Theodosius' regime. Gaul and Briton had been taken over by Roman General Magnus Maximus who then stormed the Roman capital. A set of civil wars broke out across the Empire in 387 that lasted seven years. It was during this time Theodosius issued the decrees that resulted in the destruction

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BCE): 6,000 rebellious slaves crucified along Appian Way. Sulla's Reign of Terror (86-80 BCE): 4,700 Roman supporters of Marius  
<sup>77</sup> Michael Grant, *Gladiators* (1967): 23,000 gladiators fighting under imperial auspices between 106 and 114 CE

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of a large amount of the collections of ancient works in libraries across the Empire.<sup>78</sup> His reign, in the name of Christianity, was just another Roman bloodletting.

Some estimates calculate the number killed in wars and rebellions during the Empire's rule at roughly 8 million, more than one million every century. To put this into perspective, the estimated population of all of Europe west of the Urals in 200 BC was about 36 million.<sup>79</sup> Again, to put that number into perspective in the modern era, the United States, in the twentieth century was involved in World Wars I, II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. Deaths from those wars totaled about 600,000.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> From Wikipedia: In 380 Theodosius declared "Catholic Christianity" the only legitimate Imperial religion, ending state support for the traditional Roman religion. The Christian persecution of paganism under Theodosius I began in 381, after the first couple of years his reign in the Eastern Roman Empire. In the 380s, Theodosius I reiterated Constantine's ban on Pagan sacrifice, prohibited haruspicy on pain of death, pioneered the criminalization of Magistrates who did not enforce anti-Pagan laws, broke up some pagan associations and destroyed Pagan temples. Between 389-391 he emanated the infamous "Theodosian decrees," which established a ban on Paganism; visits to the temples were forbidden, remaining Pagan holidays abolished, the eternal fire in the Temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum extinguished, the Vestal Virgins disbanded, auspices and witch crafting punished. Theodosian refused to restore the Altar of Victory in the Senate House, as asked by Pagan Senators. He authorized or participated in the destruction of many temples, holy sites, images and objects of piety throughout the empire and participated in actions by Christians against major Pagan sites. He issued a comprehensive law that prohibited any Pagan ritual even within the privacy of one's home. Paganism was now "proscribed," (targeted for annihilation) a "religio illicita". He is likely to have suppressed the Ancient Olympic Games, whose last record of celebration is from 393.

<sup>79</sup> Francois Crouzet, *A History of the European Economy, 1000-2000* (University Press of Virginia: 2001) p.1.

<sup>80</sup> Combat Deaths Only; Source Wikipedia Other causes were responsible for higher death counts, particularly in the Civil War, where over 600,000 died.

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The respect we have for life was not shared by Romans. Let me illustrate this taking a page out of Roman history and putting it into a modern context:

Suppose, after the last Presidential election, the Republicans were extremely upset the President had abused his Constitutional authority. Instead of passing or enforcing laws to remedy the problem or taking the case to the Supreme Court, sixty of the Republican leaders decided they must get rid of the President. The best way they could do this is as he was readying to deliver the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress.

As he arrived to deliver the speech, the House and Senate Republican leaders took knives and in cold blood stabbed the President in the back. Then another twenty Republicans participated in stabbing him dozens of times more!

- How would you react?

Then suppose Senator John McCain, who had run against the President in the last election and who did not know of the conspiracy, was outraged by the horrific ordeal. McCain then delivers a set of scathing speeches across the nation excoriating the members Congress that participated in such a dastardly deed.

After the deceased President is buried, the newly appointed President (former Vice President who had never liked Senator McCain), takes over. The Vice President issues an executive order for McCain to be executed by firing squad without a trial. The new President then finds the top 1,500 supporters of McCain's last election campaign and orders them to be shot on site and their homes and bank accounts impounded for the President's personal use.

- Would you be shocked?

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- If you had voted for McCain, would you be afraid his opposition would put you on their hit-list to be rubbed out, Mafioso style?
- Would you actively campaign for reform and impeachment, or duck for cover?

Now, if that isn't enough, after McCain's execution, the new President wants to show everyone how they must obey his command without hesitation. McCain's head and hands are lopped off because he had been far too eloquent in his opposition both verbally and in his written communiqués.

- Would you be outraged?
- Would you think the nation was crazy?

But more. To flex his muscles and show his power further, the new President orders McCain's head and hands to be hung over central speaker's podium in Congress for all Americans to shudder and behold.

- Now what would you think?

Now also suppose that this was not an isolated incident by a crazed leader, but was the normal procedure every time there was an election.

- Would you be interested in life itself?
- Where would your priorities be?
- How would you think about things like your family? Love? Friendship? Security?
- How would you make decisions about your future?

That's exactly what happened in real life in Rome in 44-43 BC. The names were Caesar, assassinated by Brutus and Cassius. Cicero spoke out to object, and his arch enemy Mark Antony had

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him assassinated, too. Then Mark Antony seized the reins of power.

The noble vision for the Roman Republic soon died from a homicidal mechanism called “proscription.” With that suicide the energy and imagination of Rome died too. Certainly they avoided confronting this fact by making things bigger and more massive, not by creating something new. By the beginning of the first century BC, the vision and commitment to Republican ideals was held by only a handful like Cicero.

Murder and killing is the most effective means of instilling fear into a population. Survival is the basic instinct of every living thing. We are hard-wired to preserve life. A leader can move people three basic ways: punishment, rewards, and inspiration. The Romans chose the former, the Greeks the latter. The former triggers the reptilian part of our brain, the latter the pre-frontal cortex of part of the brain connected with innovation and thinking. This may have had an important impact on innovation.

Evil is not just psychopathic butchery, its roots come from fear, which is the source of all destruction. True, ancient history, just as today, was filled with psychopathic beasts like Caligula then or Hitler recently.

As will be discussed later, psychopathic leaders become masters at using fear to manipulate whole populations.

At the most formative time in Rome's evolution, the period before, during, and after Caesar, fear and uncertain prevailed at a time vision and possibility should have reigned supreme. Proscription, the horrible and illegal act of annihilating one's enemies and absconding with their wealth was never made illegal and enforced. Thus no just sense of fairness could replace a grievous sense of fear. With some notable exceptions, such as Marcus Aurelius, for generation upon generation the tension of terror was held over the Roman people like the proverbial sword of Damocles. Fear is not fertile ground upon which to sow the seeds of the future.

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But to center the blame on one evil leader is to focus on the symptom, not the cause. At the core of any civilization's failure will be found two forces in opposition to each other: Fear and Courage. Aristotle said the latter was the most important quality one can have. When Rome finally fell, the leaders of Rome had no more will to fight the evil barbarians at their gate; instead they made a Faustian bargain, and ultimately sold whatever semblance of their souls to an evil even greater than they. Kenneth Clark remarks:

*A world of fear and darkness [is] ready to inflict horrible punishment for the smallest infringement of a taboo.<sup>81</sup>*

*Thinking about the almost incredible epoch of the Roman Empire tells one something about the nature of civilization. It shows that however complex and solid it seems, it is actually quite fragile.*

*It can be destroyed. What are its enemies?*

*First of all fear – fear of war, fear of invasion, fear of plague and famine, [I might add fear of cruelty and injustice] that make it simply not worthwhile constructing things or planting trees or even planning next year's crops.<sup>82</sup>*

But it was more than just this kind of fear. Ultimately the Roman Empire failed for the same reason the French Revolution failed or the Soviet Union failed or Mao Tse Tung failed. Their respective "Reigns of Terror" cannot hold people in check. Fear and Trust are natural antagonists. Fear will burn itself out. If civilization is unfortunate, one reign of fear will be replaced by another just as bad, as has happened with so many military coups.

Yet, every once in a while, a superior force of enlightened reason and reality takes hold, as did in the military occupations of Japan and Germany after the second world war. Our current peace with those nations and their prosperity today is testimony to that enlightened thinking. Hopefully we shall never forget what we must continue to learn about fear and courage.

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<sup>81</sup> Clark, *Ibid*, p; 2

<sup>82</sup> Clark, *Ibid*, p 3-4

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## *Diabolical Impact of Fear on Innovation*

In the seven hundred years of Roman hegemony, the level of innovation paled compared to the Greek era, which was in ascendancy for three hundred years, then hung on in the shadow of Rome for another three or four hundred years. Yes, there were some Roman advances in engineering, which can be seen in the coffered ceiling of the Pantheon, or the capacity of aqueducts, such as the Pont du Gard, to bear up to tremendous loads, or the ingenuity of the original Coliseum's convertibility design to enable the arena to be used for gladiatorial fights or naval battles, or armament improvements, or the invention of concrete. However, with the exception of the latter, real breakthroughs in technical invention, scientific discovery, or social innovation was negligible. To illustrate, just try to name a thought leader – like Plato, Euclid, or Archimedes -- in any field from the Roman era to compare with their Greek counterparts.

The impacts of fear have been quite well studied. People respond to fear in one of three ways: Fight, Freeze, or Flight. They don't innovate, except to find innovative ways to revolt.

When one looks back on the Roman era, the lack of innovation has a thundering impact on the system of government. Unlike the Greeks who were constantly seeking new ways to improve the way their government functioned, Rome got stuck in a power paradigm. Effectively, after the fall of the Republic at the end of the second century BC, Rome kept the illusion of the Republic but defaulted to a Dictatorship that was to continue for the next five hundred years. Innovation, evolution, continuous adaptation, and intelligent use of government to serve the people were ideal that simply were not part of the Roman belief system.

It was not for lack of ideas, but lack of commitment to a better future.

## *Cultural Impacts on Roman Behavior*

People's genetic structure has not changed in the last 2500 years. Yet in this time Europe has been the site of the Greek era of Enlightenment, the Roman era of Conquest, the Dark Ages of

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Depression, the Middle Ages of Religion, the Renaissance of Rebirth, and the Modern Ages of Industrialization and Information.

How could so many different behaviors and results come from the same biology? The answer is in the nature of culture. How a leader frames the culture of the over-arching culture will reinforce or subordinate a mosaic of different results.

The Greek culture reinforced the core drives to *Create* and to *Bond*<sup>83</sup>- what Socrates and Plato called in *Phaedrus* the “higher drives.” (see *Phaedrus* story below) These drives trigger and control the idea of conscience, morality, and virtue, upon which trust is built. On the other hand, the Roman culture reinforced the drives to *Acquire* and *Defend*. In *Phaedrus*, these were called the “lower drives.”

All innovation is dependent upon collaboration, and all collaboration is built on trust. With no foundation for trust, we have none of the quality relationships that propel an innovation engine.

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Phaedrus, a beautiful story, told by Socrates 2,370 years ago, illustrates the Drivers of Human Behavior.  
*(synopsis of the Greek Translation by R.P. Lynch)*

Man’s life – his chariot -- is driven by two powerful forces.

One, represented figuratively as a stately White Steed, symbolizes the Higher Spirit willingly commanded by goodness, love and beauty. The other, a wanton Black Stallion, representing the Lower Spirit, is unruly, resistant to any rational command, full of wrath and disparagement toward both the charioteer and the good horse, always resisting the commands of the charioteer. These two powerful driving forces (the horses) are not in natural harmony.

When commanded by the charioteer to obey wisdom and justice, the good steed obeys, and the wanton stallion rebels, turning against

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<sup>83</sup> See Volume Four for details on the driving forces of human behavior



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both his commander: the charioteer, and his companion: the White Steed. The Black Stallion hurls insults, calling them cowards and sissies.

Having been reprimanded by the bad horse for lack of manhood and courage, the noble White Steed is now reticent to obey the Charioteers' commands, who now has to fight his own team of horses, dragging them neighing and resisting .

The wild Black Stallion's abusive language angers the Charioteer, who punishes the wild beast.

Finally, after being forced to his haunches multiple times, the Black Stallion is tamed and humbled, and reluctantly follows the will of the Charioteer toward a more perfect destiny, where Fate has ordained there shall be no friendship where evil resides; a perfect communion shall exist among friends only where goodness prevails.

Upon the Charioteer meeting his dear friends, the wanton Black Stallion wants pleasures in return for his pain and suffering. Bursting with inner passions which he does not understand, the stallion craves physical, erotic, not spiritual love.

At this point, both the charioteer and the White Steed oppose the Black Stallion, arguing, casting shame, and trying to dispel his passionate advances with wisdom and reason.

Socrates then proposes that true happiness depends upon self-control. Once the Black Stallion joins the noble White Steed (who represents the better elements of the mind that lead to order and wisdom), the Charioteer will live his life in harmony and happiness, thus emancipating the virtuous elements of the spirit. In this event, the two gallant horses, working in unison, become winged for flight; now being divinely blessed they rocket skyward.

If, however, the lower spirit of the Black Stallion prevails and wisdom wanes, the stallion will persistently convince the white steed to follow his wanton ways. After all, a good drunken spree of blissful debauchery will solve all their sorrows. The two can then delude themselves in their false illusion of love and happiness; they will use their intellect to rationalize more wantonness, always yearning for, yet never finding their winged-glory, but thoroughly convinced that their delusionary madness is the epitome of bliss, now having bred in their

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spirit the vulgar qualities applauded by the crowd -- bowling around the world as fools forever.

This story is still as relevant as it was the day it was told to Plato. In the story the Black Stallion is the Ego, and the White Steed is the Soul. Only when the White Steed (soul) becomes the guiding force, and the Black Stallion (ego) supports and helps drive in the same direction of the White Steed, does the Charioteer fly to the heights of possibility! Plato lucid expositions about the soul are still considered some of the finest writing on the subject.<sup>84</sup>

### *The Great Greek Experiment*

Lest this discourse about the Greeks sound like overly varnished admiration of the Greeks as the final epitome of human culture, let me be specific. Greece was humanity's first great "experiment" in cultural design with an objective to bring out the finest in human nature, deemphasizing while acknowledging, the more base desires. America was the second great experiment.

Like every scientist knows, many, many experiments are failures. Tenacity and optimism in the face of adversity, and unwavering commitment to ideals in spite of the dark nights of the soul are qualities of the true champion. Edison, in his search for an ideal filament for the light bulb experimented with all sorts of materials. He constructed 3000 theories, and more than 6,000 materials." Edison was courageous and tenacious; in only two cases did the experiments prove the truth of his theories.<sup>85</sup>

In retrospect, some of their experiments may have looked foolish, or unwise. This is nature of an experimental culture. And so too the Greek political system had to evolve. For example, the Greeks eventually had to abandon their democracy, for it often degenerated into mob rule, replacing it with a Republic of wiser representatives.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> St. Paul used Plato as a foundation for the New Testament Epistles.

<sup>85</sup> Boyd, Thomas, *Prophet of Progress*, E.P. Dutton & Co. 1961, p 114; Lathrop, George Parsons, *Talks with Edison*" in Harpers magazine, Vol. 80 (February 1890), p. 434

<sup>86</sup> See Plato's *Republic*

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As political historian of the times, Polybius observed, republics degenerated into dictatorships (such as what happened to the Romans) unless there was an effective system of checks and balances. Our American system of checks and balances between the executive, representative, and judicial branches is a direct outgrowth of Polybius' sage advice, which was followed by our Founding Fathers.

Evolution of thinking is normal in a society that experiments. In a healthy culture, experiments that fail are simply considered "learning." When Thomas Edison explored three thousand theories and twice as many experiments in perfecting the light bulb, each one "failing," he was questioned on how he was able to persevere. Edison's response was quite illuminating:

*Why man! I haven't failed!*

*I now have learned thousands of ways not to make a light bulb!*

However, in unhealthy cultures, where thinking has stopped evolving, experiments that don't succeed are considered "failures," a sure sign rigor mortis has set in.

Today one may wonder about Greek sexual experimentations. Again, Plato's sage counsel:

*Plato believed strongly in the moral power which is developed with the human family, more so in his later years than his younger.....believing that the family unit was the most natural form of human fellowship which could effectively execute the responsibilities and virtues needed to benefit the state.*

*Therefore, in his last great work, the Laws, ...Stability ....depends upon the continuing family:*

*When our plan takes actual shape, we shall, God willing, deal with domestic architecture first, and*

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*make our marriage law the crown and completion of our work in this kind. (Laws VI 778b)<sup>87</sup>*

Socrates and Plato emphasized a similar point in the Phaedrus story” believing one’s sexual proclivities should not be the definition of their identity; the quality of one’s character and soul should be an individual’s hallmark.

### ***The Energy We Receive From Trust***

In the larger sense, the fall of Rome came because the people could not trust their government, nor their fellow man, nor their culture for its lack of vision and ideals.

Just as the Roman empire collapsed, in large measure, because no one could trust its leaders, nor its institutions, nor its vision for the future, so today, distrust is equally disturbing. Trust in institutions in the U.S. and Europe has eroded to precipitous levels. When less than a quarter of our citizens in America and Europe trust their government, the very foundations of democracy are in peril. To make matters worse, on both sides of the Atlantic, our most trusted institution is our military. Why? They are the last bastion of safety, security, and honor. Thank God our military academies train our military leaders to respect civilian authority. If this ever fails us, we will have another Caesar or Sulla or a Latin American style dictator.

Fear is the greatest destroyer of trust. Understanding how to create trust in a world of fear will be one of the great achievements

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<sup>87</sup> Dell Ehrlich, *Ibid*, pp 295-296. He goes on to quote Plato’s *Laws*: *I think that the pleasure is to be deemed natural which arises out of the intercourse between men and women; but that the intercourse of men with men, or of women with women, is contrary to nature, and that the bold attempt was originally due to unbridled lust. (Laws I 636c). ...I would command [men] to abstain [from sowing their seed] in any [field] in which it is not likely to grow. (Laws VIII 839) [Author’s Note: much of the confusion about relationships in this era is due to problems in translation of the Greek word for “love,” which in Greek can be Agape (divine love), Storge (motherly love), Eros (erotic love, or Philios (brotherly love). In English, this is all just “love.”*

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of this next generation. Kenneth Clark observed in his book on Civilization:

*It is the lack of confidence [distrust],  
more than anything else that kills civilization.  
Confidence [trust] in the society in which one lives,  
belief in its philosophy,  
belief in its laws,  
and confidence in one's own mental powers...  
a vigorous belief in law and discipline.  
Vigor, energy, vitality: All the great civilizations ..  
have had a weight of energy behind them.*

*People sometimes think that civilization consists of  
fine sensibilities and good conversation and all that.*

*These can be among the agreeable results of civilization,  
but they are not what make a civilization,  
and a society can have these amenities and yet be dead and rigid.*

*We can destroy ourselves with cynicism and disillusion,  
just as effectively as bombs.<sup>88</sup>*

## ***What Kind of Quest?***

Societies with direction have a “quest.” In America in the 1800s, that quest was named “manifest destiny” to signify our dream for the United States to own the territories from Atlantic to Pacific.

The Greek quest could be called a “Meta-Quest” meaning they were seeking something above and beyond. The Roman quest was clearly a “Conquest.” The Romans and Middle Ages were plagued with “Inquest.”

The idea of seeing the world, its history and its future in terms of a “quest” is important. Looking at historian Livy's <sup>89</sup>view of the

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<sup>88</sup> Clark, Ibid, p 4 & 347

<sup>89</sup> Historian Stephen Usher's comments on Livy are illuminating: Livy rarely explores contradictory versions of an event, but selects with an eye to championing Rome's national virtues. Livy depicts all non-

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history of the Roman Empire after its first two centuries of existence, from the remnants we have of his history, he saw the past primarily through the lenses of military conquest. Plutarch, a Greek writing a hundred years after Livy, but still through the Hellenistic lens of his culture, saw the course of history defined not by military conquest, but the character of the people that engaged in interactions.

Examining Roman politics fourteen hundred years after Livy, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote his *Discourses* based on Livy's interpretation of the past contained in his first ten books of Roman History. If Livy had a better understanding of the real dynamics of the failure of the Republic, Machiavelli might have been able to give better advice. Then, two hundred years after Machiavelli, America's founding fathers consulted Machiavelli's *Discourses* in gathering ideas for the fledgling American republic. Machiavelli was not a strong advocate of the ideas contained in either Plato's *Republic* or Aristotle's *Ethics* which he also discounted. The lesson, of course, for anyone writing history (including yours truly) *be careful what you write, for someone in posterity may base many decisions upon your words.*

Machiavelli's influence with the *Prince*, the handbook of guile and deceit, also extended to Elizabethan England<sup>90</sup>. Henry VIII

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Roman races as embodying character flaws that correspond with central Roman virtues: "the Gauls are factious and headstrong, and lack staying power; while the Greeks are better at talking than fighting, and immoderate in their emotional reactions" [Usher, p. 176.]

<sup>90</sup> Bireley, Robert (1990), *The Counter Reformation Prince*, p.14-15, Pole reported that the *Prince* was spoken of highly by Thomas Cromwell in England and had influenced Henry VIII in his turn towards Protestantism, and in his tactics, for example during the Pilgrimage of Grace. A copy was also possessed by the Catholic king and emperor Charles V. In France, after an initially mixed reaction, Machiavelli came to be associated with Catherine de' Medici and the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. As Bireley (1990:17) reports, in the 16th century, Catholic writers "associated Machiavelli with the Protestants, whereas Protestant authors saw him as Italian and Catholic". In fact, he was apparently influencing both Catholic and Protestant kings.

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reportedly used it as a tool to gain advantage over the Pope, and Shakespeare most probably used it as a set of plots for his historic tragedies. Through Shakespeare, the manipulative Machiavelli makes his way deep into Anglo-American culture.

## ***LEADERS WITHOUT CONSCIENCE***

As mentioned earlier, (expanding from Ruskin) civilization's greatest books are those of *Learning*, *Wisdom*, and *Leadership*, because these the explain the "Art of all Arts:

*Building creative, trusting relationships that guide people to deeper understandings, higher insights, and broader horizons*

Taking a broad and holistic view of the Roman leadership model,<sup>91</sup> in particular the period after the demise of the Roman Republic (c.100 BC), that "Leaders Without Conscience"(LWOC) prevailed. And when good leaders did attempt to gain power, they were "proscribed" (targeted for execution and expropriation of their personal assets and wealth) or just assassinated.

The "lack of a conscience" is a critical factor because that is precisely the definition of a psycho-path. The Roman system had no means of screening psychopaths out of the senior leadership positions. To the contrary, the system of succession favored psychopaths.

Consider the history of Roman rule outlined in the preceding pages and the behavior of Generals Sulla, Crassus, Pompey, Brutus, Mark Antony, or later, Caligula. Several of these would be considered in today's world as bona fide psychopaths, and others were at least borderline psychopaths.

On the other side of psychopathy, consider the behavior of Julius Caesar. From our analysis, Caesar was not a LWOC, but lived in a world filled with LWOCs in power. The fact that Caesar

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<sup>91</sup> There are very notable exceptions to this over the 700 year Roman Reign of Power, such as Cicero (who never became Emperor), and the reign of the "Five Good Emperors."(see next footnote).

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did *not* order “proscription” when he became Dictator is one good indication of the existence of a conscience.

However, to survive in a world filled with LWOCs, one must outthink them at every step of the way, even if this means rule by fear and the threat of terror. The same could probably be said also for Julius Caesar’s successor and son Octavian (Caesar Augustus), as well as what Machiavelli and Gibbon referred to as the “Five Good Emperors.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> From Wikipedia: The rulers commonly known as the "Five good emperors" were Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. The term *Five Good Emperors* was coined by the political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli in 1513-17: (from the *Discourses*, Book 1, Chapter X)

“From the study of this history we may also learn how a good government is to be established; for while all the emperors who succeeded to the throne by birth, except Titus, were bad, all were good who succeeded by adoption; as in the case of the five from Nerva to Marcus. But so soon as the empire fell once more to the heirs by birth, its ruin recommenced.”

Machiavelli argued that these adopted emperors, through good rule, earned the respect of those around them: “Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus had no need of praetorian cohorts, or of countless legions to guard them, but were defended by their own good lives, the good-will of their subjects, and the attachment of the senate.”

The 18th-century historian Edward Gibbon, in his work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, opined that their rule was a time when "the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of wisdom and virtue." Gibbon believed these benevolent dictators and their moderate policies were unusual and contrast with their more tyrannical and oppressive successors (their predecessors such as Caesar are not covered by Gibbon in his historical analysis of the Fall of Rome).

Gibbon went so far as to state:

“If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from



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Leaders without Conscience is one dimension that clearly defines the difference between the Greek and Roman eras, there are several other distinguishing features as well.

First is *ethics*, something Aristotle wrote about in great depth.

Second is *relationships*, which Aristotle made the centerpiece of his work on ethics.

Third is *justice*, which Plato expounded upon with eloquence.

Fourth is *community* (*Koinonia*), which is part of the soul of ancient Greece.

Fifth is *honorable behavior*, which was the hallmark of the Stoics.

Sixth is *wisdom*, which seems to have eluded the Romans, but not the Greeks.

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the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom."

More recent historians, while agreeing with many of the details of this analysis, would not entirely agree with Machiavelli and Gibbon's praise of this period. There were more people under the rule of these emperors than the few affluent individuals whose lives are mentioned or recorded in the historical record. A large fraction of the rest were farmers or their dependents. Additionally, Machiavelli's theory that adoption, rather than birth, led to moderate rule is also questionable. A number of Roman Emperors that Machiavelli did not believe were good rulers were adopted, including Tiberius, Caligula and Nero, although each of these also had a familial claim to rule.

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Seventh was *trust*, the quality so missing in Rome that led to its undoing.

All these seven distinct dimensions add up to one uncomfortable but compelling conclusion:

*The Roman culture lacked a conscience,  
which put Rome on a pathway to perdition.*

As we now know from modern psychology, people who are *devoid of conscience* are psychopathic. The Roman Empire, taken from strictly a leadership perspective, consistently -- for centuries beginning at least with Sulla in 85 BC (if not earlier) -- began displaying severe psychopathy which then was reinforced and perpetuated by a series of rewards and punishments that evoked psychopathic behavior from an entire country.

One must ask the question: can normal people exhibit psychopathic behavior? The answer is undoubtedly a sad but resounding "yes!" This is put in clear perspective in Germany in 1933 to 1945. Adolph Hitler, who we would all consider psychopathic, engaged in a reign of terror for twelve years.

Reading his book, *Mein Kampf*, (which sold 250,000 copies) evokes fear in people by blaming the "twin evils"-- Jews and Communism -- for all of Germany's ills. Hitler captured the imagination of the German people by seducing them with an Arian dream of "historic destiny" which would be the future progression with the conquest of new lands. The future of Germany "has to lie in the acquisition of land in the East at the expense of Russia."

Following in the mode of Sulla, Pompey, or Caesar, Hitler pronounced his intent to destroy the Weimar Republic and its parliamentary system of laws and checks and balances, believing it in principle to be corrupt.

Just like the Roman rulers, Hitler's regime was based on terror, fear, injustice, and a total lack of empathy for honoring human life and the rights of people. The Jewish genocide in 70 AD under Roman Rule was no different than the Jewish genocide in Germany in the 20<sup>th</sup> century under Hitler. What every dictator in

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the world detests is anything that resembles a "community of spirit." This is what the Romans detested in the Greeks and in the Jews and in the Spartacus slave revolt.

Hitler had worked tirelessly for two decades removing every ethical standard, principle, and sense of compassion to evoke fear, anger, and rectitude for large scale slaughter of innocent people. Four months before Hitler committed suicide, he expressed this fear in a letter to his power broker, Martin Bormann:

*We use the term Jewish race merely for reasons of linguistic convenience, for in the real sense of the word, and from a genetic point of view, there is no Jewish race. ... The Jewish race is above all a community of the spirit. Spiritual race is of a more solid and more durable kind than natural race.*<sup>93</sup>

Compare this view of the dignity of life to the inscription on the Statue of Liberty

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses,  
yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these: the homeless, tempest tossed,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

By ordering the total extermination of the Jewish people, Hitler was training a nation to more easily engage in future genocides and simultaneously attempting to remove the very code of ethics that made it difficult to conceptualize such large scale slaughter of innocent people. Referred to as "life unworthy of life" (in German: "*Lebensunwertes Leben*"), this motto became a Nazi racial designation of those unworthy "less than human" people were to be "ethanized" in Nazi extermination camps.

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<sup>93</sup> Heinsohn, Gunnar (November 2000). "What Makes the Holocaust a Uniquely Unique Genocide". *Journal of Genocide Research* 2 (3): 411-430.

## *Learning from the Good, Bad, and Ugly*

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But that was not just a cruel symbolic gesture of evil. To understand the sweeping horror of genocide strictly through the lens of Jewish suffering does not do justice to the realities of Hitler's evil.

Comprehending the universality of Hitler's reign of terror can be illustrated by the desecration of Poland.<sup>94</sup> Our modern history tells us about the Jewish genocide, but subordinates the non-selective basis of Hitler's extermination. To gain German living space Hitler eyed the fertile plains of Poland and ordered his generals in the Eastern Front to kill: *Without pity or mercy, all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language.*

Following Hitler's lead, Heinrich Himmler, the feared henchman who commanded the ruthless SS storm troopers then issued the coup d'état: *All Poles will disappear from the world. .... It is essential that the great German people should consider its major task is to destroy all Poles.*<sup>95</sup>

It doesn't take any imagination to see that this is probably nearly identical to the dialogue that Roman Emperor Theodosius had with his commanding generals in Thessalonica in 391AD when he ordered the slaughter of innocent citizens in the Circus Maximus arena.

As a nation, Poland lost six million of its citizens, of which three million were Christians (predominantly Catholics) and three million Jews.

Historian Richard C. Lukas (*The Forgotten Holocaust*) observed that:

*"So many Poles were sent to concentration camps that virtually every Polish family had someone close to them who had been tortured or murdered there," which was "the highest ratio of losses to population of any country in Europe."*

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<sup>94</sup> I personally visited Poland in September 2010 and researched this slaughter. See references to "Warsaw Rising."

<sup>95</sup> Lifton ,Dr. Robert Jay; *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* by (holocaust-history.org)

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To put these numbers in perspective, the Polish extermination represents 20% of the population, or 1 in every 5 people.<sup>96</sup> Between Hitler's 1939 invasion of Poland, and the Stalin's invasion at the end of 1944, 85% of Warsaw, a city of 1.1 million people at the outset of the war, was reduced to a heap of rubble.<sup>97</sup>

In Poland, during the period 1944-1989, the Stalinist regime was brutal and hideous. What was the structure that kept the people from falling victim to oppression? The Catholic Church, from the local parish priest in the small villages to the bishops of Warsaw and Krakow kept the spirit of community and compassion alive. It was not coincidence that a humble Polish priest was elected as Pope John Paul, who played an active role in expelling the communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

Lech Walesa, the founder of Polish Solidarity, where the movement began, gave credit to the Church for its commitment to freedom through a "peaceful revolution." According to Wałęsa:

*Before his pontificate, the world was divided into blocs. Nobody knew how to get rid of communism. In Warsaw, in 1979, he simply said: 'Do not be afraid', and later prayed: 'Let your Spirit descend and change the image of the land... this land'.*

Certainly, for the Catholic Church, this role was a grand turnabout from what happened in the waning centuries of the Roman Empire.

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<sup>96</sup> Compared to the United States, we lost, due to all causes including battlefield deaths and disease, less than 2% of our population in our Civil War and only .3% in World War II.

<sup>97</sup> See Davies, Norman. *Rising '44. The Battle for Warsaw*. London: Pan Books. (2004) Most of what little remained of Warsaw was leveled by Stalin's troops, who were more vicious and ruthless, than the Germans. Polish liberation patriots caught in the crossfire were more fearful of being captured by the Russians than the Germans. Poland was devastated and almost destroyed, in effect, becoming, as a nation, a Holocaust survivor that would then be in line for another onslaught of rapacious psychopaths -- this next wave led by ravaging the Communists.

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The ability of a regime to evoke psychopathic behavior is usually given additional credence by some high-minded rationale. Hitler advocated that the destruction of the weak and sick is far more humane than their protection. This mockery of morality is a tradition used by psychopathic leaders from every era. Here's just one example of Hitler's false justification for evil:

*"... the task of politics is not to represent just one faction.  
Rather, the task of politics must be to overcome these divisions  
for a greater good."* --- Adolph Hitler, 1933

The reign of terror during the French Revolution, was epitomized by an insanely twisted view of morality, as evidenced by this exhortation of Robespierre, who "didn't see the use of terror as a compromise of virtue, but as the enforcement of it:"<sup>98</sup>

*To punish the oppressors of humanity is clemency;  
to forgive them is barbarity.*

*If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace,  
the spring of that government during a revolution  
is virtue combined with terror:*

*Virtue, without which terror is destructive;*

*Terror, without which virtue is impotent.*

*Terror is only justice prompt, severe and inflexible;*

*It is then an emanation of virtue;*

*It is less a distinct principle than a natural consequence  
of the general principle of democracy,*

*applied to the most pressing wants of the country ...*

*The government in a revolution is the despotism of liberty against  
tyranny.*<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> From Wikipedia: As an orator, Robespierre praised revolutionary government and argued that Terror was necessary, laudable and inevitable. It was Robespierre's belief that the Republic and virtue were of necessity inseparable. He reasoned that the Republic could only be saved by the virtue of its citizens, and that Terror was virtuous because it maintained the Revolution and the Republic.

<sup>99</sup> Robespierre's his *Report on the Principles of Political Morality*, given on 5 February 1794

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(Read this bizarre admixture of sense and nonsense again and you will quickly see the psychopathic insanity of such gibberish!)

Roman Emperors without conscience could not be trusted; so too any leader of any organization exhibiting this type of behavior. But worse. The reign of terror and the flood of fear that ensues turns life itself into a battlefield massacre. In Rome, or in Germany under Hitler, or in Revolutionary France, the people themselves could trust neither their neighbor nor their circumstances, nor their future prospects. During the Communist domination of Poland, neighbors, friends, and family were rewarded for spying on others in their community. With this deep angst and insecurity, often people turn to the perceived security of a dictator.

Rome betrayed itself, its people, and bargained away its dream. As Machiavelli<sup>100</sup> astutely observed in his *Discourses* about the effective functioning of Republics:

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<sup>100</sup> Remember, Machiavelli is one of the great split-personalities of history. His handbook of advice to authoritarian leaders, *The Prince*, advises highly psychopathic behavior, forsaking all conscience. He wrote the book immediately after suffering cruel physical torture at the hands of the ruling Medici family. Cunning, treachery, and deceit are advised as the best behavior for a leader. Modern readers have tended to think this book, which, frankly, is filled with an awful lot of very bad advice, is the crux of Machiavelli. It was Shakespeare who long ago created the term “Machiavellian” to refer one with a shady mind that puts his self interest above all others.

Five years after writing *The Prince*, Machiavelli seems to have had a major change of heart, regaining his lost conscience as well as his sense of proportion. In a much more lucid and balanced treatise, (more than four times the size of *The Prince*), Machiavelli outlines in his *Discourses on Livy*, how Monarchies and Oligarchies (the domain of a Prince) are far less desirable than a well run Republic. Ever the realist, Machiavelli in the *Discourses* eschews morality, but nevertheless provides far better guidance to the modern reader. Book I of the *Discourses* discusses Machiavelli's views on the internal structure of republics, Book II on Warfare, and Book III leadership in a democratic world.

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*More unhappy still is that Republic that has diverged from a good Constitution...*

*[for] reforms are never effected without danger...*

*Princes that degenerate from a predecessor's honesty and goodness draw general hatred.*

*Once an object of the people's hatred, the Prince naturally feels fear, which mandates that he institute precautions and wrongs upon his people, and thus tyranny quickly prevails.*

*Such are the beginnings and causes of disorders. Then conspiracies, and plots against the Prince are soon set into motion, not by the feeble and timid, but by those citizens who, with great dignity in their souls, and having a wealth of courage, cannot submit to the outrages and excesses of their ruler.<sup>101</sup>*

And such was the fate of the contemptuous Roman rulers who tragically abandoned the dream of a Republic, drawing ire and revenge among the strong and fostering depression and despondency among the weak.

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<sup>101</sup> Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Book I, Chapter II



# History's Hidden Lessons

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## *CAN THE DARK AGES RETURN?*

Looking back over ancient time, I've explored the distinctly different ways Greece and Rome evolved their civilizations, the former enlightened realists, the latter as material realists. The Greeks tempered their idealism with a strong dose of scientific realism. The Romans dampened any idealism of the Greeks with a strong dose of ego gratification. Each produced a distinctly different result.

I did not spend much time digging into the plight of the Dark Ages; not because it isn't interesting, but more because of the lack of any best practices to guide us in the conduct of the evolution of our civilization.

The third avenue, the path of darkness looms only a veiled layer under our idealism. As described in Volume Four, *Building a World You Can Trust*, humans are designed with the conflicting dualism of competition and cooperation, ego and soul, darkness and light.

Civilization, namely "culture" can either explicitly or invisibly draw forth the divine or devilish energies in our psyche.

A leader's ability and desire to build trust plays an enormous role in which of three pathways we travel in life.

*One ship goes East another West,  
By the same self winds that blow.*

*'Tis the Set of the Sails and not the Gale,  
That determines the way they go.*

*Like the ships at sea are the ways of fate,  
As we voyage along through life.*

*'Tis the Set of the Soul that Decides the Goal,  
And not the calm or strife.*

Edna Wheeler Wilcox

## *Learning from the Good, Bad, and Ugly*

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(see Volume Three: Dancing with the Holy Spirit for details on the “Set of the Soul”)

Can the Dark Ages return? One only has to look to the evidence of the twentieth century to discern the disturbing truth. The names of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Milosevic, or Bin Laden exemplified the “heart of darkness” that looms under the thin veil of erudite sophistication on this planet.

We are only a blink away from accepting the bunk that manipulators can spread upon the planet. A generation that fought in World War II know that Neville Chamberlain’s “appeasement” policy toward Hitler only give the monster greater strength to slaughter and maim. There are still fascists and Marxists on the planet that use high-minded rhetoric to maintain their foolish dictatorships – just look to Venezuela or Syria or Iran for the masters of deception.

Genocide in Africa is almost expected in our world. Warlords have ruled over significant territory in Somalia, Nigeria, Columbia, and Mexico. It is only when this touches our shores that we seem ready as a nation to take action.

What is just disconcerting today is what we might call “civilized darkness.” It happens every day on Wall Street – bank fraud, stock manipulation, and the fear-greed cycle. It happens on the internet – 70% of internet traffic is spam, porn, and fraud. It happens in communities wracked by drug trafficking and gangs.

Be Alert,

Be Vigilant,

Be Clear about the Chosen Path, and  
Its Consequences

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## *By Chance or Design? Where's the Center?*

Over the last three thousand years, although circumstances and opportunities play a part, human intelligence seems to have remained fairly constant. Human society contains the potentiality to produce hope or fear, glory or destruction, life or death. Too often, this fateful decision of destiny -- crossing of the Rubicon as Caesar implied two thousand years ago -- is left too much to chance, by a cast of the dice, rather than by conscious choice and careful consideration of the underlying design that can weigh the dice heavily in our favor.

Yes, we can beat the odds of chance, if we so choose. But destiny requires clarity of mission and purpose.

Kenneth Clark, in closing his work on *Civilization* quoted the prophetic words of William Butler Yeats (who Clark referred to as one of the great geniuses he had met in his lifetime):

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,  
And everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction,  
While the worst are full of passionate intensity.*

Twenty six hundred years ago Heraclitus said that:

*“Character is Destiny.”*

In that single phrase he embodied the nature of the insightful solution – those who create real trust in their world have the personal potential to design a powerful, bold future for themselves based on a soulful vision and belief that they (along with everyone on the planet) have a higher reason or meaningful purpose or even a noble mission; and it is each individual's personal quest to identify that destiny. In the most simple sense there are three distinctly different paths: Greek, Roman, and Dark.

Today, we are at a Cross-Road in this Planet's Destiny.  
*The path we choose will make all the difference.*

## *Learning from the Good, Bad, and Ugly*

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This is the FIFTH Volume in a Six Volume Set of

# Cracking the Synergy Source Code

This series of books is a result of my personal quest to find the “truth, and to act from an integrated belief system that is:

“coherent and consistent; “

“spiritually strong and scientifically sound.”

Most people have such a conflicted belief system that they waste their lives “chasing fireflies in the night,” darting and charging in every direction, with no star to guide them to a worthy destiny. The other volumes in this set contain the deep wisdom – the “source codes” – that create order in a chaotic world and help you find that star to guide you through life.

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|--------------|--|
| Volume ONE   | Be the Champion of Your Life<br><i>Transform Your Destiny!</i>             |
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| Volume THREE | Dancing with the Holy Spirit<br><i>The Spiritual Quest for Synergy</i>     |
| Volume FOUR  | Building a World You Can Trust<br><i>Beyond Safety &amp; Security</i>      |
| Volume FIVE  | History’s Hidden Lessons<br><i>Learning from the Good, Bad, &amp; Ugly</i> |
| Volume SIX   | Destiny’s Dream<br><i>Lifting Ourselves to a World that Works</i>          |

Volumes ONE through FIVE are designed to stand alone; you don’t need to read the prior volume to understand the next, with the exception of Volume SIX, which integrates the themes of the prior books and moves on to strike new thoughts for a new world. I have purposely designed a small amount of overlap between the volumes to ensure connectivity and continuity of thought.

--Robert Porter Lynch