

INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS YARVIN IN PARIS

Marquis2Baillon

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It is 8 p.m. Paris time, and I am leaving the Zimmer Café with Curtis Yarvin, one of the most controversial Anglo-Saxon thinkers of this century (don't worry, we'll talk about another controversial thinker later in this interview). Curtis is visiting Paris for the first time. I offer to accompany him and his wife to a restaurant reserved for the occasion near Notre Dame Cathedral.

During our walk, Curtis points to the cathedral and asks, "Do we know who did this?"

I answer that there is an official story about a short circuit that caused the fire, and of course, many conspiracy theories: before the fire, several objects were moved to distant places, such as statues of the apostles and some works of art. Indeed, a very similar case occurred with the fire of Chartres Cathedral in 1134, which historians consider arson. But we will probably never know the truth! It is impossible!

Curtis smiles and tells me, with a hint of irony, "You see, that's the problem with a libertarian like Elon Musk. Some problems just can't be solved by the free market of ideas." I mentioned to my guest that community notes seemed like an effective tool for finding the truth. He wasn't convinced, adding, "Yeah, but community notes reduce misinformation. You really want to get as much accurate information as possible. And if you think finding the truth about the Notre Dame fire is impossible, imagine an investigation led by someone with all the power, like Louis XIV. Do you think he wouldn't find the truth?"

We arrived at the restaurant, and Curtis left me with that last question stuck in my head. A dangerous virus, a brain-devouring meme, and through these lines it will inevitably infect others. And after our conversation, during which my guest demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the reign of Louis XVI, I know, and you will know, that his last question was far from open-ended.

Here's the full interview, exclusively for Rage magazine.

Marquis2Baillon: You come from a libertarian family, but you ended up becoming a monarchist. How is that possible?

Curtis Yarvin: There is this American idea that in order to create a government that works in a certain way, everyone must agree to be governed in that way. It seems obvious to Americans that government arises from the opinion of the masses, but libertarians must understand that historically, when regimes have had smaller and less intrusive governments, they have more often been monarchies than democracies. The rise of democracy has also brought the rise of the totalitarian state. So the idea that democratic libertarianism is a way to defeat the totalitarian state seems far-fetched and impossible.

The writer who changed my perspective on this is Hans-Hermann Hoppe. He is the heir to the Austrian School of Economics. If you know Ludwig von Mises, Mises's heir was Murray Rothbard, and Hoppe is Rothbard's heir. Hoppe wrote a book called "Democracy: The God Who Failed," in which he opens up the possibility of considering life before the revolution as legitimate. Revolutions basically function like cults; they delegitimize everything outside of them. The idea that we live in a kind of cult of the present that delegitimizes the past was a bit new to me. And when you're in a cult, you feel like the rest of the world is in a cult.

There are several indisputable libertarian ideas. One of them is that there is a complete conflict between the libertarian idea of individual sovereignty—the absolute rule of law—and the fundamental idea of the democratic era, which is absolute sovereignty of the people, that is, the sovereignty of those who earn the loyalty of the people. Historically, we see that in democratic states everything moves in the opposite direction [from individual sovereignty]. So the idea of implementing libertarianism through democracy seems really implausible.

But there is another problem with libertarianism, which we might call Carl Schmitt's problem. There is this very English and American idea of a "state of law, not of men." In a place like Iran, one would talk about "the rule of God, not of men," or, more precisely, "the rule of Allah, not of men." But it is always man who decides what God thinks. When you look at the question of the rule of law, you see that ultimately it is always the rule of the one who claims to know how to interpret the law. One of my greatest influences is the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle. He spoke of what is now called classical liberalism in Anglo-American thought, which is essentially libertarianism of the nineteenth century. Carlyle observes, "We are automating everything, we are powering everything—we are really aiming for a government that runs on steam." He sees that we are trying to create

a government that runs itself, an automated government that runs on "steam." But there will always be people in the equation. I personally think of this flaw as an "unstable equilibrium." If I take this toothpick and put it upright on this table, it will be unstable."

Curtis takes a toothpick and holds it perpendicular to the table, placing his finger on top of it.

Of course, the closer it is to the point of equilibrium, the less force is needed to hold it, but it can never stand on its own; it will need my finger to apply a certain amount of force. This metaphor is very close to what a state of law (Rule of Law) is without the rule of law (Rule of Authority), what Carl Schmitt calls "the exception."

Now imagine this toothpick is the size of a telephone pole, ten meters high, five meters high, or whatever. I can still hold it with my hand in the center. If you've ever ridden a motorcycle, you know that you can balance an object by just rocking it back and forth. But now imagine it falling, and this toothpick is the size of a telephone pole. You realize that it would take a tremendous amount of force to get it back upright, but only a small amount of force to hold it in place.

So when we imagine a country – let's say Venezuela – and we ask, "How do we establish the rule of law?" you think, "Okay, we have to elect a libertarian president." But how? And what does he do to achieve the rule of law? Before you can achieve the rule of law, you have to end all kinds of war, and the essence of libertarianism, interpreted dogmatically, is that, that it should be a universal formula based on the principle of non-aggression. But how does the principle of non-aggression apply in war? Does that mean it's illegal to shoot someone because they're wearing the wrong uniform? Now let's look at El Salvador, where President Bukele has regained control of the country and given it one of the lowest crime rates in the Western Hemisphere. To do this, he simply observed: if you have gang tattoos, you're a gang member; if you don't, you're not (laughs). Is it wrong to have gang tattoos? Is it wrong to draw something on your skin? According to libertarian principles, no. On the other hand, you have to understand that a step towards order is a step towards law, which comes after order. They used to have a system of government and law inspired by the United States. This Anglo-American legal system is designed for a society where deviations are rare. But when 1% of your population belongs to

gangs, the only way to a libertarian El Salvador is to build mega-prisons. It's either the rule of law or gang rule. Replacing gang rule with state rule is the only way to achieve anything resembling the rule of law. Realizing that this is the paradox of libertarianism highlights that in some cases libertarianism is wrong.

So when I compare these things [monarchy and libertarianism], it's like comparing Einstein to Newton. Newtonian physics is wrong; there's a missing term in the equation, but it describes a lot of situations perfectly. But it's still wrong. In most cases, you don't notice that it's wrong, but it's always there. So to evaluate a system that claims to be perfect, like libertarianism, you have to make this conclusion: "What if the situation is like El Salvador?" Then you can say, "Libertarianism is wrong." If it's wrong, it doesn't mean that capitalism is bad or anything like that; it just means that there's a more general answer, and in some cases you can say that libertarianism is the solution, but in other cases libertarianism is not the solution.

M2B:He lacks the quality.

Curtis Yarvin:Yes. When you say he lacks a quality, you can easily understand that the missing quality is essentially the king. Because the role of a king - and this is easy to explain even to libertarians - is to have a monopoly on power, to prevent others from usurping it. What happens in our society is that there is no king, so there are many other forces that can seize power, and some of them are criminal forces that seek to use power for the individual.

M2B:Foreign forces...

CY:Foreign powers, bureaucratic powers... So you think you've created a world without power, but in reality you're still dealing with all sorts of predators trying to seize power. This is something that's been happening all along throughout history. For example, the French Revolution, I think, was largely due to the French being infected with English ideas. Louis XVI himself was very impressed with the British mixed government system, which was quite oligarchic at the time. He was a man who was passionate about clocks; he didn't really want to exercise power. He looked at England and at that time he saw the Hanoverian dynasty, where kings were being put on the throne to replace the previous dynasty, the Stuarts, who really wanted to rule. So he thought, "I just want to live in my palace and work on my clocks" and control the fate of France, and not be like Louis.

XIV, who said, "It must be this way; it must be that way." Louis XVI thought, "We could have this kind of autonomous liberal system. And if I transformed the state to function like a parliament, it would function just as well as it does in England."

I think we underestimate how much Louis XIV and Mazarin essentially saved France from the equivalent of the English Civil War, because I think the Fronde was actually trying to turn into one, and Louis XIV stopped it. If you're looking for a much more impressive figure than Louis XVI, look at Louis XIV. For example, one of the things that English-speaking people have a hard time understanding is the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, where he said, "No, we will tolerate no more Protestants." In England, a purely Protestant land, that was met with horror. The English idea of religious tolerance - of course, the English were not very tolerant of Catholics either. If you read, for example, Milton's famous speech on freedom of speech, he says, "In every free market of ideas, all must be heard - except the Catholics, who are a menace." So, at that time, the Protestants in England didn't really believe in religious freedom either. And that's what we find today among the left. What you notice about the left in general is a form of hypocrisy, because, apart from ideals, the left-wing movement is a kind of dependence on the government. For example, when Louis XVI tries to escape to seek help from the Austrians - he goes to Compiègne or somewhere while his brother is already in Koblenz - this action is criticized by people who don't believe in nations at all. They say, "We don't believe in nations, but you do; so you should be ashamed to seek help from the Austrians." Isn't it? Another example is William of Orange, who establishes the Hanoverian monarchy and leads the Glorious Revolution, which the English called the Dutch Invasion. The reason for William of Orange's invasion is that he received a letter from seven of the most influential aristocrats in England, which said, "If you attack, we will have no problem." So when liberals mean nationalism, there is an American saying: "They pull your chain." The idea that Louis XVI had Austrian help in restoring France and saving it from the Terror is viewed negatively and is still taught to French schoolchildren with phrases like "He brought the Austrians, that's bad." There is a widespread belief that there is a "good" and a "bad" French Revolution. You have probably heard of the misconception that "There is no real Scotch": if something has bad consequences, then there must be a bad part of that thing, and then they say, "Well, that was the bad part." But this violates Occam's razor. If something had bad consequences, then the thing itself was bad.

M2B: The second prominent thinker representing the so-called neo-reaction is Nick Land. He has responded to many of your writings, but you never seem to have offered your opinion or criticism of his ideas. Have you read Nick Land?

CY:I've never read Nick Land, even though I should. There are a few reasons for that. First, I don't like reading texts that are inspired by my own ideas. It's like rereading my own thoughts, and it's a little suffocating.

Curtis's wife: You should definitely read it; Nick Land has his own style, you won't feel like you're reading yourself.

CY:Yes, but there's another problem. The tradition he writes in is the tradition of continental philosophy. He's rooted in 20th-century literature, and that's not a style I really like. I much prefer reading 19th-century authors, like Victorian authors. So it's mostly a question of style. Still, I should probably forget about it and read it, especially since we have the same publisher now. I need to meet him.

M2B:Speaking of Nick Land, what are your thoughts on the singularity?

CY:Honestly, I don't believe it. There's this recurring, quasi-Marxist idea of a robot uprising. The word "robot" itself comes from a Slavic word meaning "work." It was popularized by the author Karel Čapek's play "Rossum's Universal Robots," written in 1920, and of course it's impossible to think of robots without thinking of the robot uprising that gave us movies like "Metropolis" or the recent "Terminator." And if we look back 500 years, we might even see a continuity in this robot uprising with the Jewish myth of the golem. It's the myth of a man creating an intelligent thing that immediately turns against itself.

Going back to OpenAI, if we went back 60 years, we had these computers that could play chess. And these computers could barely play chess, but people thought: these computers are going to get more and more powerful, stronger [at this game of chess], and eventually they're going to beat us and finally take over the world! This myth, when you see ChatGPT, you think, "Wow, this tool is crazy, and computers are going to take over the world soon," is as human as it gets. But if you look at ChatGPT more closely, what is it good for? Cheating on high school homework. There were startups that specialized in

cheating on high school homework, and they had to shut down because ChatGPT does the same thing, only better.

Besides, ChatGPT isn't even that good. I used it for research a while ago: I was looking for the translator of one of the few English translations of the Memoirs of Louis XIV. It's a 19th century book that's very hard to find, where "Louis" is spelled as "Lewis," translated and published anonymously. So, I asked ChatGPT who the translator was, and ChatGPT told me, "This guy did this translation." I found that interesting because this author translated a lot of books during that period. But he was a far-left radical. So it's impossible that he was the translator of the Memoirs of Louis XIV. But no, ChatGPT gave me this information, blatantly false, that you can't find anywhere on the internet, completely convincing! So when you read these stories about how artificial intelligence is turning the universe into "paper clips," it's just grotesque, it's pure myth.

Sure, we have a computer that plays chess, but after a while we realize that chess is a game that computers are naturally good at. Aristotle had this idea of the natural slave, and that's **artificial intelligence is a natural slave**[2].

M2B:In 2007, you wrote that the Cathedral would never bother to attack a simple pseudonymous blogger. Yet today in the West, people are being sent to prison for simple tweets, not to mention the arrest of Pavel Durov and threats against Elon Musk. What does this mean from the Cathedral's perspective? Are we witnessing a demonstration of its hegemony, or perhaps its weakening?

CY:My time has not yet come (laughs), but I must admit that I was not completely calm when I presented my passport at Orly airport. I also had problems when I went to New Zealand. We will see what happens with this US election, no matter how it turns out, it will be absolutely crazy. It will be a fight for everything, including freedom of speech. The problem is that we still live in a world where the regime does not joke, and unfortunately the people who fight it are not serious.

When I started my blog, you could write absolutely anything you wanted on the internet. At that time, I also proposed Urbit, my decentralized, uncensored OS project. People didn't see the point because these censorship and freedom of speech issues didn't exist yet. But as our world gets weirder and weirder, people suddenly

woke up. What is happening in Brazil right now, where anyone working with or consulting with X is being threatened with imprisonment, is complete madness!

2007 was like a bubble: we could have had Bush as president, Al Gore as president, Obama as president – it doesn't matter, we've reached the end of history.

M2B:COVID...

CY:COVID is a great example of this. It is not a conspiracy, but rather the product of a perfectly normal bureaucratic system. COVID is no more a conspiracy than Chernobyl. Mikhail Gorbachev did not secretly plan to blow up a nuclear power plant in Ukraine. Chernobyl is simply a product of the Soviet system, a system that said, "Wow, it would be great if we could prove how superior the Soviet nuclear system is by disabling all the safety systems and showing that the Soviet nuclear power plants are still safe!" And you know what? They didn't!

The story of COVID is similar: after SARS 1, scientists realized that many viruses in the jungle could mutate and infect humans. We decided to collect all these dangerous viruses. But these mutations take time, so why not do it ourselves! Of course, we cannot definitively link this study to the COVID-19 pandemic. But let's imagine that it was not so, that this study was not the cause of the 2020 pandemic - it was very close to it.

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I want to thank Curtis Yarvin for his time, as well as Rage and everyone who helped me write this interview. Curtis Yarvin's writings can be found at www.graymirror.substack.com

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