

The Biggest Obstacle To Real Freedom Is The Belief That We Already Have It



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If you live in one of the so-called free democracies of the western world, the worst mistake you can make is to buy into the hype. To believe you are a free individual in a nation that respects and protects your freedom and individuality.

Whenever I broach this subject I always get a deluge of objections along the lines of, “Well I’d much rather live where I live than under an authoritarian regime like in Iran or China! You would never be allowed to criticize your rulers the way you do if you lived in one of those places!”

And I always want to ask them, what do you think drove you to make that objection? Why are you falling all over yourself to defend your country and the people who rule over you, while condemning foreign countries that your own government happens to dislike? Could it be because that’s how you’ve been trained to behave from a young and impressionable age, and that your objection is arising from the same place as a cult member’s objections to criticisms of their cult?

Because that’s ultimately what holds power structures together in the US-aligned nations of the global north: indoctrination. The same thing used to program religious extremists and cult members. The only difference is that rather than scripture and religious leaders, the means of indoctrination is school, mainstream media, and Silicon Valley algorithm manipulation.

Without mass-scale indoctrination into power-serving narratives about nation, government and world, the power structures which rule over us would immediately collapse. People would cease voluntarily behaving in ways that benefit those power structures, cease acknowledging their government as a legitimate authority, cease pretending elections are real procedures for determining their government's actions, cease believing they're receiving truthful information from the mass indoctrination media, and use the power of their numbers to organize in ways which benefit the many rather than an elite few.

This is what one is defending when one objects to being told that they don't live in a free society. Their objection is itself the product of the reality they are denying.

In reality we are not truly freer under our rulers than people are under the governments that our rulers hate. Sure people can post criticisms of their elected officials online, but those criticisms will be dismissed and ignored by everyone who matters, they are being directed at political figureheads with no real power, and they are coming from minds that have been deeply indoctrinated into power-serving worldviews. Your rulers do not care if you're a Democrat who hates Republicans or a Republican who hates Democrats, as long as you're plugged in to one of the authorized reality tunnels.

As Noam Chomsky put it, "Propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state." In a totalitarian state people are *physically* abused into conformity and obedience; in a "democracy" people are *psychologically* abused into conformity and obedience. In a sense someone who lives under overt totalitarianism is freer than a westerner who's been indoctrinated by the most powerful propaganda machine ever devised, because at least they've got their minds. At least they know who their persecutors are.

Sure it's more pleasant to live in a society where you can say whatever you feel the impulse to say and live however you've got the financial capability to live. It would be even more pleasant to live in a vat with your brain jacked into a virtual world where your every desire is satisfied – but it wouldn't be freedom. It would be prison disguised as freedom.

I run into libertarian types who say they don't live in a free society because they are forced to pay taxes and pay their employees a minimum wage and have their business regulated by federal agencies etc, but the real reason they don't live in a free society is so very, very much more pervasive than that. They don't live in a free society because people can't even *think* freely.

It's hard to even imagine how much freer our mental lives would be if we weren't being continuously herded into artificial confines for thinking about the world. For thinking about what our real problems are. About what solutions to those problems are possible. About the kind of world we could have if we really put our minds to it. About the vast, vast spectrum of political opinion that exists outside the tiny authorized bandwidth of the mainstream Overt on window.

It's actually pathetic how constricted and confined minds are inside the indoctrinated mainstream worldview. Have you ever marvelled at how some of the most intelligent people you know can buy into the most obvious articles of propaganda? This is because intelligence by itself is not enough to protect someone from indoctrination; snapping out of the narrative matrix takes wisdom, and a fair amount of dumb luck. But think about how much brain power would be freed up if intelligent minds weren't being corralled into the tight confines of official perspectives. How much more our species could achieve if brilliant minds had real freedom and not just the illusion of it.

This is why everything mainstream is stupid, from movies to TV shows to politics to punditry. It's not because *people* are stupid, it's because we live in a highly controlled civilization that only elevates power-serving bullshit. Bullshit that comes from constricted, limited minds and facilitates the constriction and limitation of minds.

We who live in so-called free, liberal democracies like to tell ourselves a fairy tale that we live in a society that respects and prioritizes individuality, but the truth is the exact opposite: our society does everything it can to stomp true individuality out of existence and herd us through conformity-manufacturing processing systems. What's presented as "individualism" increasingly means having the freedom to express your uniqueness by having endless brands and varieties of products to choose from while thinking the same thoughts as everyone else about your government, your economic systems, your nation and your world.

Real individualism would encourage radical individuality and divergence from orthodoxies. The so-called liberal democracies of the western world do the exact opposite, hammering us into authorized power-serving perspectives and herding us into mainstream partisan echo chambers where we get to argue about **how** the empire should exist instead of **if** it should. Real individuality is stomped out and replaced with prostheses of mindless consumption and partisan thought.

Our project, then, as prisoners in a profoundly unfree society, is to help awaken as many people as we can to the reality of how unfree we really are. To be voices whispering in the matrix, beckoning the dreamers toward the real world in whatever ways we can. Engaging our creativity and finding more and more ways to get people to question if everything they've been told about their world is really true.

If we can achieve that, we can achieve anything, because we will have toppled the largest and strongest barrier to the creation of a healthy world. The power structures which rule us are not set up to handle a critical mass of people awakening from their psychological control systems and saying "no" with one voice; if we can get to that point, the hard part's over. From there, with our minds truly free and the imaginary boundaries going wherever dreams go, we can make something really beautiful together.

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