

Introduction: Reset This

the end of *Faust, Part II*, the pull of the life-giving, eternal- feminine principle that draws us ever forward: *Das Ewig-Weibliche*.

Alexander Pope, the great eighteenth-century poet, philosopher, and translator of Homer, famously remarked in *An Essay on Man* (1733-34) that “the proper study of mankind is man.” What precedes that line, however, is also of contextual interest: “Know, then, thyself, presume not God to scan/ the proper study of mankind is man.” Pope wrote just half a century short of the French Revolution, which both elevated Man and dethroned Louis XVI and God himself in a land that had been for more than twelve hundred years “the eldest daughter of the Church.” In so doing, the French launched Europe headlong – or headless, as the case may be – into the calamitous² nineteenth century.

So what are the aspirations and prescriptions of this “Great Reset,” the brainchild of the Swiss-based WEF, which hosts an annual conference in the Alpine village of Davos – the site of the tuberculosis sanatorium in the canton of Graubünden to which Hans Castorp reports at the beginning of Thomas Mann’s masterpiece, *Der Zauberberg* (1924)? In what ways are they related to the cultural forces limned above, how do they relate to Western history, to our present, and to the future?

Perhaps the language Schwab and his *Kameraden* habitually use offers us a clue. As I noted in an August 15, 2020 essay for *The Pipeline* (neo-Marxist buzzwords in bold):

The Covid-19 crisis, and the political, economic and social disruptions it has caused, is **fundamentally** changing the traditional context for decision-making. The inconsistencies, inadequacies and **contradictions** of multiple systems –from health and financial to energy and education – are more exposed than ever amidst a global context of concern for lives, livelihoods and the planet. Leaders find themselves at a historic crossroads, managing short-term pressures against medium- and long-term uncertainties.

As we enter a unique **window of opportunity** to shape the recovery, this initiative will offer insights to help inform all those determining the **future** state of global relations, the direction of national economies, the **priorities** of societies, the nature of business models and the **management** of a global commons. Drawing

² Pace Barbara Tuchman and her essential study, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (1978). The 19th century outdid even its illustrious forebear half a millennium earlier in both triumph and tragedy.

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from the vision and vast expertise of the leaders engaged across the Forum's **communities**, the Great Reset initiative has a set of dimensions to build a new **social contract** that honours the **dignity of every human being**.

The viper tongue of totalitarianism is most often bathed in palliatives before it strikes. Appeals to the "social contract" takes us at once back to Rousseau, abandoning the five bastard infants he had with his mistress Thérèse Levasseur – as it happens, one of Boswell's roundheeled conquests as well – on the steps of the nearest foundling hospital. The idea of "contradictions" instantly transports us to the Great Freeloader, Marx, himself, and the "internal contradictions" of capitalism, while the words "fundamentally," "communities," and "opportunity" evoke the still-potent shade of former American president Barack Obama, a disciple of Saul Alinsky.

With such a potent threat to Anglo-Western notions of individual liberty and personal freedom emerging once again from the bowels of central Europe, the time has come no longer to simply "stand athwart" but to roll back the ^{HUN} ~~humanist~~-Marxist tide, as we have had to do at least since 1870-71 and the Franco-Prussian War. Once more into the breach, then: behold the present volume. In commissioning seventeen of the best, most persuasive, and most potent thinkers and writers from around the world, our principal concern has been – like wise men vivisectioning a camel – to offer multiple analyses of the World Economic Forum's nostrums and in so doing to ~~go poet Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" four better.~~

~~"I do not know which to prefer/The beauty of inflections/ Or the beauty of innuendoes,/The blackbird whistling/Or just after"~~ Then again, given the surname of the WEF's chief, perhaps a better, more potent citation might be Margret's little ditty from the Büchner/Alban Berg expressionist opera, *Wozzeck* (1925): *In's Schwabenland, da mag ich nit* – "I don't want to go to Schwab-land." Well, who does?

In these pages, we shall examine the Great Reset from the top down. The eminent American historian Victor Davis Hanson begins our survey with "The Great Regression," locating Schwab's vision within its proper historical context. He is followed by Canada's Conrad Black and America's Michael Anton and their views of Capitalism and Socialism, with not a few attacks on conventional, osmotic wisdom that will both surprise and enthrall. Britain's Martin Hutchinson outlines the contours of the Reset's "Anti-Industrial Revolution," even as the American economist David Goldman confronts both Schwab's notion of the "Fourth Industrial

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Revolution” and China’s immanetizing its eschaton in real time, along with the Red Dragon’s commitment to the upending of Western civilization and its Sinof^Forming of a post-Western world.

American writer, editor, and publisher Roger Kimball tackles the implications of a neo-fascist Reset in his essay, “Sovereignty and the Nation-State,” both of which concepts are under attack in the name of “equality,” its totalitarian successor “equity,” and the political consequences of our re-embrace of Rousseauvian concepts as applied to governments. British historian Jeremy Black discusses the misuses toward which the study of history has been and will be put to by the Resetters. The late Angelo Codevilla contributes what alas became his final essay, “Resetting the Educational Reset,” to sound the tocsin about the dangerous left turn of the once-vaunted American educational system, now reduced to a shilling, sinistral shell of its former dispassionate glory.

From Down Under, the Philippines-born Richard Fernandez twins two eternally competing faiths, Religion and Science; the American-born, Australian-based economist and Sinologist Salvatore Babones contributes a remarkably clear explication of the kinds of transportation feasible under the “Green energy” regimen the Reset seeks to impose upon us, and its practical and social implications. Writing from Milan, Alberto Mingardi, the director-general of the Istituto Bruno Leoni, gets to the heart of the Great Reset’s deceptive economic program with an essay about the faux-capitalist “stakeholder capitalism” and its surreptitious replacement of shareholder capitalism in the name of “social justice.”

The Great Reset, however, is not strictly limited to matters financial, pecuniary, or macro-economic. Social and cultural spheres are of equal importance. James Poulos looks at the Reset’s unholy relationship with the predatory Big Tech companies that currently abrogate the First Amendment by acting as governmental censors without actually being commanded by an act of Congress or, increasingly, an arbitrary presidential mandate. From British Columbia, noted Canadian author and academic Janice Fiamengo weighs in on the destructive effects of feminism upon our shared Western culture while, on the lighter side, Harry Stein examines the history of American humor – which in effect means worldwide humor – and how the Leftist takeover of our shared laugh tracks has resulted in a stern, Stalinist view of what is, and what is not allowed to be, funny.

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The British writer Douglas Murray has a go at the permissible future of politics under the panopticonic supervision of the Reset, while the American writer John Tierney lays out the road to civilizational serfdom that the unwarranted panic over the Covid-19 “pandemic” has triggered during its media-fueled run between 2019 and 2021. I bring up the rear with an examination of the Reset’s – and, in general, elitist tyranny’s – effects on Western high culture.

At its heart, the Great Reset is a displaced, central-European conceited and self-loathing attack on the cultural, intellectual, religious, artistic, physical, and most of all moral, inheritance we have received from our Greco-Roman forebears. The ^{LN (?)} has latterly been shorthanded, with the rise of “wokism,” to “white” culture. Typically racialist, if not outright racist, the cultural Marxists behind wokism insist on reducing humanity to its shades of skin color and then insisting that while all skin colors should achieve in exact same proportions to the share of a given population, some skin colors are better than others and any skin color is preferable to white. It’s a deeply loathsome principle that masquerades as a perversion of Christianity but is in fact a simultaneous attack on history and merit that seeks to roll back the scientific and cultural advances of the past two millennia wielding both science and culture as weapons against our share heritage.

The goal, as always, is power – a fixation of the socialist Left. As Professor Codevilla, ^{to} whose memory this book is dedicated, noted in one of his last published essays:

“Totalitarian,” to Westerners, describes a ruler’s attempt to exert control over someone’s rightful autonomy, regardless of the power grab’s success, because we assume that we have rights that natural law forbids be taken from us. Property may be the most obvious of these. Your life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are also naturally, inalienably your own. Mussolini first used the term *totalitarismo* in reference to his boast of “everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state,” even though his regime’s aims were hardly as ambitious as the goals of those who have sought to remake humanity—such as the perpetrators of the French Revolution and those inspired by Marxism–Leninism. We Westerners believe that any uninvited attempt to control what is ours is inherently unlawful and illegitimate.

Such power grabs generally are undertaken under a cloak of beneficence – of redemption. Caesar acted on behalf of the people, not the *Optimates*, in provoking the civil war with Pompey in order to “save” the Republic; his successor, Augustus, eschewed the title of Emperor in favor

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Over the long haul, however, the Western world has proven stubbornly resistant to officially mandated unreality. Not even the prolonged charlatanism of Sigmund Freud has been able to shake the Western fondness for dogged empiricism; flights of fancy and fantasy are more properly the realm of artists, whose material is not the universe, nor even the mind, but the human soul.

^{We}
Sciatim, the inheritors of Greco-Roman civilization have rejected or repelled philosophical, religious, and military incursions from North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the steppes of Central Asia, and even all-out war with the Empire of Japan. This is not to say we haven't learned and, often, improved via our syncretic way of accumulating and employing knowledge and insight. Today this is derisively known as "cultural appropriation." But what it really is, is typically Western creative syncretism that lies at the heart of Western cultural dominance. Despite the pressure by the modern Left to acknowledge such chimeras as meaningful man-made global warming, "climate change," fundamental sex reassignment and other fashionable and transient issues that latterly plague us, most sane people reject them out of hand and remain irremediably, traditionally human.

But the modern Left's standard tactic is first to propose a transparent counter-factual (men can be women being perhaps the most egregious) and then act on it as if it were real, and then demand that we do the same. The Great Reset proposes to command by fiat what Nature and Nature's God has thus far refused to provide. ~~Like Hans Castorp atop the Magic Mountain,~~ normal people are whipsawed between the scalding intellect of Naphta and the late-summer humanistic embrace of Settembrini; seduced by the hot kitten Clawdia Chauchat, with her Kirghiz eyes, and bewitched by the spicy, despotic exoticism of Mynheer Peeperkorn. Castorp's own personal purgatory only ends when he leaves – his *Bildungsreise* complete – upon the outbreak of World War I, in which we assume he will surely meet the senseless death he has ~~been so studiously avoiding at the Berghof:~~ Just surrender your freedom, they sing; your mobility, even your diet – eat more bugs!) and heed us. But the sirenic *Alemannis* and the *Davoisie* have poultry legs, and the Chinese relish for chicken feet ought to give us pause.

We are – or used to be or should be – made of sterner stuff. In the second Epistle of *An Essay on Man*, referenced above, Pope weighs Man in the balance, and finds him... well, you decide:

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Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

How can any sentient being, thus described, be certain of anything? Trapped temporally on Middle Earth, Man cannot doubt the evidence of his senses, yet he must in order to reach beyond the quotidian to the celestial. In our human, all too human, weakness for leadership we hark to those who would order us, decide for us, provide for us, command us. It is the world of Orwell's *1984* that the World Economic Forum offers us, but spiced with the *Soma* of Huxley's *Brave New World*. No wonder sex and pharmacology have loomed so large in the Leftist pantheon; it comes naturally.

But at the same time there appears to be in the West some sort of self-correcting mechanism, a desire to cast off indolence as the old order passeth and danger looms. As the circle from Romulus and Augustus closed on the western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. in the person of the boy-Emperor Romulus Augustulus, came the barbarians from the Celtic, Gallic, Suebian, and Saxon lands to replace it with the nascent nation-states of modern Europe. Good from evil, evil from good and still, like Adam and Eve, we haven't quite been able to distinguish between them. Gods, indeed. Reset this.

Instead, the proper study of mankind being man, Pope exhorts us to locate our strength in our origins, always mindful of our deficiencies, and our inevitable ~~unvermeidlich!~~ failures:

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Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere...
Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!

Eve, and Adam, history's original chumps, were deceived. No matter how much we taste of the Tree of Knowledge, how much we lust after it, we cannot become as gods. That is the satanic temptation. It may be that no religion yet invented and established has got it right; that as the Greek and Roman deities gave way to Yahweh and Jesus the Christ and Allah, other, more potent gods may emerge and cast down the idols that came before them. The Devil, however, endures because, while we may not need a god, we always need an enemy.

The only thing that is certain is that Man cannot and will never replace his idols as an object of veneration, and all such previous efforts have ended in failure. Even the French Revolution was forced to institute the Cult of the Supreme Being to supplant the Cult of Reason, before that cult, too, fell to the temporary restoration of Christianity. For reasons presented herein, the proposed Cult of the Great Reset is unlikely to fare any better – but in the meantime its danger is present, and the damage it can do is incalculable.

The ^{Mandans}bonzes of Davos don't want to simply reset a post-Covid world. Or a post-fossil fuels world. Or even a post-racial world. They want to reset you. They may not believe in the gods, but they certainly believe in demons, and that most irksome devil is you.