On August 20, 1971 psychologist Philip Zimbardo put an early end to the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment. The experiment consisted of twenty-four male students living in and operating a mock prison environment in the basement of a psychology building. Subjects were randomly assigned to play the role of guard or prisoner. Police officers picked the prisoners up from their homes in handcuffs and brought them to the psychology building where they underwent the typical process of being booked into prison. They were each given a number to identify themselves in lieu of their name. They wore matching smocks, a chain around their ankle, and a cap over their hair to strip each participant of their unique identity and create a manageable, collective identity.

In footage from the experiment, Zimbardo instructs the guards to “create in the prisoners feelings of boredom, a sense of fear to some degree, you can create a notion of arbitrariness that their life is totally controlled by us, by the system, you, me, and they'll have no privacy... We're going to take away their individuality in various ways. In general what all this leads to is a sense of powerlessness. That is, in this situation we'll have all the power and they'll have none.”

At first, the prisoners fought to maintain their uniqueness and personal will by resisting the power of the guards. However, the guards quickly found tactics to dismantle prisoner alliances through creating a “privilege cell” for docile prisoners, and placing vigilantes in solitary confinement (a small broom closet.) They would punish all of the prisoners for individual acts of disobedience. This resulted in the prisoners pressuring each other...
other to internalize their role as prisoner in order to maximize group comfort and keep the peace. Zimbardo claims that he was surprised by how sadistic the guards became because the subjects were “psychologically normal,” law-abiding citizens prior to the experiment.\(^2\)

Zimbardo claims that this experiment demonstrates the power of the situation on the individual’s capacity for evil. I would argue that this experiment was set up to produce this result. Zimbardo’s instructions to manipulate the feelings of the prisoners, take away their privacy, strip them of their individuality, and create a sense of powerlessness all require per-se abusive conduct from the officers. While the officers were free to decide the means of creating this reality, they were not free to redefine the prison system. In order to effectively convert individual power into the power of an institution an officer must use systematic infliction of pain to shape individual behaviors and encourage internalization of norms. The amount of power an institution holds largely depends on the amount of pain it inflicts and the ability of the subject to resist the will of the institution. Therefore, torture yields nearly complete conversion of power that is used against the interest of the subject. Educational systems, on the other hand, require a significant sacrifice of power from each individual in the asserted interest of empowering the group. An individual at a school retains the personal power to challenge the legitimacy of the institution where as a prisoner may use their voice only as allowed by his captors.

For humans living in a civilized world, there is no freedom from the “power of the situation.” From the moment of birth each individual fulfills a role that has been played before by other citizen’s time and time again. Such roles include one’s place in his family, social circles, and community. Cultural norms define a script where the winners and losers

\(^2\) id.
are predestined. The pain of the losers is fundamental in fueling the winner’s institutions.
This paper proposes that compassion is a necessary and effective tool for building the personal power necessary for subjects to resist and alter institutions to maximize individual potential.

This paper is divided into five subsections. The first section describes the effect of disciplinary power on the emotional wellbeing and personal power of laboring citizens through a Marxist lens. The second section defines compassion and describes the role it plays in American society. The third section describes the beautiful phenomena of senseless kindness. The fourth section describes parrhesia, free spokenness, and its role in liberating citizens from their socially conditioned roles. It explains the philosophy of Cynicism and calls for a rebirth of the philosopher king who is willing to sacrifice himself for the sovereignty of souls. The final section describes the choice each liberated citizen faces to keep, alter, or destroy their roles in various institutions and relationships. It describes the hope that these ideas are founded on, that such freedom might facilitate equilibrium and optimize individual freedom and happiness.

1. The Script: Just a Rat in a Cage

Nietzsche explains the nature of morality in the book *the Gay Science*. He states, “by morality the individual is taught to become a function of the herd, and to ascribe to himself value only as a function. As the conditions of the maintenance of one community have been very different from those of another community, there have been very different moralities; and in respect to the future essential transformations of herds and communities, states and
societies, one can prophesy that there will still be very divergent moralities. Morality is the herd-instinct in the individual."³

Mikhail Bakunin describes the relationship between the individual and the state as being coercive, rather than consensual, stating, "[the social contract theory] assumes that while I was in a state of not being able to will, to thing, to speak, I bound myself and all my descendants only by virtue of having let myself be victimized without raising any protest—into perpetual slavery."⁴ Being born into a state means being subject to certain cultural and legal norms historically enumerated by parties with influence. Morality within the state depends on whether something serves the “general interest.” Individual citizens are expected to subordinate their private interest to the “common weal, to the inseparable interest of all.”⁵ Those with the power to define the general interest can be expected to define it in a manner that aligns with their own personal interests and ensures that they remain in power.

In Empire of Illusion the author describes a cult of self that underlies American cultural norms that embodies the classic traits of psychopaths, “superficial charm, grandiosity, and self-importance: a need for constant stimulation, a penchant for lying, deception, and manipulation, and inability to feel remorse or guilt.”⁶ Saul explains in Voltaire’s Bastards that in such a society, “imagination, creativity, moral balance, knowledge, common sense, a social view—all these things wither. Competitiveness, having an ever-ready answer, a talent for manipulating situations—all these things are

⁵ id.
encouraged to grow. As a result amorality also grows; as does extreme aggressivity when they are questioned by outsiders; as does a confusion between the nature of good versus having a ready answer to all questions. Above all, what is encouraged is the growth of an undisciplined form of self-interest, in which winning is what counts.”

According to Bakunin, the socially constructed morality of the state is often contrary to universal norms of humanity: “to offend, oppress, rob, plunder, assassinate, or enslave one’s fellow man is, to the ordinary morality of man, to commit a serious crime. In public life, on the contrary, from the point of view of patriotism, when it is done for the greater glory of the state in order to conserve or to enlarge its power, all that becomes a duty and a virtue. And this duty, this virtue, are obligatory upon every patriotic citizen.”

He further explains that “the people [have] been considered an inert and inept mass, a sort of cannon fodder for the State, to be taxed, impressed into forced labor, and kept in a state of eternal obedience; in view of all this Machiavelli arrived quite logically at the idea that the State was the supreme goal of human existence.”

As long as the oppressed remain in a false consciousness with morality being defined as conducting oneself according to another’s calculation of herd utility they will lack the perspective necessary to effectively influence the institutions they are a part of and demand more equitable and efficient outcomes. Elaine Scarry explains that “the absence of pain is a presence of world; the presence of pain is the absence of world” therefore the larger the prisoner’s pain, the larger the torturer’s world.

By maintaining a monopoly on legitimate definitions of morality, those in power minimize the world of the laborer and his

---

7 Id at 106.
8 Bakunin supra note 4.
9 Hedges supra note 6 at 106.
capacity for innovation is limited to what he needs to survive from day to day, like the world of a mouse that must find the cheese at the end of a maze daily in order to survive. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, hold God-like power to constantly and unexpectedly alter the experiments. They may sacrifice the lives, or livelihoods, of the mice at any time for their personal construction of the “general interest” without any explanation to the mice. Only the conflicting interests of his fellow experimenters limit the manipulative power of the man in a lab coat.

With each individual in a society being subjected to various institutional and personal pressures, the ability of each to effectively contribute to the institutions they are a part of and influence their policies varies. How much personal power does being a student require from a human? Being a citizen? Being an employee? Being religious? Being in a relationship? Being a friend? Being a family member? Scarry explains that, “It is only when the body is comfortable, when it has ceased to be an obsessive object of perception and concert, that consciousness develops other objects, that for any individual the external world (in part already existing and in part about to be formed) comes into being and begins to grow.”11 Without a presence in the world, emotionally exhausted individuals lack the personal power necessary to collectively overthrow abusive institutions and replace them with efficient systems for the overall improvement of society for the “mice.”

2. Compassion As Written

Legislators cannot adequately exercise compassion on citizens because they necessarily deal in generalities. Empathy requires recognizing each individual’s unique traits, life circumstances, and the nuances of their actions. In criminal cases, compassion is entirely in

11 Id at 39.
the hands of the jury. When it comes to justice, compassion does not hold a unilateral influence on the juror. One is asked during the course of a trial to exercise compassion for the defendant, the victim, the victim’s families and society at large. How compassion factors into the jury’s decision largely depends on the persuasive influence of attorneys, the impressions of the parties at trial, and the unique facts of the case.

In a recent conversation between emotion psychologist Paul Ekman and the Dalai Lama the two discussed the difference between emotions and compassion. Compassion is an active desire to relieve another’s suffering, but this desire must be cultivated. Emotions, on the other hand, are triggered by thoughts and perceptions. We experience emotions as part of our self-narrative because they filter vast amounts of information available to us so that we remember only information that fits the emotion. Academic psychologists Normal J. Finkel and W. Gerrod Parrott explain, “the moral significance of emotions is bound up in the particularities of their context. In everyday life, people think of emotions in narrative episodes because they are concerned with what emotions say about events, responsibility, and character.”

Once cultivated, compassion is “an enduring feature of the person, while emotions come and go.” While emotions tend to distort our perception of reality, compassion “makes us more sensitive to reality. It makes us care more about reality.” David Hume recognized that perceived similarity between the spectator and the subjects raises the motivation to

---

12 Andrew Taslitz, In General, Should Excuses Be Complete or Partial?: Why did Tinkerbell get off so easy:: the roles of imagination and social norms in excusing human weakness, 42 Tex. Tech. L. Rev. 419, 426 (2009).
13 Id at 444.
14 Id at 427.
empathize and the ability to do so accurately. The Dalai Lama suggests a need for “a sense of connectedness, a sense of endearment to others, where the idea is cultivating a state of mind that makes the sight of others’ suffering unbearable to you.” Such a sense of connectedness requires an understanding that the observer and the sufferer are fundamentally equal and similar in essential ways, “with a sense of shared ‘createdness.’” Ekman states that compassion focuses only on the suffering that we witness. In the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein, “what the eye doesn’t see, the heart doesn’t grieve over.”

Cultivating compassion depends on practicing empathy. Sociologist Candace Clark divides empathy into three modes: cognitive, physical and emotional. Cognitive empathy is the thought or recognition that another person is in a difficult situation. All empathy begins cognitively. Philosopher Adam Smith argued that “spectators” have a moral obligation to imagine every circumstance of distress that can possibly occur to the other and to “strive to render as perfect as possible that imaginary change of situation upon which sympathy is founded.” Because such extensive imagining requires a good deal of cognitive energy, many individuals quickly judge others according to stereotypes or project their own emotions onto others. Lower-status individuals are usually better able to imagine other’s plights than higher-status individuals, probably because their livelihood has depended on

15 Id at 433.
16 Id at 428.
17 Id at 428.
19 Taslitz supra note 12 at 431.
20 Id at 432.
21 Id at 432.
their ability to empathize with the powerful to know how to adapt to their demands.\textsuperscript{22}

Rousseau said that the kings and nobles of France lack compassion because they “count on never being human beings,” subject to the vicissitudes of life.\textsuperscript{23}

Physical empathy is a visceral reaction that strikes a “sympathetic chord.” It occurs most often when witnessing another’s suffering, grimaces, sobs, blood, and screams. It can trigger shivers, nausea, doubling-up as if in pain, lip biting, rapid heartbeat, or tears in the observer.\textsuperscript{24} Emotional empathy, on the other hand, occurs when you understand another’s situation by feeling their emotions or at least triggering emotions akin to those they are feeling. It is most likely to trigger sympathy—the desire to actively alleviate another’s pain.\textsuperscript{25}

Moral Philosopher Cristina Bicchiere defines social norms as the “grammar of society” that is “the language a society speaks, the embodiment of its values and collective desires, the secure guide in the uncertain lands we all traverse, the common practices that hold human groups together.”\textsuperscript{26} Norms evolve and change as the wisdom and reasons behind them is contested. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum views compassion as depending on four specific judgments, each based on governing social norms. First, direness of the suffering: a person overreacting to a situation’s severity will be judged a complainer, spoiled, and weak. The accuracy of this judgment depends on the accuracy and selection of relevant information available to the observer about the subject’s situation. Second, blamelessness, the degree to which the actor is at fault for bringing about his or her plight.

\textsuperscript{22} Id at 433.
\textsuperscript{23} Id at 455.
\textsuperscript{24} Id at 431.
\textsuperscript{25} Id at 431.
\textsuperscript{26} Id at 445.
There is a norm that the actor's suffering should be proportionate to his blame. Third, shared vulnerabilities, when the observer understands himself to be vulnerable in similar ways to the subject they are more likely to deem him worthy of compassion. Finally, eudemonism, whether the observer believes that the sufferer falls within his circle of concern.\(^27\)

Empirical data shows that Americans confer compassion in varying degrees based primarily on the perceived mix between the transgressor’s bad luck and the transgressor’s personal responsibility.\(^28\) Seven principles guide the responsibility versus luck determination. First, the special deprivation principle holds that some categories of people experience the same loss as involving a greater degree of deprivation than do others. Second, the special burden principle recognizes that American’s see some categories of people as facing greater burdens than others by performing valuable, unique or difficult tasks. Third, the “balance of fortunes” principle holds that the wealthy and powerful who lead more pampered lives than the average citizen deserves little sympathy for occasional reversals of fortune. Fourth, the vulnerability principle finds that vulnerability increases American’s willingness to offer sympathy. Certain vulnerable groups such as young children, elderly, weak or helpless are more likely to trigger sympathy. Fifth, the potential principle accepts that some individuals have not received the opportunity to “make something of their lives” or have such limited future potential, such as the severely disabled, that they cannot be expected to do much. Sixth, the special responsibility principle holds individuals with presumed special talents or skills are more responsible than others for hardships caused for these skills failing. Seventh, the social worth principle

\(^{27}\) Id at 447.
\(^{28}\) Id at 450.
finds that some social actors contribute more to society than others, thus meriting more sympathy when they stumble.\textsuperscript{29}

Sympathy entrepreneurs try to amplify, alter, create, or kill sympathy norms.\textsuperscript{30} For example, a criminal defense lawyer who introduces expert evidence on battered women, urban violence or new immigrants seeks to create new norms about personal responsibility. On the other hand, when a defense lawyer in a rape trial argues that the victim was “asking for it” the prosecutor may argue for a norm of sympathy-denial (for the defendant), requiring full explicit consent from both parties before sexual activity. In the courtroom, as in an individual’s daily life, advocating for changing a norm requires recognizing some personal interest in a new outcome than what would otherwise be calculated using existing social mores.

Bork explains that there is a “safeguard against political judging, No judge will say openly that any particular group or political position is entitled to win. He will announce the principle that decides the case at hand”; the judge must apply the same principle in the next case, “even if it means that a group favored by the first decision is disfavored by the second.”\textsuperscript{31} Unlike judicial decisions, there is no official system of checks and balances in place to criticize social norms for lack of fairness, or inherent prejudice. It is therefore the responsibility of the citizens to critically question any proposed compassion norm to determine whether it creates an unfair economy of sympathy. For justice to be effective no individual (regardless of power, sex, race, etc.) can be practically exempt, as a matter of process, from the possibility of compassion.

\textsuperscript{29} Id at 451.
\textsuperscript{30} Id at 457.
\textsuperscript{31} ROBERT BORK, THE TEMPTING OF AMERICA 146 (Free Press, 1997).
3. Blind Mice: Senseless Kindness

In order to achieve true freedom and empower real change, individuals must realize their power to rewrite historical scripts and change situational roles. But how can masses functioning in an apparently cemented system, created to ensure power balances remain the same, attain the personal power necessary to effectively challenge these institutions?

Abusive institutions depend on a certain predictability of human behavior. Abusers assume that men are both self-interested and rational. They then find methods of controlling individual behavior by strategically altering the dilemma presented. However, sane humans do not have to act rationally according to their own self-interest. Louis Wolcher describes senseless kindness as a snag in social scientists cost-benefit analysis theory, it “reminds us of the fundamental uncertainty of human action.”\(^{32}\) Grossman explains, “this senseless kindness is condemned in the fable about the pilgrim who warmed a snake in his bosom. It is the kindness that has mercy on a tarantula that has bitten a child. A mad, blind kindness.... But one shouldn’t be afraid of it... the harm from time to time occasioned by a society, class, race or State by this senseless kindness fades away in the light that emanates from those who are endowed with it. This kindness, this stupid kindness, is what is most truly human in a human being. It is what sets man apart, the highest achievement of his soul. No, it says, life is not evil!”\(^{33}\)

Emmanuel Levinas interprets Grossman’s work as an argument against any effort to systematize senseless kindness:

\[\text{[Grossman] thinks that the “small goodness” from one person to his fellowman is lost and deformed as soon as it seeks organization and}\]

\(^{33}\) Id at 162.
universality and system, as soon as it opts for doctrine, a treatise of politics and theology, a party, a state, and even a church. Yet it remains the sole refuge of the good in being. Unbeaten, it undergoes the violence of evil, which, as small goodness, it can neither vanquish nor drive out. A little kindness going only from man to man, not crossing distances to get to the places where events and forces unfold! A remarkable utopia of the good or the secret of it's beyond.”

In the absence of a “compassion institution” humans have proven capable of great feats of kindness and mercy. Effective activist-citizen’s find that this innate, mysterious desire to improve the human condition requires them to fearlessly confront their own role in the subordination of other’s and their conditioned rationales and responses. A single act of senseless kindness undermines the totalitarian power of abusive institutions to dictate the actor’s behavior and to emotionally isolate the recipient.

Abusive institutions rely on isolation of beings and sometimes intentionally prevent horizontal connections between subjects. In America, an individual is legally free to pursue any social connection they desire, but cultural and social norms often prevent similarly situated individuals from fully relating to one another. When a victim has experienced severe emotional abuse they often lose the willpower to seek understanding for themselves. By definition senseless kindness does not depend on norms of mutuality or

---

reciprocity. If those who exercise it think about their motives at all, they might consider Marx’s principle, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

Elaine Scarry emphasizes the healing power of compassion in the context of torture in her book The Body in Pain stating, “an act of human contact and concern, whether occurring [in the prisoner’s presence] or in private contexts of sympathy, provides the hurt person with worldly self-extension” and “in giving the pain a place in the world, sympathy lessens the power of sickness and pain, [and] counteracts the force with which a person in great pain or sickness can be swallowed alive by the body.” To each subject repressing great pain while dealing with abuse in his life “the most powerful and healing moment is often that in which a human voice, though still severed, floating free somehow reaches the person whose sole reality had become his own unthinkable isolation, his deep corporeal engulfment.”

4. Parrhesia and Cynicism

According to Scarry, there is an “incompatibility of pain and the world. To bring them together, to bring pain into the world by objectifying it in language, is to destroy one of them.” To give a real voice to the victim, independent of the abusers rationales and definitions, is to create a space for them in the world. Before a victim can effectively use their own voice they must come to the conscious understanding that they have thus far been speaking with an assigned voice according to another’s command. Such a realization can simultaneously be painful, humiliating, and empowering for the victim. One method for

37 Scarry supra note 10 at 50.
38 Id at 50.
39 Id at 51.
achieving this level of understanding is through meaningful interactions with individuals outside of an abusive institution.

In his book, the Courage of Truth, Foucault describes the practice of parrhesia (free spokenness) he explains that “for there to be parrhesia the subject must be taking some kind of risk [in speaking] this truth which he signs as his opinion, his thought, his belief, a risk which concerns his relationship with the person to whom he is speaking. For there to be Parrhesia, in speaking the truth one must open up, establish, and confront the risk of offending the other person, of irritating him, of making him angry and provoking him to conduct which may even be extremely violent.”40 Nietzsche explains that while mankind “desires the pleasant, life preserving consequences of truth; to pure knowledge without consequences he is indifferent, to potentially harmful and destructive truths he is even hostile.”41 There is never a convenient time to discover that one’s reality is constructed by coercion.

Socrates used parrhesia to test souls through ironic cross-examination.42 “Telling the truth in the realm of the care of men is to question their mode of life, to put this mode of life to the test and define what there is in it that may be ratified and recognized as good and what on the other hand must be rejected and condemned.”43 Socrates explained that the soul must look at itself, that it is like an eye which, seeking to see itself, is forced to look in the pupil of another eye in order to see itself. In the same way, by contemplating the divine

42 Foucault supra note 41 at 73.
43 id at 149.
reality, we can grasp what is divine in our soul.\textsuperscript{44} This truth telling informs men what courage they need and what it will cost them to achieve a desired lifestyle.\textsuperscript{45}

According to Wolcher, “human beings are essentially hermeneutical creatures.”\textsuperscript{46} This means that their understanding of the world is mediated through interpretations based on lived experiences. Therefore it is impossible to conceive an unbiased reality. Humans live, as they die, alone. Socratic testing undermines the state’s tyranny of truth as it asks citizens to seek for answers within their own field of knowledge and trusts the individual to decide his own course of action without external pressures. Socratic students learn to critically examine the socially accepted scripts they are given as they come to understand that they are actors of custom with the freedom to alter or abandon their roles at any time.

While the citizen has the absolute freedom to change her behavior, she is still subject to societal and legal consequences of her chosen actions. Socrates knew that if he were to pursue a career in politics he would be killed, and he was eventually put to death for playing these games.\textsuperscript{47} The state is “invested with the power to suppress all the revolts of individual egoist, having, however, the duty of protecting every one of it’s members in the exercise of his rights in so far as they [do] not run counter to the general rights of the community.”\textsuperscript{48} How far can an abusive institution push this principle? At what point does the right of each individual to understand the nature of their oppression compromise the “general rights of the community”? Is there an absolute right to truth?

\textsuperscript{44} id at 159.
\textsuperscript{45} id at 161.
\textsuperscript{46} Wolcher \textit{supra} note 33 at 197.
\textsuperscript{48} Bakunin \textit{supra} note 4.
In the United States, Brandenburg v. Ohio sets the rules for the use of incendiary speech under the First Amendment. Advocacy of lawless action may not be punished unless it is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite such action.49 The court states in Texas v. Johnson, “if there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.”50 Such speech is not protected, however, if it is categorized as an incitement to riot. The court states “when clear and present danger of riot, disorder, interference with traffic upon the public streets, or other immediate threat to public safety, peace, or order, appears, the power of the state to punish is obvious.”51 Moreover, “words that create an immediate panic are not entitled to constitutional protection.”52 It therefore does not matter whether the words are truthful or not. Their legality depends on the likely effect they are to have on the populous. When it is likely to actually provoke citizens to revolt, revolutionary speech is prohibited. When it is likely to go unheeded, however, revolutionary speech is at the core of First Amendment protection. Given this uncertain legal framework, the practice of parrhesia in our society requires the presence of individuals who are willing to risk social and political consequences in order to test the bounds of free speech through speaking honestly and openly to citizens without regard for external sanctions. In ancient times, such philosophers were called Cynics.

Cynicism is a form of philosophy initially practiced by some of Socrates pupils in which the lifestyle is directly linked to truth-telling.\textsuperscript{53} For the Cynic, the purpose of life is to live in virtue, in agreement with nature. The goal of life is Eudemonia (happiness) and mental clarity from ignorance, mindlessness, folly and conceit. Eudemonia is achieved by living in accord with nature as understood by human reason. Arrogance is caused by a false judgment of value, which causes negative emotions, unnatural desires, and a vicious character. Eudemonia or human flourishing depends on self-sufficiency, moral virtue, equanimity, love of humanity, parrhesia, and indifference to the vicissitudes of life.\textsuperscript{54}

The Cynic’s role is to act as a spy for humanity to determine what may be favorable or hostile to man in the things of the world. After he discovers the truth he must return to announce it without letting himself be paralyzed by fear.\textsuperscript{55} The Cynic must live an impoverished life of begging because he must not have any attachments. Epictetus explains, “the Cynic cannot have a family because, ultimately, humankind is his family.”\textsuperscript{56} His lifestyle frees his time as it reduces all of the “pointless obligations which everyone usually acknowledges and accepts and which have no basis in nature or reason.”\textsuperscript{57} By remaining unattached, a Cynic is able to test which things are truly indispensable to human life.\textsuperscript{58}

Epictetus explains, “choosing between the philosophical and the non-philosophical life is a matter of choice and freedom. Claiming to be a Cynic and undertaking the task of addressing humankind in order to battle with it and for it, and possibly against it for the

\textsuperscript{53} Foucault \textit{supra} note 41 at 166.
\textsuperscript{54} World Heritage Encyclopedia, \textit{Cynicism (Philosophy)} available at \url{http://community.worldheritage.org/articles/Cynicism_(philosophy)}.
\textsuperscript{55} Foucault \textit{supra} note 41 at 167.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Id} at 171.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Id} at 171.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Id} at 171.
change of the world, is a mission one is given by God, and only by God. One must wait for it, not bestow it on oneself.” The life of the Cynic is unlikely to result in popularity. As Paulo Coelho writes in the novel *The Witch of Portobella*, “anyone working to change the axis of the world must be prepared for the fact that her neighbors won’t always be happy.”

Foucault explains, “the Cynic’s capacity for endurance must be such that common people take him to be insensitive, a stone. Nobody can abuse him, strike him, or offend him. He has himself given his body to whoever wants it to treat as he sees fit... He must be beaten like an ass and, being beaten, must love those who beat him as though he were the father and brother of all.”

Epictetus assures that if God advises you to take the Cynic path, this is not because he loves seeing you receive blows, it is so “that you can become great.”

The Cynics freely taught citizens from street corners. The function of their philosophical teaching was not essentially to pass on knowledge but rather, “to give both an intellectual and moral training to the individuals one formed.” These unrecognized beggars labored to arm the public for life so that they would be prepared to confront the trials that awaited them. According to Diogenes, to prepare for life one needs either reason (logos) which organized life, or the cord (brokhos) with which to hang oneself.

Julian explains the two principles of cynicism are (1) to know yourself, and (2) to revalue your currency. Currency refers to the law or custom. The individual must first fearlessly examine himself and then alter his internalization and application of social

---

59 *Id* at 295.
61 Foucault *supra* note 41 at 300.
62 *Id* at 299.
63 *Id* at 224.
64 *Id* at 224.
65 *Id* at 238.
66 *Id* at 241.
customs, rules, habits, conventions and laws. After discovering his own nature he will adjust the rules so that he can live in accordance with nature. This may mean that an individual will shed certain identities that are inherently contrary to his nature in order to create new ones. It may also inspire an individual to act as a norm entrepreneur in their various institutions as they advocate for norms that promote eudemonia. Changing one’s currency could even entail intentionally committing crimes or starting a revolution.

Being sovereign means being one’s own and “having to seek all one’s joy in oneself.” A sovereign life is therefore a life of assistance and help to others (student or friend) but it is useful and beneficial to others in yet another form: it serves as a lesson of universal significance to humankind by the way in which one lives in full view of everyone. The Cynic stands watch over others and also his own thoughts, according to Epictetus “you will see how many eyes the Cynic possesses, so that we could say that Argus was blind in comparison.” The Cynic’s role is not to meddle in other’s affairs but rather to inspect matters concerning humankind in general. Humankind includes the individual Cynic, and it is in dire need of a watchman. It’s comparable to a general inspecting his soldiers, he is not looking to impede on their individuals lives but rather to inspect and improve the parts that make up an army.

According to the Seneca tradition, a true life should be lived “as if always under the eyes of others in general, but especially and preferably under the watchful eye, the gaze,
the supervision of the friend who is at once a demanding guide and a witness.”

A discerning friend has a moral obligation to speak honestly and to look out for the best interest of the subject. Unlike the menacing gaze of prison guards, a friend aims to empower you, rather than optimize your utility for an institution.

Plato describes an ideal society where the philosopher and the monarch mutually rule over each citizen. Each fulfills distinct responsibilities: the philosopher assures sovereignty over self to each soul and the monarch enables the city as a whole to be happy and stable. In such a society, Plato argues that the philosopher is the true king even though the monarch wields the power of the sword. Alexander depends on an army, guards, allies, and armor to maintain his role as king. The Cynic king, in contrast, holds unshakeable power and cannot be overturned, since he needs nothing to exercise it.

The Cynic king holds various responsibilities. First, he must care for others. In addition to giving lessons, he must seek out his subjects, wherever they may be, and sacrifice himself, even his own life, to be able to take care of them. Second, he treats people. He brings them the medication that will be able to assure their own cure and their own happiness. Third, his mission takes the form of a battle. He attacks his enemies, namely the vices afflicting men, affecting the individuals he is speaking to in particular and also humankind in general. “It is a militancy in the open in the sense that it claims to attack not just this or that vice or fault or opinion that this or that individual may have, but also the conventions, laws, and institutions which rest on the vices, faults, weaknesses, and opinions shared by humankind in general. It is therefore a militancy which aspires to

72 id at 252.
73 id at 274.
74 id at 278.
change the world, much more than a militancy which would seek merely to provide its followers with the means for achieving a happy life.”

5. The Script: to Burn or to Revise?

The aim of the Cynics supervision is twofold, to change the conduct of others, and to change the configuration of the world. In each personal interaction, the cynic is not only addressing the individual, he is addressing all men. The aim of this practice of the truth characterizing the Cynic life is not only to evince the true state of the world; “it’s aim is to show that the world will be able to get back to it’s truth, will be able to transfigure itself and become other in order to get back to what it is in it’s truth, only at the price of a change, a complete alteration.”

Citizen-Cynics exercising compassion and hiding in plain sight threaten to permanently alter and destroy institutions and hopefully equalize wealth distribution as relationships are challenged and occasionally broken in the interest of achieving eudemonia. Foucault explains “there is no single locus of great refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, producing cleavages in a society that shifts about, fracturing unities and affecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remodeling them, making irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds.”

Parrhesia and the practice of senseless kindness empower oppressed persons to cognitively erode their conditioning as cogs in an abusive cycle and discover their true

\[75\] id at 285.
\[76\] id at 313.
\[77\] id at 315.
\[78\] id at 315.
nature. Once an individual has this knowledge he is free to abandon state notions of society in favor of higher concepts of humanity. If Bakunin’s characterization of state power is accurate, this concept of humanity holds a huge threat to the states. He explains:

“The idea of humanity becomes more and more of a power in the civilized world, and, owing to the expansion and increasing speed of means of communication, and also owing to the influence, still more material than moral, of civilization upon barbarous peoples, this idea of humanity begins to take hold even in the minds of uncivilized nations. This idea is the invisible power of our century, with which the present powers—the States—must reckon. They cannot submit to it of their own free will because such submission on their part would be equivalent to suicide.” However, “the states can no longer deny this idea nor openly rebel against it, for having grown too strong it may finally destroy them.”

The states must therefore engage in hypocrisy as they “pay their outward respects to this idea of humanity; they speak and apparently act only in the name of it, but they violate it every day... their position having become such that they can hold their own only by lying.”

Bakunin explains, “the supreme law of the state is self-preservation at any cost.”

Sovereign citizens have the power to insist that state preservation comes at the cost of ensuring a certain amount of freedom and mobility that permits individuals to speak freely with one another. Aware individuals have the personal power necessary to stand in

---

80 Bakunin supra note 4.
81 Id.
82 Id.
solidarity with their fellow citizens as they inform their state and private institutions that there are atrocities they are willing to go to war for. The state—or any faceless, blameless, institution for that matter-- should not have unchecked power to command and organize human bodies against their consent and against the interest of humanity.

Through teaching individuals the power of choice and empowering them to vote with their feet the Cynic enables their students to fully support institutions that effectively improve the conditions of society, while dismantling those that threaten the freedom of souls. A free agent could choose to become a better student, citizen, saint, lover, and decision-maker because he would have the autonomy to selectively sacrifice his time and effort exclusively to institutions that he believes effectively contributes to eudemonia.