

Imagine!

In [*The Fourth Age*](#) (*TFA*), I discuss cultural changes that can help the world advance toward a more humane era of social and cultural interaction, an age of humanity, the fourth age of human cultural evolution. For thousands of years our so-called *civilized* age has been characterized by conflict, war, and wide-scale human suffering. *TFA* suggests that the principle reason for such conflict and suffering has been the invention of and the perpetuation of social institutions that allow *human subjugation*. The book shows that political, religious, and economic subjugation are tools used by a small minority of the human population to maintain social systems wherein they can exploit large masses of people in order to achieve economic and social advantage. The worst kinds of human suffering and strife derive from social interactions made possible by these forms of subjugation.

Subjugation

We define subjugation as a pattern of social interaction in which people elevate themselves as the elite in order to exploit others as subjects, or to place others into service, in order to gain social advantage. Exploitation is central to the definition. The most deplorable kinds of subjugation are achieved by dominance, which we define as a pattern of social interaction in which people use force or fraud to assume a position of social ascendance over others. Few people accept social subjugation without reservation, especially if they understand the extent to which they are subjugated. The point made in this book is that subjugation is the pre-eminent problem in human associations: it is the social evil at the root of virtually all human conflict. It is the principle impediment to universal peace.

The ancient Egyptians used religion to subjugate the population. Historical figures like Hannibal and Alexander ("The Great") were more direct and used the threat of death to subjugate populations. The distinguishing talent of these men and of conquerors like them was their willingness to suppress their moral consciousness and slaughter masses of people in order to subjugate those whom they did not kill. Existing systems of government use less extreme methods of coercion, but every form of government used throughout the civilized age, including those in use today, impose varying degrees of human subjugation.

The Fourth Age avoids use of emotional trigger words like Republican or Democrat, Liberal or Conservative, Communist, Socialist, Capitalist or anything of the kind. The first reason is that these trigger words bring preconceived notions into the discussion that complicate the goal of the book, which is to identify the root of the problems we face in the Age of Civilization. The second reason is that human subjugation, the cause of most human conflict and the cause of many other human problems, is found in virtually all modes of human interaction, including all those listed above. It is to be found in all prevailing forms of government, all organized religions of the day, and all existing economic systems. Almost everything we do and much of what we believe is influenced by dangerous cultural paradigms that have no value other than to allow systems of human subjugation to be sustained. The book refers to the one percent and the ninety-nine percent, but a person's wealth is not an absolute measure of the danger that person poses to humanity. The real danger is the hoarding of natural resources by the one

percent to the exclusion of the ninety-nine percent. The danger is in the denial of the means of subsistence to other inhabitants of the planet.

Imagine

The words of the John Lennon song, *Imagine*, from the year 1971, were printed as an appendix to *The Fourth Age*. Although I did not refer to Lennon's ideas as I researched this book, I cannot reject the possibility that I might have been influenced by his words. Lennon proposes concepts that seem extreme in a civilized setting: no countries, no religion, and no possessions. Parallel ideas, equally extreme, appear in *The Fourth Age*. In a humanized society, asking for the end of political subjugation is like Lennon's call for "no countries," asking for the end of religious subjugation is like Lennon's call for "no religion," and asking for the end of private ownership of planetary resources is like Lennon's call for "no possessions." In the humanized society described in *The Fourth Age*, political subjugation is replaced by the idea of the mutual sovereignty of humankind, religious subjugation is replaced by the idea of the shared divinity of all people, and economic subjugation is replaced by the idea of the shared ownership of planetary resources.

Religious Subjugation

Asking for the end of religious subjugation is not asking for the end of religion. It is commendable that a person might wish to pattern his life after the life of Jesus Christ. It is equally commendable that a person might pattern his life after the life of Confucius, or Buddha, or Mohammed, or even after Gandhi or other laudable people.

Political Subjugation

Asking for the end of political subjugation is not asking for the end of political organization. People will always have reasons to form associations for their social, political, or spiritual well-being. Such associations can be organized without the need for a subjugating influence.

Economic Subjugation

The principle means for subjugating a population has been by denying them the means of subsistence; by denying them to right to partake of the fruits of the earth. Ancient conquerors claimed ownership of the lands for themselves, their patrons, their conscripts, and their heirs, and they forced others to subjugate themselves on threat of starvation or death. Asking for the end of economic subjugation is not asking for the redistribution of wealth, it is asking that the right to sustenance be acknowledged for all who occupy the planet; that the right of every man to use the resources of the earth for sustenance and survival be acknowledged.

Before Religion

Every major religion now existing was invented during the civilized age. Prior to the births of Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad (all of which are documented in *The Fourth Age*), there was no Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam. For two million years people of the earth lived without these religious guidelines; they lived in social groups founded upon cooperation and sharing: the sharing of jobs, the sharing of knowledge, and the sharing of the fruits of the earth. The earliest sign of warfare I have found in my archaeological research is the discovery of bodies pierced by arrow points that date to

ten thousand years ago. This is around the time of the agricultural revolution when men began to create social institutions based on the forced subjugation of a docile population by a small aggressive minority.

The Fourth Age

My recent revision to *TFA* was released in November of 2011 and has been made available as a PDF document which I hope you will distribute only as permitted in the copyright notice. It is not a public domain document, but it can be shared.

Only a few copies of the book have been printed and most of them have been distributed for review. The hope is that a reputable book publisher will see the importance of this book and will agree to put it into mainstream book distribution channels.

The book is not offered as a casual read. The goal was to document the central ideas of my thesis completely but briefly. Some of the discussion might have benefited from a bit more repetition, but I chose to limit repetition to the barest minimum. Those who need repetition can undertake it at their convenience by skimming through the book as often as necessary. It has taken me several decades to understand and organize the ideas in this book, so it should not bother you if you need a few days and multiple readings to get caught up. Take your time. The future of mankind depends on everyone embracing principles of humanity.