

## Tradition

### Tradition and Pride

Yesterday in the city of Philadelphia, I watched a lot of different events, such as the Georgia Independence Day celebration and some live performances in our famous Love Park here in Center City. During the summer in Philadelphia, there are lots of different cultural events, parades, and people outside. Maybe this is why Will Smith was inclined to write his song, "Summertime."

While watching the traditional dances and songs of the Georgian people, it sparked my curiosity as a photographer to participate, observe, and photograph this event. As much as I believe that we should transcend the traditional ways of doing things, living life, and even within our artistic practices, I believe that tradition is something to hold onto and to take pride in. The people of Georgia take great pride in their independence from the Soviet Union, and because of this, they uphold their festivities all throughout the globe, even here in Philadelphia. There are many flag raisings that take place outside of City Hall, and I always make sure to stop, watch, and listen to the speakers, as I am curious. **I believe that national pride is good**, and I'm very grateful to have grown up attending a Catholic school where each morning we prayed and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Weakness is the Enemy

During my walk along the river trail this morning, I was greeted by another one of those communist stickers on a pole. It reminded me of the United States Independence Day last year here in Philadelphia. On July 4, 2023, on a beautiful summer day, I decided to walk to Independence Hall, the birthplace of America here in Philadelphia, to see what festivities or traditional events were taking place. What I witnessed was a disgrace, as these communist pamphlets were held in the air by a group of weak and anemic people, burning the American flag to the ground.

**What I admire most about America is our freedom of speech and the fact that we have the ability to express things openly, whether you agree with them or not.** However, this particular event amused me, mostly just a hilarious and chaotic byproduct of weakness and the cruel nature of capitalism. The beauty of capitalism is that it gives the individual the power to accrue their own wealth and capital. The problem is the weak find this to be a difficult thing to achieve, and because of this, they desire to tear everyone down to a base level of poverty. Maybe they enjoy poverty and want everybody else to experience their weakness and impoverished state too. They like to bring everyone down to the base level, tear things down from behind the scenes, pull at the strings, burn the flags, and always desire to revolt because they were never able to acquire power and strength.

### **Gossip and Drama**

I feel like most people these days fuel their days with mindless gossip and drama. Are the Kardashians and social media to blame? Maybe, but probably not. **I think it's just the natural order of things.** Once we have abundance, we fill the void with meaningless things.

Whether it's people walking from a university campus, chit-chatting about this and that, "he said, she said" conversations become the center of most people's attention these days. I find that people love talking about other people, and maybe this is because most people cannot find time to empower themselves on their own. People have to constantly be around others and empower themselves by tearing others down. This is apparent to me just from overhearing conversations as I walk the streets. I hear it mostly every single day, and it never ceases to amuse me and put a smile on my face. **I find that it's best to just laugh in the face of chaos and not to take any of this stuff so seriously.** Just allow others to live deliriously, in the shadows, in the dark. **It's not our duty to take them out of the dark.** Some people will dwell there forever, in their little prison, their own personal hell.

### **Bureaucracy is Bad**

When you are born and assigned a birth certificate, a birth certificate number, and your Social Security number, you become a byproduct of bureaucracy. When you go to the DMV and pull a ticket, you are just a number. You go to the desk, they tell you to sit down, they ask for your Social Security number, your birth certificate number, and then admit you to receive a new driver's license number. You then get a job, receive a payroll number, a bank account number, and watch numbers appear on a screen in your phone.

**What a dream, what a way to live life, what soul we have here in the United States!** My thought is that a lot of the systems are bad because there are so many hoops you have to go through to do anything, so much time wasted and squandered, so much human potential put inside of boxes to do mind-numbing labor and menial tasks.

### **Intelligence is Artificial**

I recently had a doctor's appointment, and it had me thinking a lot about how intelligence is merely artificial. When you arrive at the doctor's office, you usually wait for around an hour before being greeted, then wait for another half an hour after you've been greeted. They listen to your heart, they check your blood pressure, and then you're left on your merry way. You get a script to get some blood work drawn, you go home, and you receive the results. From there, I guess you can just use artificial intelligence and research all of the fancy words and scientific terms on the documents that you receive.

**My thought is that a lot of these doctors and people love to just throw big words around that a normal person has no idea what they mean anyway.** What is the function of a degree? What is the function of a university? For you to memorize random things and then regurgitate them later in the workplace to people that have no idea what it means?

This is why I believe that artificial intelligence is beautiful because you can essentially learn what anybody received from their four-year degree in a matter of 30 seconds by opening up your phone in your front right pocket.

What will the future of lawyers, doctors, and office workers be? What will happen once artificial intelligence reaches the point where it truly can replace all these menial things? I believe that the jobs will not be entirely replaced, but perhaps the way in which they are done will change drastically.

## War and Robots

I attended Central High School here in Philadelphia, a public school, which to me, felt like a big prison. All the doors were locked, there was security everywhere, and you had to go through metal detectors and x-rays just to get inside. You couldn't go outside during lunch and were forced to sit down for eight hours per day.

Because I noticed how useless the information we were being taught was early on, I spent my days skipping class and exploring outside, finding doors that I could sneak out of and enjoy the fresh air. I found it extremely easy to get homework done and study for tests in the period before by just opening up the book and memorizing things. It wasn't really difficult to get by in high school; you just look at a book, then look at a piece of paper, and write things down.

However, I would always pass by the robotics team, as there were various clubs throughout the school. I typically hung around the breakdancing club and liked watching them as they would glide across the halls of school. But the robotics team was interesting, always tinkering with these machines and little bots. I was never really much of a computer nerd or got into these things; the furthest I went into these kinds of ideas was modifying my Nerf guns and jailbreaking iPods.

With the capability of making humanoid robots, **what will the future of war look like?** What is the function of a human being, the value of a human death, on the front lines of a battlefield? Perhaps there was true honor and glory to have when wars were fought with muskets or swords and merely hand-to-hand combat with sword and shield. Nowadays, some 18-year-old kid with an Xbox controller can drop bombs on a city, killing innocent civilians without a physical connection to the battlefield. **I believe that this is alarming and has me questioning the ethics of war itself.**

I believe that there will always be war, conflict, and violence in society, but with the advent of technology, this changes the game entirely. Maybe we should just host our wars in virtual simulated universes. I remember reading *Ender's Game* in middle school, where the boys on the spaceship fought what they believed were simulated wars in virtual reality. The twist, however, was that the final battle was real, leading to significant moral and ethical implications.

I remember playing *Call of Duty*, an FPS shooter game, as a kid, or even *Halo*, a much more sci-fi warfare game, to seek glory on the battlefield. **Perhaps it's human nature to seek this glory on a battlefield, but it gets to a point where we are so disconnected from the humanity when a robot or drone is utilized.** At this point, we should bring back the major league gaming community, make it international, and just have Israel and Palestine fight it out on *Counter-Strike*. Whoever wins gets 1600 Microsoft points. Isn't that the whole function of war anyway? Driving the economy? They're just numbers on a screen. Why not just use Microsoft points? Those were cool! United States dollars and any fiat currency are kind of lame at this point. You could just burn it sort of like the communists burn the flag.

## **Reject the Modern World**

Going forward, I say just return to the primal. **Think ancient, and disconnect from the modern world.** Most of our culture is junk food, whether it's the media we produce, the music that we make, or even the artwork that's displayed on the walls of galleries. It's all junk.

Go for walks in nature, find yourself inspired by old sculptures and architecture, and disconnect from this modern world, especially if you live in a city. **Focus on increasing physical strength, and everything else will fall into place.** Reject weakness, sedentary life, and just sitting down all day on your butt, consuming junk. **It seems that's all we produce these days, is junk,** whether it's junk food, junk thoughts, junk gossip, or junk politics. It's time to call 1-800-GOT-JUNK and remove all the junk, declutter your mind, your body, and your life. **There's no real point in making new friends these days, so consider yourself lucky if you're like me and still hold onto your childhood friendships from when you were in**

**kindergarten.** Once you're sucked into the junk world, there's no point in saving others and pulling them out of it. Just focus on yourself, leave others alone, and become one percent more curious each day.

**Perhaps it's time to create a new tradition...**