

Why I am a reactionary

I think it needs to be established right off the bat that the so-called 'political spectrum' of left and right is a load of crap. While I may use terms like 'leftist' and 'right libertarian' for shorthand to denote particular movements or people, I do not believe there has ever been a coherent conception of the idea of left and right. This may be something I write about again in the future, but honestly, I'm not really interested in discussing anything with anyone who doesn't get this. Sorry, but I purged myself of that delusion more than ten years ago, have tried explaining it countless times since, and no one has infinite patience.

With that said, I would like to talk about my recent adoption of the term 'reactionary'. This has mostly been the result of the gradual elimination of alternatives, rather than me necessarily seeing it as the most accurate label. In fact, in general I detest labels, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, I am against essentialism in that I don't believe that people can be subsumed or understood by nouns [see the history of existentialist philosophy and radical semantics for more information about this – or if you're lazy, try *'Quantum Psychology'* by Robert Anton Wilson]. Secondly, I'd rather focus on actions, or at least ongoing processes. What people do is objectively more accurate to describe, and subjectively more interesting, than what anyone says they 'are'.

Speaking of such processes, I think one helpful metaphor for civilisation is to see it as a series of ongoing transformations, the result of which is the globalization of hatred and the eradication of love: between humans and humans, between humans and animals, and between humans and Mother Earth/Gaia/whatever you like. A reactionary, from this perspective, is someone who wants to revert to the very real earlier state of being where more of this love existed, and there was no globalization of anything.

Now, there are some uses for labels in a momentary, temporary sense. It's like holding up some kind of a flag - not for Pavlovian use like military colours, but just as something to gather around. If I held up a sign saying 'I think Boris Johnson is a smelly cock', I would likely attract people who felt similarly (as well as a few brave and staunch Tories who wanted to tell me how silly I was being – to which my likely response might be 'Go away you smelly cock'). If you're a neutral at a football game between the Cowboys and the Patriots and you're sat in a section of the crowd where there likely to be a large concentration of one or the other fanbase, it can be helpful to wear the jersey of your own team so people get, roughly speaking, that you have no horse in the race and you are just there to watch the action. In soccer matches, especially in Europe, this can actually be life-preserving.

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There are some merits to terms like ‘radical’ – but it’s more of an adjective applied to other words than actually standing for anything in itself. I think it’s good to have radical critiques: ones that get to the root of the matters being discussed. I champion Maximalism over Minimalism. But I can’t *just* call myself a radical. ‘Radical WHAT?’ people will ask me. So as a label it’s not of much use.

Then, since Western societies are currently tearing themselves apart in polar opposite directions, with a very large section having fallen under the spell of neo-Marxist cultural demoralization and another faction forming around populist nationalism that can sometimes include some anti-liberatory measures, I feel that moderation is certainly a virtue. Self-identifying as a moderate, for example, can show everyone involved that I am neither going to self-police myself to use whatever invented language the identity politicians want to force me to use, nor do I want to see people with gender dysphoria treated as anything less than human beings. Being a moderate on this issue is very sensible, I would argue. The same goes for the multitude of debates in which I am a ‘moderate’.

Now, some would say that ‘radicalism’ and ‘moderation’ are opposites, but I don’t think they are. One can definitely be a radical moderate. I strongly considered going with this option, but a) it’s a bit of a mouthful, and b) not really understandable by anyone. If there were a big event in Speaker’s Corner, or in front of the Lincoln Memorial (a year ago let’s say), and I’m there with my buddies and we are presenting as ‘radical moderates’, I doubt anyone would notice.

The other trouble with moderation is that some people use it interchangeably with centrism, which I despise. Centrists are anti-radical in that they don’t really want much of anything to change.

Nominally, at least, the conservatives of a society are the ones that don’t want things to change much, or want them to change slowly, or perhaps want to roll them slightly back. But my view on the world is that we have allowed ourselves to form a huge number of features (or ongoing processes) which are not only extremely dangerous but are leading to massive psychological and cultural collapse. I want to see a world without those features.

I’m not alone in this conception. [The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy](#) delineates the difference between conservatives and reactionaries as one in which the former are seen as wanting ‘gentle reform’.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/conservatism/#TraGraRefConVsRea>

Since I think that the history of attempts to reform society and civilisation is the most immiserating story I could probably find, I cannot consider myself to be a conservative. Had the conservatives of the 18th and 19th century prevailed and slowed down the march of civilisational progress so that I

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was living in a pre-globalised world, I might feel differently. But I would refer the reader to the content of **Liberty & Logos, Episode 1** for a reasonably comprehensive articulation of exactly how ferocious and totalising ‘progress’ has been, and for those and other reasons, I do not want to simply ‘tweak’ the status quo.

Likewise, [Wikipedia](#) describes reactionaries as wanting to see the return of “*characteristics that are negatively absent from the contemporary status quo of a society*”. Examples I might give of the things that I see as lacking are: *any* sense of morality whatsoever; real community; sexual and parental responsibility; spiritual connections to other beings, to God, and to the Earth in general; unmediated communication; and the tendency to restrain oneself from verbal diarrhoea, until at least one has a reasonable grasp of the topic in hand [*these last two are especially lacking in the anarchist forum where I was recently brigaded*].

In short, my viewpoint constitutes a reaction to the world in which I find myself, an increasingly large share of which is wrong, morally and existentially. I am, therefore, a reactionary.

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Now, as with any term, there are a plethora of people who are using it differently. This is true of anarchism (see **‘Liberty and Logos’, Episode 4**) and of ‘democracy’ (which we will address in future episodes). Many people seeing the word ‘reactionary’ will assume I have something in common with any number of people. The remedy for this is to actually, you know, *look* and see if that is true.

A viewer that contacted Liberty and Logos by email asked me what I thought of the ‘nRx’ or ‘neo-reactionaries’. My first thought was that neo-reactionary is something of an oxymoron. There isn’t really anything new about wanting to wind the clock back on some of the more oppressive elements of civilization. Ask the Amish, the Luddites, the Anabaptists or the early Christians. None of those are ‘neo’ in any way, but all of them could see dangerous currents at work, and vocally (and in some cases, existentially) opposed them.

After some cursory reading into these nRx types, I see that in general they advocate capitalism, anti-egalitarianism, nationalism and technophilia – all of which I oppose, and all of which seem to me like some of the more popular trends in Western society. Supporters of these things should rightly be called progressives, if we used language properly. Accelerationism and unquestioning support for modern technological society are not liberal (in the classical use of the term) or even conservative positions, and they certainly aren’t reactionary in any meaningful use of the word.

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“Ah, but you’re ignoring the idea that these people want to return to feudalism while keeping the modern technological world!”, I hear some readers protest. I got some news for you: elite control of the masses didn’t start or end with medieval feudalism. Please read some real history. A dominant few have lorded it over the masses for millennia in many places. The fact is that during the feudal period, there were in many places greater freedoms than there are today. And certainly there weren’t the globe-spanning technetronic systems of surveillance and information control that we now have to contend with!

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One further point: the insinuation has been lodged that my following or re-tweeting of personalities that certain people consider to be ‘on the right’ (see the first paragraph of this piece) constitutes me having “unpleasant interests”. The implication here seems to be that merely wanting to know the opinions of (or finding anything valuable amongst those opinions) these personalities is somehow ‘unpleasant’. ‘For whom?’ one wonders. Answer: the people judging me without a clear idea of who I am, I guess. Well, I don’t give a shit about what they find pleasant or unpleasant, frankly.

Unlike them, I’d rather not consign myself to a bubble where I only read news from a pre-designated set of sources, or insist that it would be anathema to find even one interesting or thoughtful idea amongst people I disagree with.

People with this view clearly didn’t see **Liberty & Logos – Episode 0**, in which I argue that it is not only possible, but very likely, that in reading the output of people you disagree with *overall*, you can find individual ideas that you *do* agree with. I gave the example of Ted Kaczynski, whom I think had some good ideas despite overall being someone I’d want nothing to do with in terms of actual relationships (or even correspondence, since the one time I wrote him a letter, he ignored the fact I was merely asking questions and decided I was a hardline primitivist sent by John Zerzan).

So yes, you may find some of my viewpoints or comments surprising, or note that they have been infrequently expressed within discourses on liberation. But if you’ve read this, you no longer have any excuse, I think, to insist that I have anything in common with the likes of Il Duce or El Caudillo.