

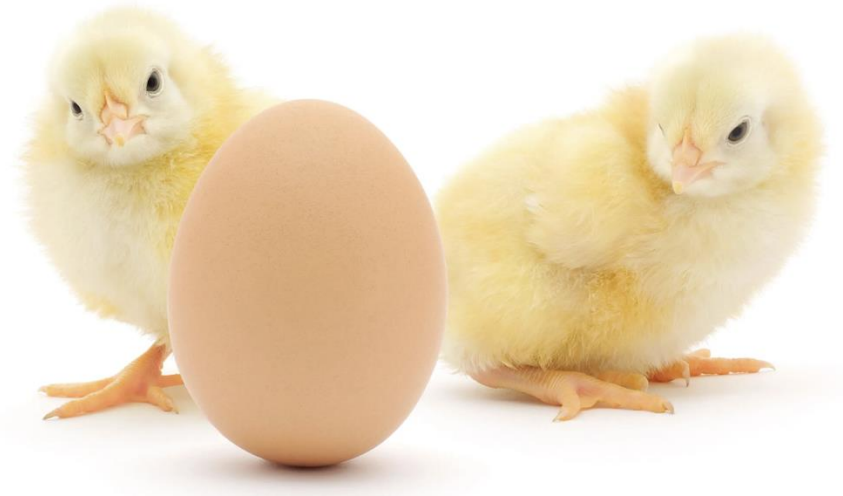
# The West and the Individual

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WHY COMMUNISM FAILS

# *Karl Marx and the Egg*

- *History of revolution*
- *Intellectual response*
- *Practical perspective*



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MARX SUGGESTS YOU CAN'T MAKE AN OMELET WITHOUT BREAKING A FEW EGGS. CRITICS SUGGEST COMMUNISTS ARE GREAT AT BREAKING THE EGGS BUT NEVER SEEM TO GET AROUND TO MAKING THE OMELET.

# *Welcome to the revolution.*

KARL MARX, A 19TH-CENTURY GERMAN PHILOSOPHER, ECONOMIST, AND POLITICAL THEORIST, PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCED THE HISTORY OF REVOLUTION WITH HIS CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM AND VISION FOR A CLASSLESS SOCIETY.

HIS SEMINAL WORKS, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO AND DAS KAPITAL, OUTLINED THE THEORY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, ARGUING THAT CLASS STRUGGLE DRIVES SOCIETAL CHANGE. MARX BELIEVED THAT THE PROLETARIAT WOULD INEVITABLY OVERTHROW THE BOURGEOISIE, LEADING TO THE ABOLITION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNIST SOCIETY.

HIS IDEAS INSPIRED REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917, AND CONTINUE TO SHAPE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISCOURSE.



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COMMUNISTS SEE COMMUNISM AS AN INEVITABLE SOCIETAL OUTCOME. THE REVOLUTION IS ALWAYS JUST A BREATH AWAY ... BUT THE REVOLUTION NEVER COMES.

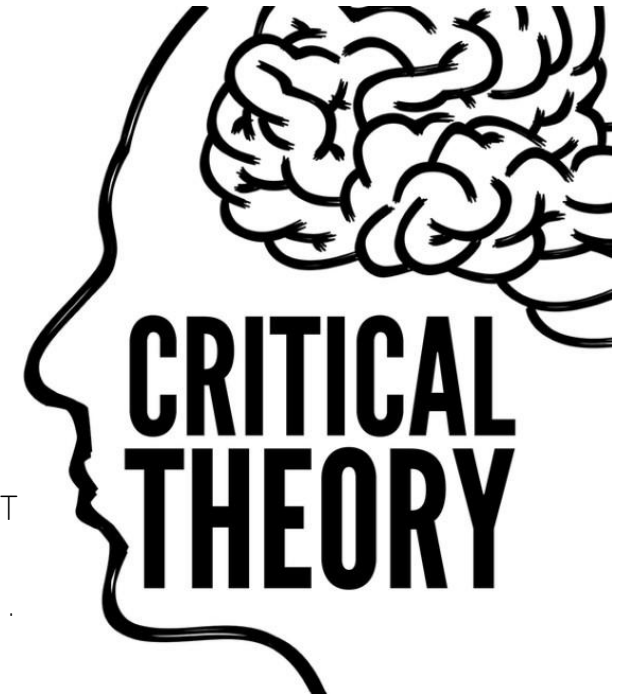
THE QUESTION IS WHY?

# *The Frankfurt School*

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH DRAWING ON MARXISM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, PHILOSOPHY, AND SOCIOLOGY TO CRITIQUE AND CHANGE SOCIETY, NOT JUST UNDERSTAND IT.

CRITICAL THEORY AIMED TO REVEAL HOW SYSTEMS OF POWER OPERATE IN HIDDEN WAYS THROUGH IDEOLOGY, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES.

ARGUES THAT DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES IN CAPITALIST SOCIETIES ARE SUBTLE BUT POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CONTROLLING THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR, LEADING TO A "FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS" WHERE PEOPLE ACCEPT SYSTEMS THAT OPPRESS THEM.



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TOM BREAKER: BUDDY. THE MOVEMENT IS DEAD.

WILLIAM STRANNIX: YES, OF COURSE! HENCE THE NAME: MOVEMENT. IT MOVES A CERTAIN DISTANCE, THEN IT STOPS, YOU SEE? A REVOLUTION GETS ITS NAME BY ALWAYS COMING BACK AROUND IN YOUR FACE.

- TOMMY LEE JONES - UNDER SIEGE

# *The Frankfurt School – Key Figures*

**MAX HORKHEIMER:** FORMULATED CRITICAL THEORY AS A WAY TO UNITE SOCIAL SCIENCES WITH PHILOSOPHY TO CRITIQUE POWER STRUCTURES AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES.

**THEODOR ADORNO:** EXPLORED THE WAYS IN WHICH MASS CULTURE (E.G., CINEMA, MUSIC, AND TELEVISION) SHAPES AND PACIFIES INDIVIDUALS, LEADING TO "THE CULTURE INDUSTRY" CONCEPT.

**HERBERT MARCUSE:** ARGUED THAT ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES CREATE A "ONE-DIMENSIONAL" INDIVIDUAL, LACKING CRITICAL THOUGHT DUE TO CONSUMERISM, MASS MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RATIONALITY.

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MANY IDEAS FROM THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL WERE FOUNDATIONAL TO MODERN CRITICAL THEORY, INFLUENCING MOVEMENTS LIKE POSTMODERNISM, FEMINISM, AND POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES. THEIR INFLUENCE IS VISIBLE IN CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUES OF MEDIA, IDEOLOGY, AND POWER DYNAMICS, AS WELL AS IN ACTIVIST MOVEMENTS THAT SEEK TO QUESTION AND RESIST OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS.

# *The Frankfurt School – Key Figures*

**ERICH FROMM:** ANALYZED HOW PEOPLE OFTEN WILLINGLY SUBMIT TO AUTHORITARIANISM OUT OF FEAR OF FREEDOM AND UNCERTAINTY.

**WALTER BENJAMIN:** HIS ESSAY "THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION" EXAMINED HOW MASS PRODUCTION CHANGES ART'S SOCIAL FUNCTION, STRIPPING IT OF ITS "AURA" (ITS UNIQUE PRESENCE)

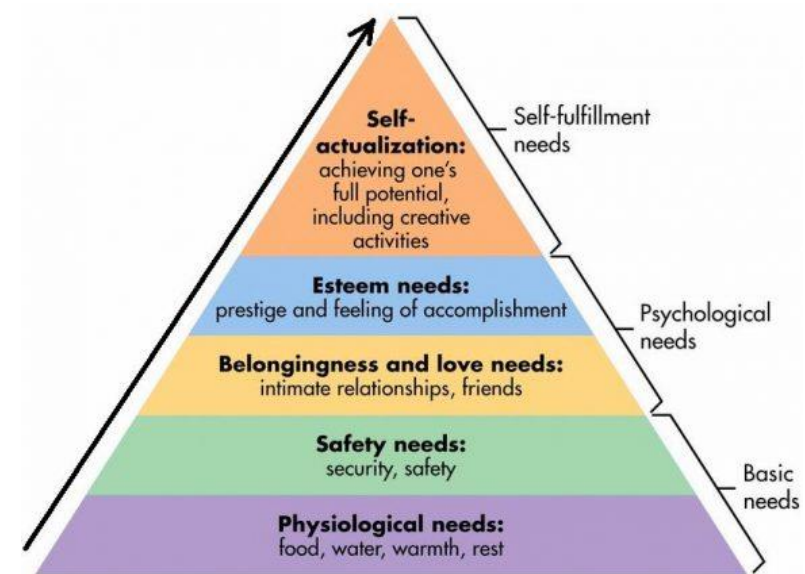
**JÜRGEN HABERMAS:** ARGUED THAT RATIONAL COMMUNICATION COULD FOSTER DEMOCRACY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. HIS FOCUS SHIFTED AWAY FROM PESSIMISM TOWARD THE POSSIBILITY OF DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE IN MODERN SOCIETY.

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THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL HAS HAD A LASTING IMPACT ON FIELDS LIKE SOCIOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND MEDIA THEORY. ITS CRITIQUES OF CONSUMERISM, MASS MEDIA, AND THE EROSION OF INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY RESONATE WITH CONTEMPORARY ANALYSES OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM.

# *Communism targets basic needs*

- 1 - FOOD AND WATER
- 2 - SHELTER
- 3 - HEALTHCARE
- 4 - EDUCATION
- 5 - EMPLOYMENT
- 6 - SOCIAL BELONGING
- 7 - SECURITY



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COMMUNIST THEORY EMPHASIZES THE COLLECTIVE SATISFACTION OF THESE NEEDS WITHOUT CLASS HIERARCHIES, AIMING TO CREATE A SOCIETY WHERE ALL INDIVIDUALS CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND SECURITY. HOWEVER, IN PRACTICE, THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNIST SYSTEMS IN MEETING THESE NEEDS HAS VARIED DEPENDING ON HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS.

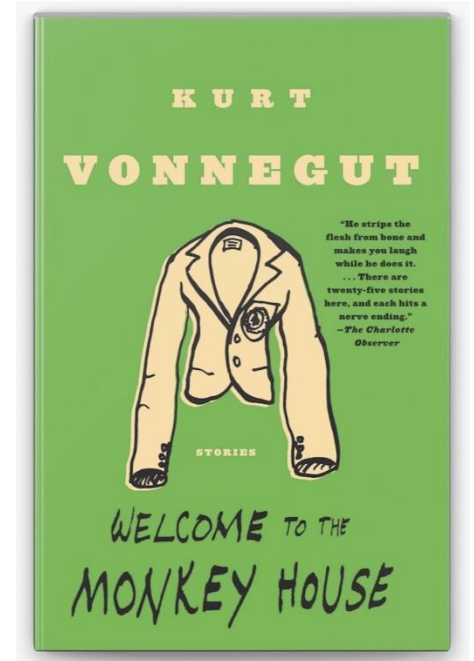
# The absurdity of equality

IN THE SHORT STORY "HARRISON BERGERON," VONNEGUT IMAGINES A DYSTOPIAN FUTURE WHERE THE GOVERNMENT ENFORCES EQUALITY BY HANDICAPPING PEOPLE WHO ARE ABOVE AVERAGE IN ANY WAY.

- STRONG PEOPLE MUST WEAR WEIGHTS TO REDUCE THEIR PHYSICAL ADVANTAGE
- INTELLIGENT PEOPLE ARE FITTED WITH DEVICES THAT DISRUPT THEIR THOUGHTS
- BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE WEAR MASKS TO OBSCURE THEIR APPEARANCE

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THE STORY CRITIQUES THE EXTREMES OF ENFORCED EQUALITY AND EXPLORES THEMES OF INDIVIDUALITY, FREEDOM, AND THE DANGERS OF GOVERNMENT OVERREACH.





# *Why does Communism fail in the West*

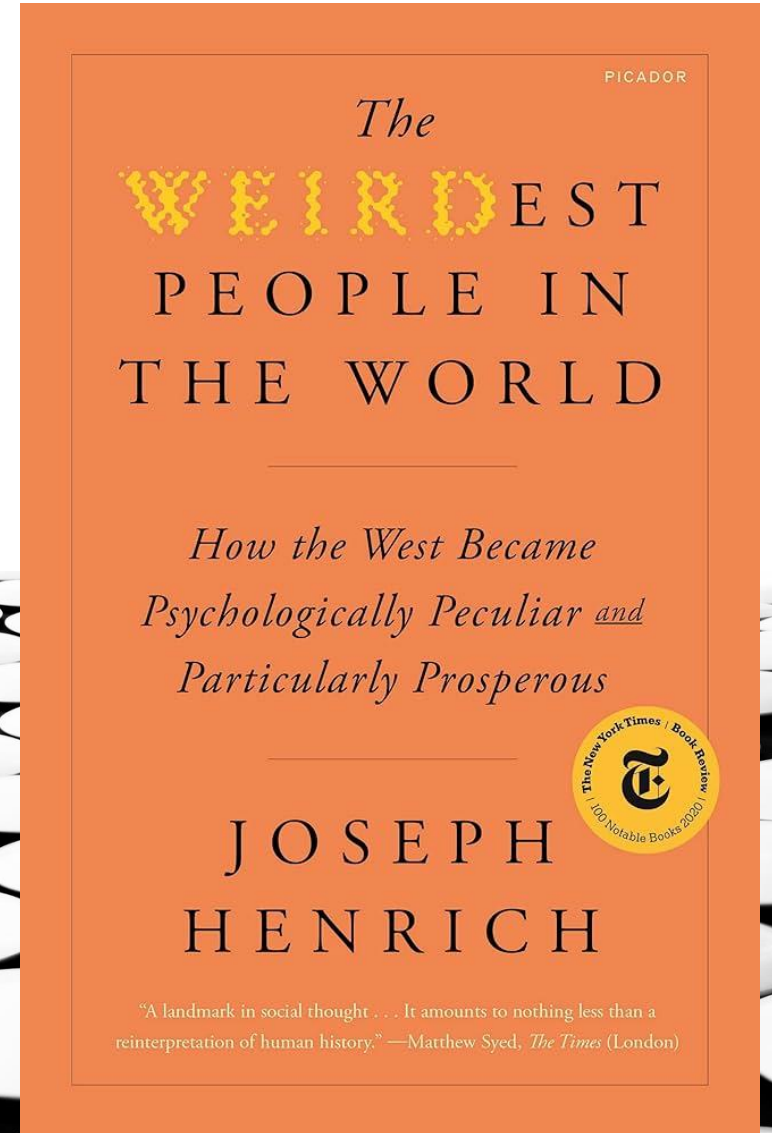
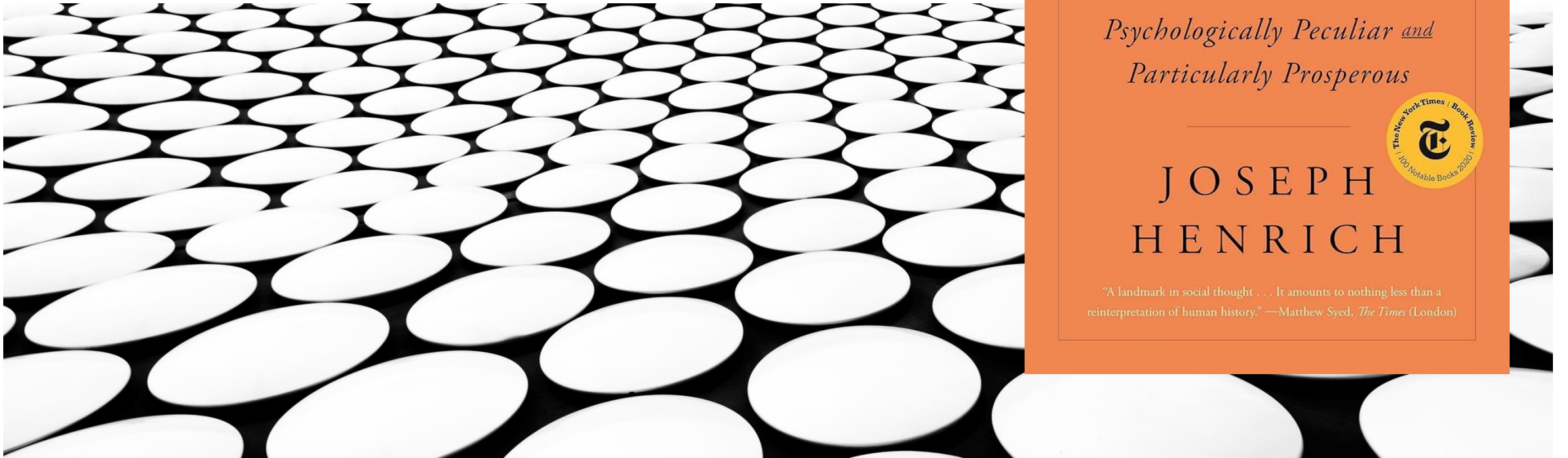
1. STRONG INDIVIDUALIST CULTURES
2. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND CAPITALISM'S SUCCESS
3. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND STABILITY
4. ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENT AND PROPAGANDA
5. DIVERSE AND FRAGMENTED LEFTIST MOVEMENTS
6. INFLUENCE OF WEALTHY ELITES
7. GLOBALIZATION AND OPEN MARKETS



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OF ALL THE FACTORS, IT IS WESTERN CONCEPTS OF INDIVIDUALISM THAT PREVENT TRADITIONAL COMMUNISM FROM TAKING HOLD. IN WESTERN SOCIETIES IT IS MORE OFTEN ABOUT GETTING AHEAD OF OTHERS THAN JUST GETTING AHEAD.

# Well Educated, Industrious, Rich and Democratic



# *The West is WEIRD*

**ANALYTICAL THINKING:** WEIRD PEOPLE TEND TO VIEW OBJECTS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN ISOLATION, WHILE NON-WEIRD SOCIETIES THINK MORE HOLISTICALLY, CONSIDERING THE BROADER CONTEXT.

**INDIVIDUALISM:** PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS, SELF-RELIANCE, AND AUTONOMY ARE EMPHASIZED MORE IN WEIRD SOCIETIES THAN IN KIN-BASED ONES.

**TRUST AND FAIRNESS:** WEIRD SOCIETIES TEND TO TRUST STRANGERS MORE AND ARE MORE INCLINED TO FOLLOW ABSTRACT RULES AND LAWS, UNLIKE KIN-BASED SOCIETIES, WHERE TRUST IS RESERVED FOR FAMILY AND CLOSE SOCIAL NETWORKS.

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**WEIRD PEOPLE**—WESTERN, EDUCATED, INDUSTRIALIZED, RICH, AND DEMOCRATIC—ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTLIERS COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN HOW WEIRD INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVE FAIRNESS, MORALITY, COOPERATION, AND INDIVIDUALITY.

# *A Grand Narrative*

WEIRD SOCIETIES THINK AND BEHAVE IN WAYS THAT ARE UNIQUE COMPARED TO MOST HUMAN POPULATIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY. THEY TEND TO BE MORE INDIVIDUALISTIC, ANALYTICAL, AND RULE-ORIENTED.

THESE CHARACTERISTICS EMERGED FROM HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES, PARTICULARLY DUE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S INFLUENCE IN EUROPE, WHICH DISRUPTED TRADITIONAL KIN-BASED SYSTEMS BY PROMOTING MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGE, BANNING COUSIN MARRIAGE, AND WEAKENING CLAN TIES.

THESE SHIFTS LED TO GREATER EMPHASIS ON NUCLEAR FAMILIES, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, WHICH FOSTERED INDEPENDENT THINKING AND A RELIANCE ON FORMAL INSTITUTIONS LIKE MARKETS AND LAWS.

OVER TIME, THESE CULTURAL CHANGES CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN INSTITUTIONS, SCIENCE, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

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HENRICH'S BOOK CHALLENGES THE ASSUMPTION THAT HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY IS UNIVERSAL. INSTEAD, IT SHOWS THAT WESTERN WAYS OF THINKING ARE CULTURALLY UNIQUE, SHAPED BY HISTORICAL FORCES RATHER THAN INHERENT HUMAN NATURE.



# *So, communism fails ...*

Conclusion



DUE TO CULTURAL RESISTANCE, CAPITALIST PROSPERITY, POLITICAL STABILITY, AND FRAGMENTED LEFTIST IDEOLOGIES?

OR, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR THEM AND ARE INEXPLICABLY UNWILLING TO ACT IN THEIR OWN BEST INTEREST?

OR, WESTERN WAYS OF THINKING ARE CULTURALLY UNIQUE, SHAPED BY HISTORICAL FORCES RATHER THAN INHERENT HUMAN NATURE?

OR, INDIVIDUALS NOT ONLY WANT BETTER FOOD, CLOTHING, CARS THAN YOU, THEY INSIST YOU KNOW THEY HAVE BETTER FOOD, CLOTHING, CARS THAN YOU?

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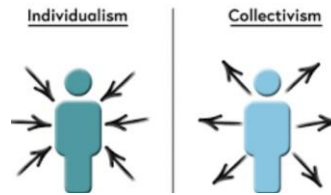
HOW FAST DO I NEED TO BE TO GET AWAY FROM AN ANGRY BEAR?

EASY, I JUST NEED TO BE A LITTLE BIT FASTER THAN YOU.

# Individualism vs. Collectivism



Considers the moral worth and autonomy of the individual as paramount. One should pursue personal freedom, self-reliance, and your own goals..



Emphasizes the group, community, or society as a whole. The welfare of the group is to be put above personal desires.

Individualism

You

Collectivism

Unchecked individualism can worsen the tragedy of the commons, it can also contribute to solving it through innovation, institutional development, and responsible behavior. The key is balancing personal freedoms with collective needs through effective governance, cultural norms, and shared accountability.

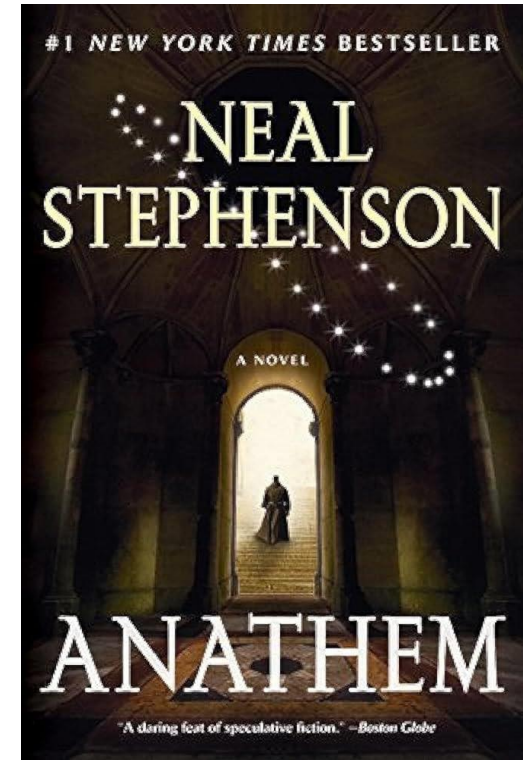
The term 'tragedy of the commons' was popularized by ecologist Garrett Hardin in 1968 it describes a situation where individuals, acting in their own self-interest, overuse or deplete a shared resource, leading to long-term collective harm. Examples include overfishing, deforestation, and climate change. While individuals gain the immediate benefits of resource exploitation, the costs are distributed across the entire group. Without regulation or cooperation, everyone suffers from resource depletion.

# Book Recommendation

A BLEND OF SCIENCE FICTION AND PHILOSOPHY, SET IN A WORLD WHERE CLOISTERED SCHOLARS, ISOLATED FROM SOCIETY, PRESERVE AND EXPLORE KNOWLEDGE.

WHEN AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT EMERGES, THESE INTELLECTUALS MUST VENTURE BEYOND THEIR WALLS, CHALLENGING THE BOUNDARIES OF SCIENCE, FAITH, AND REALITY ITSELF.

FILLED WITH RICH WORLD-BUILDING AND INTRICATE IDEAS, ANATHEM INVITES READERS TO QUESTION THE VERY NATURE OF EXISTENCE.



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THIS IS ONE OF THOSE BOOKS THAT I CAN PICK UP AND OPEN ANYWHERE FOR BIT OF ENTERTAINMENT AND DISTRACTION.