

PATH TO SOVEREIGNTY

7 KEYS TO UNLOCK YOUR TRUEST SELF



BERTIL SCHAART

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A GLASS OF COGNAC

*A tavern is a place
where madness is sold by the bottle.*

Jonathan Swift

One more. Definitely. I decided I deserved it. It had been a long terrible day. “Could you please pour me another glass of cognac? Yes, that one. The most expensive one.”

“There you go sir”

“Thank you. And you can put it again on room 103.”

I couldn't care less. All my business expenses were paid by my boss.

There I was. Alone. In a bar. In a hotel. Abroad.

And I was doing great. I had a super job! Great salary. Beautiful lease car. I travelled internationally. Gold member of the airline company. Bonuses. Respect. Promising future. I was great... and everybody thought so. But deep down I knew better.

I was only great... on paper.

In reality, I was deeply unhappy. I worked 70 hours a week, was always away from home, no time for friends and family. I was single and I did not

have time for love. In fact, I did not have a personal life at all. I worked hard, but did not have the time to play hard.

I did not support the work I was doing. It didn't make sense. The large project I was made responsible for would only cost the company money, it wouldn't bring anything to the company. From an organizational point of view, it was a big mess. Any attempt to change that situation was blocked by the management team. At the same time, I had become part of a political power play and was asked not to tell the truth about the project. Although my job title was impressive, in the end it boiled down to chasing people to work on a project that didn't make sense from the beginning.

It was getting late and as I stared in my glass, the waiter told me softly he was going to close the bar for the night. He started calculating the bill. I realized I was the only one left at the bar.

I started reflecting on my life. What was I doing with my life?

As I was younger than most of my peers at work, I looked at their lives to project what my future would look like.

I noticed I had a growing number of colleagues with medical problems, due to the severe stressful situation at work. I was very healthy, but I also experienced the stress and tension. I felt a continuous flow of adrenaline rushing through my veins. Similar to revving up the engine of your car, into the red. It is possible, but being in the red for a long time will ruin it.

Then I saw the images of my colleagues with relationship problems. I was jealous, wishing I had those problems, then at least I would have a girlfriend! But I had no time to meet someone. This senseless job did not allow me any personal space.

Then there were the colleagues with drinking problems. Right in the middle of reflecting on them, the waiter pushed the invoice of the evening to me. Its amount demonstrated clearly I was well on my way to join this group of alcoholic co-workers.

My personal life was not much better. I did not have a real home. I was living in a sublet rental apartment in Amsterdam. In other words, I had

a temporary abode, living in somebody else's mess. I moved in there with a few suitcases. One was my permanent travel companion which I always took with me on my weekly business trips abroad. If suitcases could talk, this one would perfectly express how it is to be mindlessly dragged around all the time, exactly what my job was doing to me. With the little time I had during week days in Amsterdam, I did try to find myself decent housing, but to no avail.

Amsterdam was experiencing a property boom at the time. Real estate agents will always sacrifice flexibility and customer service first in such high demand for real estate. The agent would set just one possibility for the viewing of an apartment. If you can't make it, too bad. Around thirty people would gather in front of the house at the set appointment. The real estate agent, usually a junior person wearing a pinstripe suit with commensurate arrogance, would typically arrive 15 minutes late. Apologizing was certainly not part of his activities. The apartment hungry people were let inside and were allowed to roam the house for just 10 minutes in which you see more of the other people than of the house itself. The visitors were then asked to submit their bid for the house. The desperation was so high that the winning bid was usually 25% over the asking price. How can anyone feel comfortable making such large financial commitment in under 10 stressful minutes for a house you can hardly see?

I tipped the bartender and left the deserted hotel bar. With my mind very occupied, I walked towards the elevators. I felt so divided. The inside discussion continued. The little Bertil in me wanted to keep things as they were: "Things will improve as you go along." The voice of Big Bertil was very clear: "Is this what you are here for on this planet? To serve an agenda that is not even yours? Every day you see the destruction, the corruption, the senselessness and the struggles. Do you want to be associated with this all? Can you explain to yourself why you contribute to it? It is getting worse and worse. You need to change now."

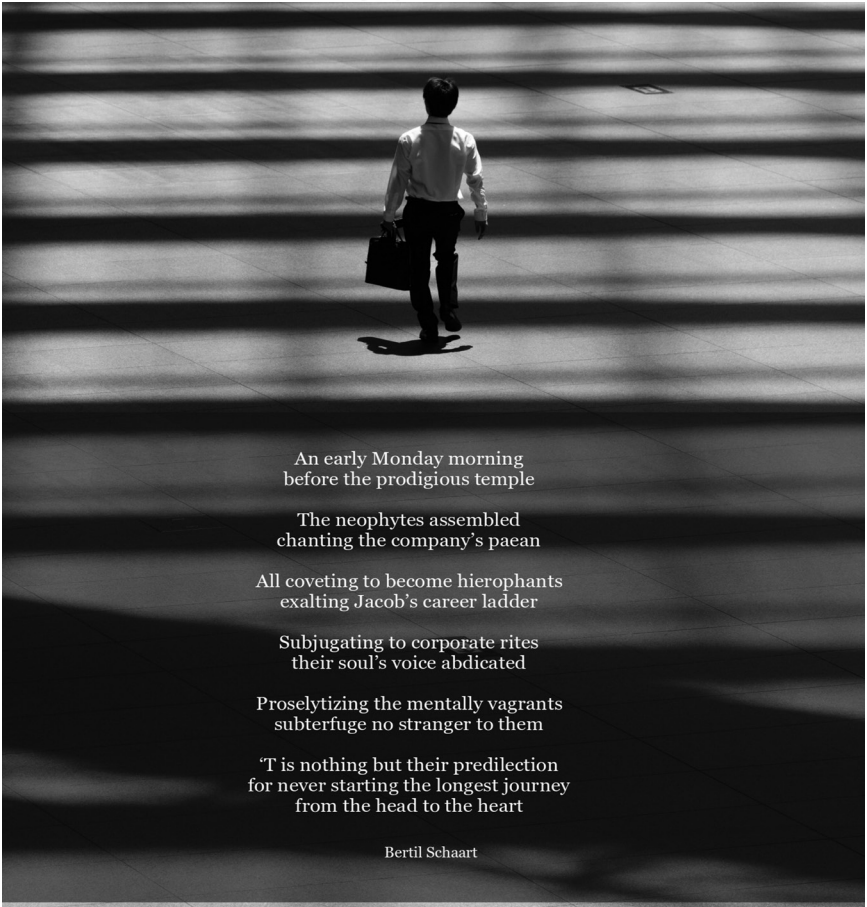
Little Bertil interjected: “Remember how the CEO praised you after your first project and asked how the others could become more like you? Think of the money, the imminent salary raise. And what about Mum and Dad? They are so proud of you.” The Big voice replied: “Your work is like a cancer in your life right now. It is growing and it is affecting all other aspects of your life. How can you explain this to yourself?”

I longed for freedom. I yearned to be happy and joyful again. I wanted to start all over again. As I stood in front of my hotel room door, it became very clear to me. Things had to change. The job had to go. As I slid the key pass in the door, I heard it unlock.

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Praying To The Corporate God

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An early Monday morning
before the prodigious temple

The neophytes assembled
chanting the company's paean

All coveting to become hierophants
exalting Jacob's career ladder

Subjugating to corporate rites
their soul's voice abdicated

Proselytizing the mentally vagrants
subterfuge no stranger to them

'T is nothing but their predilection
for never starting the longest journey
from the head to the heart

Bertil Schaart

PART TWO: MY THOUGHTS

What does sovereignty mean?

FREEDOM OF MIND

This book is about claiming your personal sovereignty. Sovereignty is the state in which one has supreme power. When you have sovereignty, no longer will you let others decide for you. It is not the government, not your employer, not your family, not your spouse, or whoever or whatever. It is you who in the end consciously makes the decisions that affect your life. The power of sovereignty comes with great freedom.

We all yearn for freedom. However, not many truly understand what freedom is. When you ask around, most people will equate freedom with being on holidays on a remote tropical island, lying in a hammock, relaxing, sunshine and doing whatever you want to do. Sounds compelling at first. And that is exactly what I would have answered years ago.

What I did not realize then is that this has nothing to do with freedom. It is merely a mental response to the life I was living and did not want. My reaction was simply the opposite. I wanted to relax, because then, I was

feeling very stressed. I was being lived. Other people, companies, governments were ordering me around. I couldn't cope with it anymore. Their requirements were unclear, not well thought off and in conflict with their other requirements. I wanted to be able to do whatever I wanted. I was longing for peace of mind.

I also wanted sunshine, because then, my life was very grey. This was quite remarkable, because I actually do not like lying in the sun at all. I simply yearned for more colour in my life.

So, it is really not freedom that I wanted. I simply wanted the inverse of what I was experiencing at the time.

What happens for people in these cases is that, once enough time has passed, the old situation, now the new opposite, will become attractive again. The relaxation has turned into boredom. People crave for someone to tell them what to do, because they don't know what to do anymore with all this freedom.

You can see this as a recurring movement, like the seasons. These people are always looking for pleasure and attempting to avoid pain. This, rather egotistical, attitude to life is not the solution.

This type of freedom described above is of the destructive kind. It attempts to remove the unwanted. It looks at what isn't and tries to fill that gap. It is void of true responsibility and therefore lacks meaning and purpose.

I have been blessed with the frequent conflicts between small Bertil and Big Bertil. Small Bertil chose for the short term, the destructive form of freedom. Whenever I spoke to others, in the end I really did so to please him. But I also listened to Big Bertil, my inner feelings who require no words.

They moved me to choose the other type of freedom. That is the constructive freedom. This freedom gives you the mental space to view life from different perspectives. What is good in what you regard as bad? What is bad in what you regard as good? Is one truly better than the other?

The constructive freedom is not too sure that it is right. It seeks to understand the minds of others and weighs their interests alongside its own without bias. Constructing your freedom of mind is a rather painful and challenging exercise. It also comes with great responsibility.

In 2002, one year after the 9-11 event, I went on holidays to Thailand. There I met a gentleman from Switzerland who was living in Bangkok. He told me: “The people here think 9-11 was orchestrated by Israel”. This certainly didn’t fit how I was being told the story. My initial thinking in response was of how they could be so wrong. But by further reflection, I questioned how I could be so convinced my story line was the truth. I am basically just a parrot repeating what I have been told.

I started a philosophical mental journey. The objective was not to proof or debunk what I was told, but only to better understand truth and falsehood on a meta level. What is true? What is truth? Am I entitled to say anything? From my perspective, 9-11 could just as well never even have happened. Please understand I am not saying it didn’t happen, but philosophically seen, where is my proof it happened? Yes, I have seen the countless videos, read the many articles and listened to dozens of stories. But I didn’t make or create any of these. I simply wasn’t there when it happened. I had visited the Twin Towers in 1999. A few years later, after 2001, I was in the same location and I could see they were no longer there. What does that prove?

I started to understand that the news I was consuming was only able to find ground in me if I had decided beforehand that I believed the source was legitimate, diligent and telling me the truth.

Then I realised “What have my Western European main stream media outlets done to earn the trust I give them?” I came to a chilling confusion. Absolutely nothing. They had only earned my trust, because of me not hearing any other perspectives.

It left me in confusion and kept me thinking, until years later I started a website called Newsstage. It served as a stage for various news articles

on the same topic, offering different points of views that I gathered from sources all over the world.

The motivation for this initiative came from my realization and utter surprise that the news coverage about the economic crisis of 2007/2008 was one sided and did not reflect what I believed was going on. Having ample time on my side to investigate and research, I discovered various little known news outlets with other perspectives and narratives. By juxtaposing the news articles, I exposed the contradictions. My mission was to demonstrate to the readers that one should not blindly accept what one is being told and encouraged people to be alert and critical.

The website no longer exists. While I started with a lot of enthusiasm, I came to the rather disturbing observation that I myself was no longer portraying the 'full truth'. I had developed a tremendous bias in how I composed my articles. I started with an excerpt from an establish news source and subsequently came with other perspectives from various alternative news sources to 'prove' the invalidity of the first excerpt.

Yes, I was biased. The wilful omitting of 'facts' by my main stream news sources triggered me to favour and even accept news telling a contradicting story. In a way I was being dishonest, because I was just being the same parrot. I had been repeating what I had been told, albeit it from a different source and more covertly published.

Nevertheless, I am very happy with my experience. It made me very aware of how I consumed news and of my own underlying biases. It also triggered me to investigate why I had subconscious preferences for one type of truth over the other.

I came across a powerful definition of the word fact. In the 1956 lecture titled "The Broken Heart and the Offended Pride", Manly P. Hall defined facts as being **expertly analysed convictions**. He further points out that while there are exact sciences, there are no exact facts. Our concept of fact is being reformed into a highly relative concept, concept subject to change without notice.

European people in the 17th century did not wash themselves regularly. That was considered wise, since bathing would open the pores of your body, leaving it vulnerable to all kinds of diseases. Considering the hygienic conditions back then, the reasoning itself seems logical. Today, we have an almost opposite approach, whereby we wash away those same diseases by regular baths and showers. Somewhere in between, new facts seem to have replaced the old ones.

Even more interesting, at time of writing, the world is entangled in a pandemic crisis. The commonly accepted scientific advice is very frequent hand sanitation. Other experts however claim this excessive washing of the hands is damaging to a person's health. The ecosystem of benevolent bacteria and viruses that naturally dwells on the human skin protects the body from infections and by frequent washing, one removes the protective layer.

Numerous other examples in history can be given of this dynamic of fact relativity. Therefore it is wise not to blindly believe the currently commonly accepted facts. It is far better to do one's own critical thinking, become a trained observer and develop an informed opinion, even it is in sheer contrast with the opinion of the vast majority.

Manly P. Hall continues: "It is true that lack of wisdom is more common than wisdom. It is therefore quite reasonable that large groups of persons should be wrong and that smaller groups of persons increasingly small as in minorities may be more correct or more true in their thinking."

"It is not a moral and spiritual duty of the individual to conform with the attitude and opinions of others. A person is not bound by society to common agreement. He is bound to society to a common struggle for existence and improvement. He is duty bound not to create a situation detrimental to the survival of a socialized existence. This does not mean however he must forever agree with the opinions of his times."

"In the course of the past 500 years, we have gained liberty, but at a terrible price: the Spanish inquisition, the Reformation, the Armada and

probably fifty wars, the French Revolution, the American revolution and the Russian revolution. Misery and pain, we have bought a semblance of liberty. Now that we have it, we do not use it. We sacrifice voluntarily the liberty we have earned, cheerfully upon the altar of collective opinion, and do exactly as we're told to. Liberty seems to be worth dying for, but not worth living with."

Why do we so badly want freedom, while when we obtain it, we quickly move to surrender it again to others?

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