

1. MADISON IN DISMAY

“Let’s meet for dinner.”

“There’s a great seafood restaurant in Philadelphia.”

“It sounds like a good location. Centrally located.”

“I have what I think is the best question for you. Once you make the right to own property a fundamental right, does that mean you give up your fundamental rights if you do not own property?”

“We can’t allow freedom to exist in a vacuum. There has to be some kind of constraint on freedom; otherwise, it is sheer licence.”

“You are allowing freedom on the one hand, and then denying it on the other.”

“We can’t give in to anarchy. Without some kind of control, we surrender to mob rule.”

“That’s just a fancy way to put down democracy.”

“Are we sure that we want to allow the democratic spirit to develop without some kind of direction? It like the raging river. It can move the mill wheel. But it can also flood the nearby lands. Democracy is the same way. It can easily degenerate into rule by a demagogue. The people can easily be led astray from the principles of freedom. That is why the citizen needs a vested interest in the process. If his opinion has any kind of weight, he has to have property. It is fundamental.”

“There is an obvious counterweight to your argument. The property owner realizes that it is in his interest to own more property, to crowd out his rivals. He can disenfranchise his fellow citizens by rigging the real estate market.”

“If all the citizens work equally hard, that can’t happen.”

“You are devising this absurd utopia simply as a way of favoring the status quo. That is your anarchy. That is tyranny.”

“Property rights can help stabilize the political process. If one has a vested interest in the process, then he will accept the need to be committed to his opinion. He can’t sway like a wind vane.”

“The market can change from year to year. Property rights can change hands. But the right to freedom has be inviolable. It can’t change like the wind.”

“That is a totally inaccurate picture of the market. The next thing that you know the state will end up seizing property from the owner in order to satisfy some abstract need for freedom.”

“If there is not some kind of economic equality, all your claims to justice go for nigh.”

“There has to be an equality of opportunity. But we’re not asking for a redistribution of wealth. That would be totally contrary to freedom. That is exactly what the tyrants have done to rob us of our fundamental freedoms.”

“You want it both ways. You want to defend freedom, but you want to exclude its application for everyone.”

“We’re offering freedom to everyone. That’s what equal opportunity is.”

“But it’s not as if we’re babes in the woods. Property has been distributed in an inequitable fashion. Those who allied themselves with the tyrants have received on your version of freedom.”

“We’re not babes in the woods. But we have to strike out for freedom. And if a man has worked all his life for his place, we can’t let the law take it from him. We have to use the law to protect him against tyrannical impulses whether they originate with the state or they originate

with the mob.”

“We’re not saying that we take away a man’s house from him. But property rights have to be seen as secondary rights. They originate in the citizens providing support for a claim to land. If any particular claim is disruptive of the body politic, that claim needs to surrender prominence to the primary liberty of the citizenry. We can’t have property rights hold sway over fundamental liberties.”

“You are disguising property confiscation by the state behind the right to liberty. The right to own property is an inalienable right.”

“Property rights are derived from the will of the sovereign. Those rights need to be made secondary and responsive to the will of the people. The people grant the rights to property. And when needed, they can strip away those rights.”

“That action would be taken in total contradiction to the notion of inalienable right.”

“No it wouldn’t. If lands were obtained by collaboration with the sovereign, and the sovereign revealed himself to be a tyrant, even such donation would itself be a piece with his tyranny.”

“A tyrant might do acts that benefitted the citizens.”

“But you are inviting us down the slippery slope to consider the beneficial tyrant. Why not a king who rules over all?”

“Why not?”

“Because we have done everything in our power to escape such domination. The tyrant is the essence of war and subjugation of the people.”

“Not necessarily.”

“By necessity. The tyrant rules by force and any affront to his force must be met with force. This is the beginning of subjugation.”

“You’re putting words in my mouth. Let’s work from what we both have in common. We both oppose tyranny. And we both believe in freedom. Free thought and free expression are essential to fighting tyranny.”

“I’ll go along with that.”

“But once you’re in the public forum freedom can’t simply be exercised willy-nilly. You need to recognize how one citizen’s actions can infringe on another.”

“OK, I’ll consider that possibility for the moment.”

“It is more than possibility. Those are the very conditions that risk destroying our fundamental freedoms.”

“What are you saying?”

“That freedom cannot be posited without reference to social obligations.”

“Aren’t you undercutting the basis of freedom?”

“Not at all.”

“You can’t have freedom with restriction. Free expression develops from a withering away of constraint.”

“In private, at home, in your own place, you are the lord of the manor. You can exercise unfettered freedom of thought. Once you enter into the public realm, you join society. The change is to your advantage. But you need to face some limits on your freedom.”

“You are still assuming that society will act contrary to the freedom of the individual.”

“You were the one advancing the idea of unlimited freedom. I’m simply showing you how you give up your freedom to participate in society.”

“That’s the same cliché about how we give up freedom when we cooperate with others. It’s totally the opposite. We enhance our freedom. We become more free. You assume competition simply as a way to ignore needs of others.

You have this ridiculous view of genesis where you start with absolute freedom as an individual and give it up when you enter society. But you are always a social being. That is how we express our inalienable rights.”

The escape from tyranny comes at a price. We must be willing to bear the price of freedom.”

“If it is indeed freedom, it must be endowed without restriction. Once you start talking about the price of freedom, you are maintaining freedom for the few. Only those who can pay your exorbitant price.”

“But there are those who would fight for tyranny. It is necessary to confront such enemies of freedom.”

“You only allow freedom as limited by your social compact. So there is no real difference between the free state and the state of slavery.”

“That is ridiculous. You just sanction pure wantonness.”

“For you the citizen is already guilty. You exaggerate the shortcomings of people who will not follow your rules. With such a rigid view of law, rules are made to be broken.”

“Pshaw! Anarchy!”

“You have so violated the principles of freedom and natural law. How could it be otherwise?”

“Freedom doesn’t mean just doing what you please. It means accepting rules and acting in accordance with those rules.”

“You’re willing to grant people freedom, but at the same time, you place severe limits on that freedom. That’s not freedom at all.”

“You can’t just go do whatever you please.”

“No, of course, you can’t. Then you might enjoy yourself. That would be terrible. You want people to be miserable.”

“I’m not saying that. But if you do whatever you please then you end up hurting other people.”

“That assumes that we’re made to cause pain to other people.”

“That’s just as much part of our nature as the desire to cause pleasure.”

“That assumes that we derive pleasure from hurting other people.

“I’m not saying that. But the conditions of the world sometimes make it such that we end up hurting others to get what we want.”

“What are you saying?”

Scarcity, competition for resources. There are many factors that mitigate the realization of liberty. Freedom is not articulated in a vacuum. It is like a force. It needs matter to act upon.”

“And the more complex the matter, the higher the degrees of freedom.”

“Exactly.”

“You are just replacing one form of tyranny by another.”

“But the physical universe has rules. And you can’t develop your freedom in absence of those rules.”

“The will already is endowed with the force to act in the physical universe. The only thing that restrains it is political oppression pure and simple. No matter how you couch it, it’s always the same thing.”

“But you just can’t steal what I find most enjoyable. If you’re envious of my ice cream, you can’t simply steal it to satisfy your greed.”

“You’re telling me that you don’t have enough to share with me as well.”

“I don’t know if we’ve made enough for you as well.”

“It all comes back to the same thing. You construct your social model based on scarcity. But that scarcity works just fine to support your view of a social hierarchy.”

“I am trying to use enlightened judgement when it come to sharing what we have.”

“Don’t tell me that there isn’t a little glee in applying that judgement.”

“I won’t admit to that.”

“Such modesty accompanies power. That is only the beginning. Because there is a residual delight in such goings on. And that is hardly where it ends. It only gets worse.”

“What do you mean?”

“You were arguing for pleasure in the pain of other.”

“Hardly, I only admitted that some people feel pleasure and that causes others feels pain. It is a reality.”

“You seemed to be arguing for a causal connection. That some people feel pleasure when others feel pain. The torturer feels pleasure due to the screams of his victim.”

“OK, in that case, I admit to that causal connection. And for that very reason, we cannot allow you to act at liberty without some awareness of the rules.”

“That is still some platitude that you have learned in the nursery and repeat simply to dull the full force of freedom. You have constructed a utopia built on the status quo. And that is how you advance that vision.”

“If we lose sight of life’s struggle of the demands of freedom, then we give up on the mandate that we are given to protect our basic rights.”

“Your poetic image of natural aggressiveness is such an exaggeration of actual behavior. You are using that assessment to your advantage to seize power. Your attitude only aggravates what little aggressiveness is there. You only turn that into a self-fulfilling prophecy. It only makes you more vigilant, and this in turn further worsens the situation. You can’t have it both ways. Either you defend democracy, or you protect tyranny.”

“The rule of law can’t extend itself without some kind of protection.”

“You can’t have it both ways.”

“There are going to be vulnerabilities in the state. People will take advantage of them. Te only way to guarantee liberty is to make it precious.”

“You make it so precious that it is a treasure for the few.”

“I agree that we need to base the state on the free commerce among individuals. Even with regards to our behavior, we need some safeguards so that behavior doesn’t degenerate to its base state.”

“If freedom is our natural state, we have to advance that state!”

“We don’t want the world descending to the law of the jungle. We have to uphold values of honesty and hard work.”

“Who determines what is hard work? I could toil on some puzzle all day. Or exhaust myself at a game of cards.”

“If the market supports your play, that is the roll of die.”

“And how do you advance such a market?”

“It’s all about being paid in a currency that retains its constant worth through repeated transactions. This insures the return on an initial monetary pledge.”

“That flow replaces the free flow of ideas.”

“No, it is simply the support for that exchange.”

“You are making the monetary pledge into the groundwork of democracy. That is an utter contradiction.”

“Without a clear monetary policy, we live in a world of tyrannical amnesia. We cannot use our knowledge to escape the fetters of ignorance.”

“We have memory. That is sufficient testimony.”

“A good currency bears a record of its transactions. The ebb and flow of the market is free men exchanging their goods and ideas. The free flow is enhanced by a secure currency. It builds in value by the increased contribution of all the citizens. It is the wealth of the nation.”

“What about speculators? Runs on the currency?”

“The values of property ground the method. It is clearly articulated. Any fluctuation are absorbed by real estate.”

“But that too is subject to speculation.”

“Not if there are clear rules about ownership. And these rules are embodied in restrictions on the flow of specie.”

“There goes your restrictions again. The one who controls the minting of money is the one who can manipulate the market. He creates the conditions of scarcity. He puts into motion your model of greed. Because your system is inequitable from the beginning.”

“That is our job. We have come here to determine the rules for this exchange.”

“Then we are the beneficiaries of the largesse of the people. There is no possible way to avoid abusing the mandate of the people.”

“Scarcity is a reality of the human condition. Only good planning can help us avoid submitting to the ravages of nature.”

“If freedom is not our starting point, then we only create those ravages our self.”

“Evil is a part of our nature. We have to anticipate its influence. Corruption abounds.”

“If evil is part of our nature, then it is our nature. It cannot abide its contrary. You are building your system based on evil. You are simply constructing another evil empire.”

“Freedom only results from what we create in concert. We have to encourage our hard work. We have to reward those who contribute to the furtherance of our vision.”

“What is the import of the incredible distance that we feel in the soul?”

“It guarantees the separation between the image and the object that it represents.”

“What then is the result of this separation?”

“That changes affected on the image may have no relation to the object itself. The subject’s representations have no direct connection to the object represented.”

“So the loneliness in the soul has no relation to the triumph that might liberate the self from its misery? Are you suggesting that happiness is always impossible?”

“That should be evident. The very expanse that is the invitation to freedom becomes the very extreme that will snuff out any dreams of liberty.”

“Even those who challenge tyranny have acted on the basis of a system of rules. You get so far out in the heavens, that you need an anchor to bring you down to earth.”

“Your rules are the new tyranny. If we can’t act our desires, we will never know of what we are capable.”

“We have already agreed that there are those who find pleasure in pain. They see it as part of the development of pleasure. A more abstract vision of pleasure.”

“That sounds perverse. A perversity that your authorize. But I will entertain that situation.”

“They inflict their pleasure on others. And that is a trespass. That is why we need rules.”

“Your examples are so weird to begin with. They are contrary to reality.”

“They are the reality.”

“You are making them a reality. You are confusing true happiness with temporary delight. In so doing, you are jeopardizing the democratic project.”

“If the state needs to protect the individual against himself, that is its purpose.”

“It is your necessary evil. And when the citizens contemplate this evil, it only abounds. You have turned the apple rotten.”

“You are letting him bully you. True freedom means always getting what you want. It is a state that feeds on itself. Pure liberty. It’s not just about getting what I want. It’s about getting you to do what I want.”

“Thanks for joining the conversation. I wasn’t sure if you were going to come. It’s getting a little lopsided with his views of real estate and a central bank.”

“I thought that you like the idea of the central bank.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Jerry, it’s great that you decided to join us after all.”

“Do you feel a draft?”

“To restate my position, the basis of social interaction is my ability to convince you to do what I want. It goes beyond that. You have to see it as an imperative. Or stated in different terms, what I want has to be an imperative.”

“Not an absolute imperative.”

“I didn’t say that. But it really can’t be challenged.”

“What about unwelcome advances? Doesn’t that contradict your absolute?”

“The other person has to see the inescapable pull of the idea. She has to be seized by the same power that is embodied in the initial desire.”

“I am afraid of state coercion just as much as you are.”

“You are the one advancing all these rules.”

“Freedom goes far beyond doing what you want. It’s more particularly about getting others to go along with our desires.”

“Does that mean getting them to go along even if it is against their will?”

“I admit to an element of coercion. But the source of this coercion comes from

veering away from the proper path. It is simply the failure to follow the true course of freedom. If you really are carried along by the truth, then you naturally accede."

"You are proposing a single view of the world. You simply replace the tyrant with a vengeful higher power."

"If that's how it works, so be it."

"So be it. What can I say to that?"

"You get three people in a room, and your social contract turns to anarchy. You never agreed on a foundation to protect things from degenerating to that state. So here we are. What can you say to that?"

I don't know what possessed me. It was just something that happened.

"I heard about it on the news. I'm surprised that you got away for it."

"I may still get caught."

"You really have gone way over the top."

"I feel like someone else."

"I told you that you needed to see someone. You need help."

"It's not like I did anything to her. I let her go."

"You brought her to a hotel with you."

"She came of her own free will. It wasn't anything like they said on TV."

"I don't care what they said on TV. How old is she? Did you give her drugs. It's only a short step to taking her by force."

"It's only a small step if you took her by force. What if she tells her parents? What got into you?"

"I really don't know."

"If you can't stop yourself, someone will have to stop you."

"She's almost an adult. She wanted to come with me. The society has too many rules."

"She wanted to come with you? Was that after you shot her up with drugs? Could she even stand up?"

"She's not so innocent. She's done things with her friends that would stand your hair on end."

"Why are you doing this to me?"

"I'm not doing it to you. I'm doing it for you."

"You get pretty philosophical after a few drinks. I'd swear that you were seeing things."

"No, I'm not that tipsy. I just feel that you're not giving me a chance."

"That I'm ganging up on me. Next you're going to advance a theory of spirits. to explain my band of allies."

"Do you mean ghosts?"

"Exactly. Supernatural forces."

"But that's what I've been trying to tell you along. Freedom is like a supernatural force. It takes us beyond ourselves. In a sense, that is its very definition."

“But it can also be like a potent liquor. As much as it inspires the consciousness, it ends up dulling our faculties. And at its worse, freedom can fill us with these power fantasies. We just get drunk on it.”

“Your analogy is another excuse on your part to deny freedom.”

“I am not denying what is natural. I just feel that you need to put things in perspective. I don’t even think that we can trust you to your own devices. Especially not operating a motor vehicle.”

“I’ll be fine.”

“Sure you’ll be fine. But you’re becoming a threat to those around you.”

“There’s that same idea of yours.”

“What idea?”

“The prying into the affairs of others.”

“You are admitting to the essence of your demands for privacy, the right to private property. All challenges to the well being of the state result from the inability to recognize that fundament.”

“You just won’t let it go.”

“Let it go...if I let it go, then I eliminate the very basis of free action. We act to protect our property, to protect what we work for.”

“What you have stolen and passed on to your co-conspirators.”

“Whatever!”

“I need another drink.”

“That’s the last thing that I need.”

“You are getting oppressive.”

“I was trying to get her to go to my place.”

“She wouldn’t go?”

“She was thinking about it.”

“You abducted her from a mall.”

“That isn’t what happened at all.”

“It’s all a result of that crazy theory of yours. That you can just take pretty well anything that you want. No questions asked. This is what happens when you let yourself go.”

“It wasn’t like that.”

“But what happens when you give the mind free licence. There is no limits on where you go.”

“I’m not killer.”

“Under the circumstances you could be. When you realize what you’ve done, you’re going to feel guilty. You’ll make excuses. You’ll start to panic in the confusion. That’s how it all get started. You’re much stronger than she is. If she resists, you’ll try to stop her from screaming.”

What’s your starting point?

“What’s your starting point? If you favor violence, that is the cornerstone of your social contract. So be it. Don’t blame me. You put the crazed rabbit in the hat, and then you blamed me when the damn thing started hopping wildly around the room. It was all your doing.”

“Do you want me to feel guilty?”

“It would help if you felt something.”

“If you start the name calling, we are never going to get anywhere?”

“I didn’t call you a name.”

“You implied that I was insensitive.”

“I don’t know what it is. You freak me out.”

“Do you want me to leave? I can just go if you like.”

“I don’t know what it is. I find you attractive.”

“Are you going to feel the same way a week from now?”

“I can’t say.”

“What about in the morning?”

“Ha ha!”

“You want to go somewhere?”

“Where?”

“We could get some ice cream. Maybe something to eat.”

“That seems OK. It is in a public place.”

“Well.”

“I’m just afraid of letting you in?”

“In?”

“In my mind. I don’t want you doing things to me. I don’t want to act in some weird way.”

“What’s going on?”

“I’m not going to feel like this tomorrow. Once the curiosity has worn off. You’re taking advantage of my inexperience.”

“You can regulate the citizens’s behavior, but you still can’t control their minds. We don’t even pretend that is our goal.”

“You don’t have to pretend. I have no doubt how you feel.”

“We can determine the rules for the currency and its distribution. But we can’t just tell people what to do. Liberty is essential.”

“The only liberty that appeals to your is economic liberty. And in the end, you need to do everything that you can to hold on to your wealth. That is when you start to get moralistic. You talk about what is necessary for the free society. What we need to save our families from the monsters out there. You are the monster, and you are already way out there.”

“Desire doesn’t necessarily have to veer into the realm of the perverse.”

“You are using contemplation as the model of desire. You think about a woman all day. You gratify your fantasies. Then you want to world to correspond to your vision.”

“I just do what is natural. I dream. We all daydream.”

“But you are reinforcing the perverse side of your nature. I need to apologize for you all the time.”

“I’m not hurting anyone.”

“Not right now. But let you have the opportunity. You’ll just shade things until they turn into exactly the kind of thing that you like every time. We need to shield the world from that sort of thing.”

“I’m not a pervert.”

“But you know what is going to happen. You gratify your desires even once, and the flood gates will just open up. All those negative thoughts that you’ve been repressing are going to well up and overcome you. That will be the prime influence on your behavior.”

“I’m not like that at all.”

“Of course , you are. You have been transformed into a deviant.”

“Why do you find it convenient to paint me this way.”

“I don’t. You are upsetting my whole system of thought. You are reinforcing the surveillance society. We start here and what is next?”

“We can act like this kind of thing doesn’t exist.”

“You know that it does.”

“It does become the state encourages. It forces us to worship at the same altar.”

“What are you talking about?”

“It tells us to embrace innocence and beauty. But it’s all so fake. You actually commit yourself to that vision, and you get punished.”

“You can’t take things so literally. There needs to be some kind of separation between thought and action.”

“But if you feel something strongly, there is no separation.”

“That is just the thing. The tyrant skirts that fine line trying to see how much he can push. It is similar to an encroaching property line. Pretty soon, there is no separation. You have been completely engulfed.”

“But the tyrant began with his initial claim. And he used the state to extend his ownership.”

“Only the law can restrain that behavior. If you have nothing of value, you don’t need to law. But once you have acquired wealth, you can’t let the state take that from you.”

“Wealth, value, property, and the state—you have eliminated the will of the people.”

“The will of the people exists in those concepts. It’s the day to day toil that defines the very aspects of property. The people are given that right, and they work to retain it.”

“The process needs to account for the various states of our mind. How we feel when intoxicated is very different from the cold sobriety of mid-morning.”

“Is that what gets you started in the morning?”

“Quit teasing me. You know yourself that even little things can arouse your anger. Or you feel pleasure, and you will do anything in your power to maintain that state of exhilaration.”

“There’s more to it than that. If you embrace temporary pleasures, they will be your undoing.”

“Happiness is simply a sustainable pleasure. No more no less.”

“And pleasure can result from the desire to do others pain. We can’t base a state on the *pursuit of happiness*. That only reinforces the realm of the senses. Temporary pleasures abound, and risk dominates consciousness.”

“A dream within in dream.”

“What?”

“Nothing!”

“You are drifting on me.”

“Go ahead and try it.”

“That is how you got caught.”

“No one is going to tell.”

“There is going to be another day. And there is going to be regret. You can’t just approach strangers in the mall, and such.”

“If I go along with you, then there would be arranged marriage.”

“Are you trying to tell me something?”

“That you yourself are tempted.”

“Let us say that I went along with you. I’ll go along for all that it’s worth. I’ll admit to the right to own property. Will that permit you to recognized my freedom of action?”

“Of course.”

“And free assembly.”

“Of course.”

“And freedom of expression.”

“Most definitely.”

“We may have an agreement.”