The Invisible Manifesto

A specter is haunting America — the specter of Invisibility. It is eating away at the foundation of all that U.S.A. econoculture holds dear. Invisibles consider this hopeful progress. Most important to them is how, at least until now, econoculture doesn't even realize it's under assault. Invisibles hope to keep their surreptitious revolution out of sight as long they can.

Econoculture is simply a human culture that has been wholly captured by the values of commercial activity. The habits, ideals and practices of the business interests have spread like malignant fungi throughout American society and culture. America leads the world as a prototype of this total cultural appropriation by the marketplace, a process now underway throughout the world with much help from neoliberals and neoconservatives linking arms and dancing a jig for joy. Every tender morsel of American culture vulnerable to monetization, whether folk customs and traditions or the arts and crafts of our creatives or the souls of our youth, has been privatized, appraised and auctioned off, with hungry entrepreneurs ever sniffing out fresh meat as yet untapped that might feed a business that might tempt a hedge fund that might make them rich. The fine arts have been commodified since the Reagan eighties for use by the ultra-rich as speculative investments and tax shelters. Music, literature, film, even the culinary arts have suffered similar fates, reduced to extravagant displays of conspicuous consumption.

Since econoculture has come to define the American Way for most of its people, a widespread loss of faith in econoculture would be a crippling blow to the U.S. enterprise of worldwide exploitation of planet and people for profit, something invisibles call endless greed for gain. What might bring about such a loss of faith? Invisibles offer a radical revolution of values they call Invisibility.

Shared values hold econoculture together as a social entity as they do all cultures everywhere. Shared values are an expression of what people most care about in any given time and place and what they need to agree on to live together in concord. Our values are what we treasure most. They are who we are in our minds and hearts. But they are not carved in stone. They

are adaptable, like the human species itself, and can change as their environments change.

Invisibility is a direct, intentional, nonconfrontational challenge to the present dominant values regime in the US of A — and much of the rest of the global marketplace — that is luring its bedazzled captives like a pied piper to the brink of self-destruction. Those econoculture values, when endorsed by a majority of the people, enable and perpetuate this mad headlong rush to species immolation — not to mention an enshittified way of life on the way there.

Obviously there is something terribly wrong with econoculture's American Way. Most agree that conditions are already intolerable and grow worse with each passing year as luxury condos displace homeless camps and housing for all but the rich becomes unaffordable; rampant corruption and mass shootings proliferate; ever-changing technologies prove to be wolves in sheeps' clothing; growing anxiety, depression, suicide — the psychotropic drug industry can't keep up. Opioids and alcohol fill the gap. Demand for guns and ammo exceeds that for corn and soy. The top tenth sucks up more than half the wealth. Generous Americans spend far more than comparable societies to rank lower in health and wellness. Prisons are overflowing with petty thieves while the big crooks stealing millions get presidential pardons from a fellow felon. If that's not enough (and it only skims the surface of our crippling ills), the fossil fuel base of our prosperity is rendering the planet uninhabitable and we seem helpless to stop it. Collectively we lead the worldwide race to self-destruction by climate disaster with our own JP Morgan/Chase as the world's biggest investor in oil and gas industries. It's as if we just can't wait to put an end to this horror story of human life on Earth.

Invisibility invites those lately awakening to these bracing econoculture realities to recognize as a step in the right direction what invisibles call "a heartbreak of disillusionment." Understanding the disillusionment experience as a positive, hopeful evolutionary step forward helps overcome much of the inevitable suffering and resistance it entails. The heartbroken among us, already numbering in the millions, have reconsidered econoculture values in light of their ugly consequences now circling back to slap us down for our arrogant greed. The time has come to rethink what we have valued in our ungainly, destructive, adolescent proto-democracy and

move forward to a more evolved and mature American culture with values invisibles can proudly recommend to their heirs.

Invisibility intentionally undermines the dominant values regime in the US of A, and the econoculture these values support and enable, by pursuing viable alternatives in defiance of all they are told is vital to preserving the American Way and their collective happiness and wellbeing. Because econoculture values are now dominant and ubiquitous, they are widely accepted as normal healthy ways to be. This widespread unthinking acceptance is what gives them their power.

Econoculture pundits and public intellectuals belittle Invisibility's alternative values (see below) as absurd, excessive, ridiculous, unrealistic, naïve, preposterous, even outrageous or treasonous. So long as econoculture can dismiss alternatives by portraying them as utterly unacceptable and beyond the pale, it can continue its drive to civilizational collapse unimpeded. Econoculture PR pros, usually associated with Ivy League institutions, reassure the public constantly how the world is getting so much better in so many ways and we should all just relax, enjoy our privileges, and stop griping. They neglect to explain why, amidst all these improvements, happiness and peace of mind remain so elusive for so many.

Invisibility's gripes against econoculture values are many and varied. A lifetime of study could not encompass the myriad ways these values are expressed and their harmful influences on our people's behavior individually and in groups. What invisibles find of them in general is that they provide cultural support for a society and economy devoted to the limitless plundering of Earth's limited resources (called "growth"), Spenserian survival of the fittest, unapologetic greed, and conspicuous consumption that would have made Thorstein Veblen double down on his theory.

Invisibles identify among these econoculture values some that carry more weight and influence more behavior than others, but only with the understanding that they are all woven of the same self-interested stuff and work together as a unified cultural force in service to that U.S. worldwide exploitation of planet and people that invisibles have identified as econoculture's principal contribution to human history.

The values examined first below, some of econoculture's most cherished, illustrate why invisibles choose to withhold their consent and travel a very contrary path.

Hyper-Individualism

In its classic liberal expression, individualism is the rugged self-reliance of our forebears who tamed wildernesses and inspired Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous essay emphasizing the intrinsic worth of each individual and the importance of self-respect. Think for yourself, avoid groupthink when you can, risk nonconformity. Stand by your inner convictions in the face of ridicule. Do your own thing! This is the gist of Emerson's advice expressed with great eloquence in nearly 50,000 words, half a good novel. Not well suited to modern attention spans.

Econoculture long ago left behind such homespun abstract notions of individualism for something far more practical and useful — *hyper*-individualism. Individualism on speed. Revved-up individualism. This mutant iteration declares the individual free of all conventional restraints, including respect for social norms and the need to pay parking tickets. It heaps scorn on government regulations that restrict its freedom to act as it sees fit. All taxes are theft. All restraints on individual liberty violate natural laws. From this viewpoint other people interest us only insofar as they can serve our interests. We are not our brother's keeper — he needs to be self-reliant and not a parasite. This tough-love libertarian anarchic strain of conservative thought, on the rise for decades, has found its modern celebrity hero in billionaire Donald Trump and his billionaire cabinet in whom invisibles can witness an epitome of hyper-individualism. The psychologists call it pathological narcissism. Invisibles call it econoculture's tightening convulsive grip on our national character and spirit.

Little more need be said of hyper-individualism at this point in our examination of econoculture values. It's pretty straightforward, all about the libertarian me-me-me, and invisibles encounter that ego-centered bid for attention everywhere they turn. Farmers and truck drivers cry the blues over Trump's tariffs saying they voted for the man and now he's screwing them. When they thought he would only be screwing other people, he was their guy. That's how hyper-individualism works. It keeps us divided and wary. And lonely.

It is easy enough to recognize hyper-individualism's pervasive influence as a context, a milieu, a framework within which other values work their special magic. As we examine competition, consumption, hard work, ambition, stardom and branding, listen for the background soundtrack, the harsh tobacco-ravaged voice of Ayn Rand's ghost wailing the virtues of selfishness. It's no secret — they're proud of it! Let this be your guide and machete to chop a path through the econoculture values jungle we will be exploring.

Competition

Chief among the values econoculture encourages and feeds upon is competition. Competition is deeply embedded in our daily lives whether on the job, in our roles as parents and partners, friends and neighbors, and in individual psyches ingrained with an urge to be better, stronger, faster, smarter, quicker, richer, sexier and more beautiful than the next guy or gal. It's a world of rankings and classes and premium seating, of good/better/best, always striving to be all you can be — preferably better each day than you were yesterday with the help of professional coaches and trainers.

Americans are taught the importance of winning and the shame and disgrace of losing in childhood games of checkers and Monopoly, Dungeons and Dragons, classroom and gym competitions. There are eating, drinking, spitting and farting competitions. A Gravediggers Olympics. Robot races. Econoculture's devotees accept this competitive drive as beyond question, vital to their health, safety and well-being. Many have undergone military training and ultimate competition, the supreme importance of dominance in combat when winning means staying alive. They are loyal to their local sports teams, cheer their champions and boo the losers. Average and mediocre are vilified, superiority and excellence esteemed.

Much of this competitive drive is lived vicariously through thousands upon thousands of sporting contests streaming into homes and cars and mobile devices continuously day and night. Competitive sport is America's secular religion; 4.5 men watch sports and/or play golf on Sundays for every man in a church, with women increasingly drawn into the action. Teams are a source

of statewide, even national pride in international competitions — something to rally around with religious fervor and generational loyalties.

This thirst for competition is endlessly reinforced in TV's soap operas, reality shows, quiz shows, and of course 24/7 sports coverage. Video games engage young people in endless hours of intense simulated competition from cage fights to battlefield warfare. Social media encourages status competition across the spectrum of success and failure from fashion and family to jobs, weddings, vacations and children's educations. Politics, the playing field of democracy, is inherently competitive with insatiable demands for attention and participation and cash donations from every would-be patriot.

Econoculture has no time for losers — also-rans are quickly consigned to anonymity. All that finally matters are those inducted (or "enshrined" as they insist) into Halls of Fame conferring immortality. There are already an estimated 793 registered Halls of Fame in the U.S. alone and expanding yearly, recognizing competitions in fly-fishing, Frisbee tossing and crocheting among 790 other activities. Awe and grudging envy remain for all the losers (thousands per winner a conservative estimate) as recompense for their own shattered hopes and dreams. The outcome of this competitive orgy is an elite of celebrated winners and a mass of dutifully resigned losers resorting to vicarious thrills cheering for favorite game show contestants or soccer teams or political parties or nations. All losers are expected to be *good* losers and embrace the Queensberry rules of fair play, gracefully acknowledging defeat and paying winners all due respect.

Econoculture PR calls this good sportsmanship. Invisibles call it blindness to reality, econoculture's consolation prize for those who bought losing tickets in the Great American Greed for Gain Sweepstakes. In fact it is rivalry, not good sportsmanship, that is the essence of competitive sport in America — good sportsmanship a secondary consideration. Rivalry requires pitting two people or groups in an enduring competitive relationship. This is what really draws the fans. It is the "us against them" mentality encouraged between competing sides whenever loyalty or pride or TV revenue is involved. Each participant, whether boxer or goalkeeper or game show contestant, sees him-her-themself as a rival to others and works hard to defeat the opposition. There is no win-win option. In the words of tech billionaire Larry Ellison, "Winning is not enough. All others must lose."

Simply put, competition has become an obsessive compulsion among econoculture's elites and their captive audiences in virtually every aspect of their lives. It has spread to every expression of arts and culture like a mutating virus from its original arenas of military and business combat. If we do not resist this competitive juggernaut and confine it once again to its origins in warfare and commerce (where it is presumably useful, although that is subject to question), it will reduce our humanity and spirituality to cultural cage fights rated on their entertainment value.

With trillions of dollars at play in the sporting industries alone, not to mention billions more generated by other forms of competition, invisibles don't expect any call for competitive restraint to show much progress anytime soon. People are too desperate for something to cheer for — they won't soon give up their team loyalties or allow their children be less than the best. Econoculture will pull out all stops to protect its promotion of competitive rivalry in all spheres of life. Any perceived threat can expect massive repression and relentless ridicule — all of course under a pretense of fair play. This is one of several reasons why invisibles stay low key and out of retaliation range.

This enthusiastic consent for sports competition among so many of our people simplifying a confusing world into clear-cut winners and losers is one reason why invisibles have, until now, chosen to stay invisible. They're not feeling the thrill of victory. It no longer works for them, if ever it did. But cultural enticements and social pressure to play along and not be a spoilsport are hard to resist. Many go along to get along. They may make reluctant compromises and soften their criticism for the sake of social harmony, but in their heart of hearts invisibles give the whole dog-eat-dog competitive rat race a royal thumbs down.

Consumption

Econoculture encourages maximum guiltless consumption. After all, you've worked hard and deserve your just reward! Go shopping! Buy something new and glamorous, something your friends and colleagues will admire. Something elegant! How about a new luxury sedan with heated leather seats that accelerates from zero to 60 in a mere 2.6 seconds! Wow! At least indulge in a new couture evening gown and matching heels for the next gala. Fine dining anyone?

Or, for the rest of the country, bigger TVs and SUVs, fast fashion, cheap hot dogs, thinner cell phones and free porno.

Econoculture's passion for competition is complimented by its love affair with consumption. It extols and celebrates the indiscriminate acquisition of products and services, as much and as many as possible whether cash or credit, whatever the budget can bear and beyond. Measures of consumer confidence function like ancient readings of tealeaves and animal entrails to guide our nation forward. If consumer sentiment takes a dive, alarms send Congress scurrying and Wall Street into conniption fits. In times of crisis America's leaders urge us to get up off our miserly butts and go buy more stuff.

Econoculture success is signaled by maximum acquisition of better/best products and services from Neiman Marcus and Sacs and the like, leaving WalMart and Dollar Stores to supply the failed two-thirds of the population with merely fair or good products, their apportioned share of mediocre goodies. No matter rich or poor, just get out there and buy buy buy. Acquisition as success is an association powered by the advertising and marketing industries that have yet to be held accountable for their baleful contributions to our cultural malaise. These greed propellants should be denounced as the harmful destructive manipulators they are for promoting insatiable and unsustainable consumption with disregard for the rotting fruits of their labors. They turn jungles into cardboard boxes just to ship the mindless consumption they promote. Oceans and human bodies are infested with their plastic refuse. They plot rare metal wars to keep those new-generation cell phones selling. Marketers and their advertising coconspirators need to be offered training opportunities in other less harmful, more Earth-friendly occupations. To paraphrase "The House of the Rising Sun":

> Oh parents tell your children
> Not to do what I have done
> Not to spend their lives foisting more useless trash
> On a world already crushed under a ton

Gigantic industries are devoted to delivering human attention to purveyors of goods and services so they can persuade us to want whatever they've got for sale. Social media salespeople calling themselves "influencers" exploit

pseudo-intimate relationships (see Stardom below) for profit like a digital reinvention of the old Tupperware parties where everyone's family, friends and neighbors got squeezed to buy plastic products they could burp.

Small is beautiful has yet to catch on in America thanks mostly to econoculture's commitment to bigness — corporations bigger than small countries, vast fortunes, monstrous mansions, big cars and trucks and boats and TVs. Recycling is largely a joke, a pretense, a slight of hand. The important thing is to consume, to go shopping and treat yourself to the rewards you know you are due for all your hard work.

Hard Work

Synergistic with econoculture's passion for competition and devotion to consumption is its jones for hard work. This earnest-seeming faith in hard work as the key to success and prosperity is as fervent as a missionary's praise for the Holy Ghost before a crowd of heathen.

The hard work panegyric is the production side of unbridled consumption idiocy. Every success formula in econoculture's repertoire is but a variation on the old reliable hard work injunction to keep that shoulder to the wheel in pursuit of your destined success — if you choose to claim it. It's entirely up to you! Are you success material? Do you have what it takes? China, home to the notorious 2010 Foxconn suicides by despairing workers, now bans from its media platforms any user posting the "destabilizing" phrase "hard work is useless."

In centuries past, the whip and noose and threat of starvation enforced the hard work law of the land. Now enforcement is not so easy after centuries of conflict and reform thanks to the heroics of the civil rights and labor and women's movements. In econoculture's world today, all of its endless success stories still emphasize hard work as an essential success formula ingredient — gotta keep those mules straining at the harness. Pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps is another way of saying take whatever work you can find and trust that if you bust your ass at whatever is your lot, your luck of the draw, however grueling and demeaning it may be, just tough it out and someday you will surely earn your just reward.

Yet any fool can look around modern econoculture and see countless egregious refutations of this hard work formula. Millions of Americans for a great many reasons, some legal, others not, live very comfortably with little or no work whatsoever, much less hard work. Millions perform work that's not all that damned hard — foremen and supervisors and managers and owners who can delegate actual hard work to underlings. Millions more work hard now and then but goof off at every opportunity with two-hour lunches and naps on the clock. Millions of gamblers in casinos and horse tracks and stock markets bet their good luck will spare them hard work. Among the millions who do work hard there is still so much variation in that work as to render the words all but meaningless. Is the hard work of a harried loan officer in an air-conditioned bank equivalent to the roofer's hard work nailing shingles to the bank's hot tar roof? Is a North Dakota farmer's hard work harvesting corn in his air-conditioned John Deere 7630 remotely comparable to a peasant's hard work weeding Peruvian potatoes with a hoe? On close examination econoculture's hard work appeal simply falls apart as a meaningful concept, a shibboleth that needs to fall in favor of more humane, less materialistic values about work and its place in our lives.

Without knowing what work for whom and to what end, invisibles treat all general "hard work" encomiums with deep skepticism and playful evasion at every opportunity. They recognize this ploy for what it is, a cynical manipulation of our natural human desire to provide for ourselves and our loved ones as best we can, as well as our responsibilities as community members to contribute our fair share. Since the fruits of econoculture's hard work so often accrue mostly to econoculture elites who hardly work, invisibles consent only grudgingly to this verbal surrogate for the overseer's whip. They work hard only when they see a useful purpose to which they can in good conscience consent and devote some of their precious life attention. Then invisibles can work like mules. Then they can find joy in hard work.

Otherwise they may work hard only when they feel like it, if at all, with irresistible schadenfreude for econoculture's workaholics.

Ambition

Econoculture encourages its subjects to be ambitious and go boldly where no man has gone before. The caricature of Don Quixote in the 1965 Broadway

musical *Man of La Mancha* expresses this well: “To dream the impossible dream, fight the unbeatable foe, run where the brave dare not go, to fight for the right without question or pause, to be willing to march into Hell for a heavenly cause.” Oh it’s a glorious quest to be sure, with econoculture framing what “right” and what “heavenly cause” has us marching. At the very least we are urged to apply ourselves assiduously to the pursuit of fame and fortune (not to mention power) on our climb up the success ladder, reinforcing as this does competition and guiltless consumption.

Ambition is the Little Engine That Could energizing econoculture’s values constellation, always paired with hard work as incentives to keep trying and striving for greatness. The French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal famously observed nearly four centuries ago, ”All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.” Invisibles wholeheartedly endorse this observation, which has become widely quoted in our beleaguered times. What drive so many of us out of that room are boredom, loneliness and ambition. Boredom follows from our conditioned need to be continuously entertained and heed econoculture inducements to go shopping. Loneliness follows from celebrity-inspired ideals of social popularity, romance, and idealized friendship. Ambition follows from the econoculture demand that we all strive to “be somebody.”

It’s easy to see how well ambition supplements other econoculture values like individualism, competition, stardom and branding. Invisible research confirms that ambitious men and women trying their best to “be somebody” are responsible for at least 80 percent of the country’s woes, and likely the world’s, consistent with Pareto’s 80/20 ratio found applicable to so many social and natural phenomena. Their ambition is largely ego-driven and thus prone to disastrous unintended consequences for others since they rarely if ever consider anyone other than themselves. Our current crop of techno-plutocrat celebrities presents a fine case in point. They have created, and continue creating for their own self-aggrandizement and insatiable wealth accumulation, technological horrors guaranteed to enshittify our families and communities and the nation as a whole — the entire world! — for generations to come, all with the eager cooperation of econoculture captives conditioned to consume anything promoted as new and better.

Self-interest and self-promotion must come first for all the ambitious, however they may feign otherwise. Otherwise they would find contentment pursuing their interests with the least possible attention and disruption to the

lives of others that might distract them from their passionate pursuit of new knowledge and understanding, often with little thought for their own enrichment. That is rarely the case now. Econoculture's ambitious minions, lately styling themselves "evangelists, "entrepreneurs" and "influencers," draw an estimated 80 percent of social media attention (again consistent with the Pareto ratio) and by doing so profit handsomely. They specialize in drawing attention to themselves and whatever products or ideologies or conspiracies they would have us buy.

As it happens, most great advances in human civilization have come from people who were simply curious and followed their desire to better understand how things work, people like Plato and Newton, Einstein and Marie Curie, Freud and Darwin. Self-interested ambition, on the other hand, has at its most destructive given the world such mass slaughterers as Genghis Khan, Napoleon Bonaparte, Leopold II, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and Mao Zedong, just to name a few, who with their lesser aspiring wannabes bear responsibility for countless millions of annihilated human lives. Their legacies are indelible bloodstains on the human record. The horrifying photographs of human bodies piled high in burial pits around the world should forever remind us of ambition's global evil threat.

Econoculture certainly did not invent ambition, probably as old as humankind or at least human civilization. But it has rendered the curse more democratic, more widely distributed among the population and accessible to those inclined by nature to covet greatness. Now econoculture would have us all believe greatness is within reach of everyone with the grit, wit and determination (and of course hard work!) to get more followers and shares and subscribers than the next guy. There's a lot of competition out there, so stay on your toes and let not your ambition flag.

Nowadays tyranny assumes a new guise. Nowadays an ambitious carnival huckster like Donald Trump can uproot the lives of millions who took too seriously the Statue of Liberty's "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." This depraved creature of econoculture can boldly lead his followers back to Jim Crow racism and Gilded Age mass suffering before the New Deal; embolden hyper-masculine misogyny to re-subordinate women; reinforce econoculture's libertarian disdain for laws and constitutions that restrict individual and corporate freedom to act in their own self-interest without obstacles like regulations to protect the public interest; and curtail efforts to stave off climate catastrophe

in favor of the petroleum and plastic industries' best interests — all while brazenly enriching himself and his family with other ring-kissing sycophants. In painful contrast to FDR's comforting fireside chats during wartime, what this econoculture president offers are deranged midnight ramblings on his personal social media site denouncing domestic foes and praising his glorious self.

Such grotesque ego-driven econoculture ambition is no less a plague on the human race than the rampaging tyrants of old, certainly a development that must provoke a widespread "heartbreak of disillusionment" with the econoculture project as a whole among fellow Americans not yet hopelessly ensnared in its deceptions. That heartbreak leads more and more of econoculture's disaffected to commit to getting out and going invisible.

Stardom

Admiring exceptional talents among our fellow human beings has produced unintended undesirable consequences under econoculture, most notably the phenomenon of stardom. There was a time when widely known and admired celebrities like Sarah Bernhardt and Mark Twain and Josephine Baker enjoyed popularity for their actual talents. This has become far less the case as mass media, marketing, and public relations now run the stardom show. Forget those old Hollywood film celebs like Marilyn Monroe and Humphrey Bogart, musical heartthrobs Elvis and the Beatles and Sinatra and all the rest blessed by Ed Sullivan and Johnny Carson and Dick Clark, not to mention those spared the hook at the Apollo who advanced to Motown. Such stars were useful then to econoculture's growing hegemony and certainly greased the wheels of commerce. Commercialization progressed as stars were used to promote brands — recall Ronald Reagan hyping General Electric — and draw tourists to vacation destinations like Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Today basketball celebrity Lisa Leslie endorses Nike's Famous Footwear with a solicitation to prospective buyers announcing, "You've got SUPERSTAR status!" So a pair of shoes can confer both fame and stardom. Lately, spectacular performative extravaganzas that can be witnessed by the masses only from afar have become the dominant star-making trend, grossing hundreds of millions of dollars.

Econoculture in its inevitable decline has hyped up stardom's luminescence to blinding brilliance. Its marketing professionals have refined their craft of

capturing and holding consumer attention to near perfection. Consider for example econoculture's latest top pop star Taylor Swift and her hero football boyfriend — what a match made in stardom heaven! It's a fairy tale come true, a storybook romance unfolding right before our eyes! Stay tuned! Don't miss the movie *Taylor Swift, Life of a Showgirl*! It brought in $40 million on opening weekend.

The stars of film, music, sports and other entertainments gather periodically to celebrate themselves, reassure each other how wonderful they are, and display their wit, charm and beauty to their fans. These star-studded award affairs compete with Super Bowls for ad revenues in the hundreds of millions of dollars with econoculture's PR cheerleaders promoting competition for top awards and lavish lifestyles of obscene consumption.

Since celebrity entails intense competition and devotional consumption (all that merch! so much bling!), not to mention lots of hard work from captive fans to pay for the whole trillion-dollar entertainment industry, stardom shines bright in econoculture's values constellation. It's nothing new, going back to tribal adulation of victorious warriors and Greeks celebrating their Olympian champions. But like all outcomes of the good-better-best-greatest mindset it must end in tragedy, a virtual law of nature. Heroes must be sacrificed to the insatiable appetite of their followers. Greatness exacts its price. Stars write tragic memoirs of their sufferings. Celebrities deplore their loss of anonymity. In most cases fame proves fleeting as reality intrudes on manufactured images. The particular tragedy of econoculture stardom stems not from natural admiration for human talents but rather their commercial exploitation via modern media, the amplification and distortion of celebrity to prop up the current econoculture regime with all its glaring faults already in decline, and the disillusionment of loyal fans when their heroes are exposed as all-too-human frauds, or worse. Like favorite comic Bill Cosby and favorite entertainer Michael Jordan and favorite quarterback Brett Favre. Consider the tragic end of Princess Diana hunted to death by econoculture's paparazzi like Dorothy terrorized by the Wicked Witch of the West's winged monkeys.

The rise of social media has amplified celebrity culture tenfold until it has become pervasive in everyday life. Details about celebrities' personal lives, relationships and daily routines propagated through media create an illusion of intimacy with fans, a projection of closeness, even friendship. Celebrities become role models shaping personal identities, attitudes, lifestyles and

consumer choices. They continuously strive to “connect” with their fans and reinforce the bond. Modern marketing genius has even tamed resistance and rebellion to serve its manufacture of desire, a special role for many rock and punk stars. All of pop stardom, including its pseudo-rebellious strains, has become a vital pipeline for grooming young people into econoculture’s everlasting greed dream machine.

Stardom’s immense attention-grabbing powers are well known — big stars are big draws and fans adore their winners. This attention can be and is sold like any other celebrity merchandise, and devotees give theirs up gladly, lambs to the slaughter. Less recognized is stardom’s usefulness to econoculture as a trafficker not only in attention but in personal data collection, helping Big Tech fulfill its confessed ambition to know everything about everyone all the time.

Stardom’s greatest service to econoculture is cultivating among fans the values, lifestyles and attitudes most serviceable to econoculture enterprise. Devoted fans are sold manufactured star identities evoking idealistic fantasies. Public images are skillfully crafted by marketing and media for whom pseudo-events are staged to compete for public attention. The commodification of fame has permeated political, social and economic life. Entertainers vie for our attention along with athletes and politicians. Americans need to shoot up entertainment day and night like morphine junkies. Pseudo-suave celebrity hangers-on like *Playboy*’s Hugh Hefner sold his foldout fans on the oh-so-cool lifestyle of luxury consumption and hot chicks in his decadent mansion. College athletes can now sell their likenesses just like the pros. Everything in econoculture is for sale, no exceptions. Are kindergartners still safe? No, of course not — whole marketing research divisions are testing their susceptibilities to enticements like cute puppets singing happy songs.

Essential to the celebrity bond is creating an illusion of emotional intimacy with fans who will confess their deepest secrets to their idealized stars — after all, there can be no secrets between such good friends. The line between public exposure and private intimacy becomes blurred. Especially on social media, fans trust their innermost hopes and dreams to idealized role models — as well as to corporate marketers targeting age groups and other demographics for the purpose of selling products or services. The newest tech invasion of AI chatbot friends can only further commercialize this new invasion of greed for gain into our precious private selves.

Stardom taps into an all-but-irresistible human susceptibility to charisma, heroics and romance. Many among us, once these demigods-goddesses capture their attention, simply can't get enough. This renders them captives of econoculture as their celebrity groomers guide them into the fold. Fans surrender their independence of thought to econoculture's crafted images and manufactured personalities, artificial creations no less than Mickey Mouse and Elmer Fudd, though certainly more lifelike. Cartoons all the same. Invisibles see this surrender of individual critical thinking capacity to emotions aroused through marketing magic as a violation of personhood, especially that of young people still struggling to make sense of a Mad Hatter world. Pride based on team and celebrity loyalties is known to diminish pride in one's own life and achievements, especially in the cutthroat arenas of social media. Also, a focus on individual fame distracts attention from the collective social and political movements of the day, a welcome fringe benefit for econoculture's status quo.

For invisibles this has already become a bridge too far. Then comes branding.

Branding

Corporate branding has long proved an effective evocation of our ancient fondness for symbols. A brand can be seared into the human subconscious no less than onto a steer's hide, bringing with it a host of modern merchandising's crafty associations with good things you feel comfortable spending your hard-work money on. Think Coca Cola (happiness, togetherness), Harley Davidson (freedom, adventure), Nike (rugged endurance), Subway (fast and healthy), Maidenform (fit and comfort). We are increasingly bombarded with marketing brands in our public lives, something largely out of our control, but at least in the past we have retained some personal control over the extent of this exposure in our private lives. No more. Now everyone's invited to make the personal public and become influencers shaping their identities for targeted audiences after exploiting friends and family for all those relationships may be worth. The internet and social media would have everyone in the world become marketers of themselves and their personal brands.

This pernicious mutation of econoculture values has in recent years penetrated humanity's last defenses against mass manipulation and the complete absorption of personhood into the marketplace. This corruption is called personal branding, and its source, unlike the Covid virus' disputed origin, has been recorded for all time in an article titled "The Brand Called You" published by econoculture business guru Tom Peters in the 1997 August/Sept. econoculture magazine *Fast Company*. The gist is that brands are not just for corporations — any individual can establish his or her or their own brand to stand out from the competition as a unique human product for sale. The nutrients for this Peters fungus had of course been prepared decades before by hyper-individualism, competition and celebrity.

The stealthy Peters advance brings generations of commercial creep, the step-by-step absorption of American culture and psyche into the profit-driven buy-sell value system of the marketplace, to new heights with no telling what yet to come. It is this extremity that has provoked invisibles to risk unwanted exposure and issue this *Invisibility Manifesto* sounding the alarm that unless millions more act on their inevitable heartbreak of disillusionment, withdraw their consent from self-destructive commercial values, and adopt a less greed-focused, more people-centered way of life, not only the American experiment but the human experiment itself is hell-bent for catastrophic failure. How did America ever reach such a sorry pass that something like this — people branding themselves as products — could become a canaries-in-the-goldmine warning of immanent suffocation? In this country it first surfaced in something as seemingly harmless as t-shirt slogans.

Many men still living recall when t-shirts were simply undergarments like jockey shorts or bras for women. Made of inexpensive cotton, mostly plain white or gray, they were casual summer work shirts and useful in winter when extra layers of clothing made life easier. Then in the 1960s t-shirts came out of hiding in a new guise: They appeared in bright colors bearing slogans for or against things, mostly war, Vietnam in particular, or war in general with a peace sign that advertised a total anti-war stance. T-shirts declaring devotion to particular rock bands became widespread once the music industry discovered that people enjoyed sharing their musical tastes with the world around them voluntarily without being asked or paid, a marketing bonanza. After that it became a t-shirt free-for-all — whatever your passion, your pet peeve, your fondest hopes and dreams, your greatest fears, your madness, let the world know just how you feel by displaying it

boldly on your chest or back or both just like the old sandwich men with advertising boards hung from their shoulders. A whole new class of t-shirt entrepreneurs was born always poised to pounce on controversy. The day after George Floyd was choked to death by a cop in Minneapolis, "I Can't Breathe" t-shirts were being hawked at the murder site.

The logical next step, of course, is the tattoo. Why limit personal expression to t-shirts when the whole human body surface can be an outer statement of inner states? Nowadays we often see fully illustrated men and women displaying their brands on their flesh wherever they go, a true triumph of econoculture's power of commercial advertising to influence personal expression. Tattoos make public what was once private, another reflection of celebrity influence. Celebrities may have been the first private brands, and since now on social media everyone can aspire to celebrity, why not advertise on our bodies and turn everyone and everything into branded products?

It's said that personal branding is becoming a cornerstone of modern professional identity and that job recruiters give it increasing weight when examining candidates' online profiles. This sounds the death knell of any professional integrity that has survived commercialization thus far. It's also said that strenuous personal branding is now required of all politicians. That should ensure the departure of the last honest, honorable, self-effacing person from that already benighted occupation.

And so much more…

There are of course numerous other econoculture values we could examine with an eye to their cooptation justifying the habits, ideals and practices of business and finance interests, stimulating commercial activity, and holding the free marketplace sacrosanct. Such are the banal realities of econoculture motives. Take freedom, for example. What sensible relationship is there between the freedoms sought by colonial revolutionaries, enshrined in the Bill of Rights, long denied slaves and the indentured and women, fought for in wars and strikes and Freedom Rides — and the freedom to profit at public expense, to pollute and defraud and persecute and yes deport and kill at will? Little or nothing at all of course, yet econoculture trumpets the word as if it must mean the same for all red-blooded Americans. Which is what econoculture says it is — free markets and freedom to brandish weapons of

war. Which econoculture declares best for the nation whose anthem thousands sing at Super Bowls to launch a thrilling contest — yes, that very nation whose worldwide exploitation of planet and people we have already identified as econoculture's tragic legacy.

Values such as economy and efficiency, rationality, comfort, security, even wisdom are acknowledged in econoculture since they are easily adapted to the mercantile mentality and expressed in ways palatable to consumers. After all, don't we all want cheaper eggs and governments that work, logical science-based decision-makers, secure neighborhoods, more wisdom and fewer wiseasses? Judging from the actual outcomes of those fine sentiments, however, the devil is surely in the details. Econoculture comfort sells lots of $6,000 mattresses and Gulfstream private jets but does little to warm homeless people at cold latitudes. Secure econoculture neighborhoods put us all under continuous surveillance. Wall Street financial wisdom is the best econoculture has to offer. Take your pick — it's a sad fact that every one of these fine ideals can be warped to serve commercial interests and co-opted to sell products or services or market ideology. Recognizing this is healthy cynicism at work.

A look at what values rank low and get little mention reveals econoculture's true commitments and serves as a guide to where invisibles go looking for healthier alternatives. Honesty, for example, ranks very low as a galling obstacle to hyper-individualism, heated rivalries and ardent ambition. Empathy, compassion, altruism, these are rarely mentioned in econoculture-speak, much less recommended. Savvy competitors do not empathize with their competition. The ambitious cannot afford compassion for those they must surpass to get ahead. Humility and modesty are certainly devalued, contrary as they are to the entire cluster of econoculture values we have examined. And harmony? Forget it. For econoculture, a harmonious resolution of our earthly strife is far less achievable than transforming Mars into a habitable planet where the elite can escape the horrible mess they have made of Earth.

Invisibles have identified viable alternatives to every econoculture value. Most of these are easily found in the writings of ancient and modern philosophers and the teachings of world religions. Invisibles borrow freely from these sources whatever best abets their alternative ways of life in a committed, relentless revolt against econoculture's ravages, a way of death.

The Invisible Revolution

Invisibles engage in a silent, nonviolent and nonconfrontational revolution against econoculture's reigning value system — an invisible opposition from within. It is their observation that strident opposition and confrontational tactics challenging econoculture too often provoke harsh countermeasures and escalated conflict. Rather than make an already chaotic situation worse, invisibles advance their values revolution by unobtrusively withdrawing their personal consent and turning a deaf ear to econoculture's insistent urgings and entreaties. They become cynical nonparticipants in that way of life and direct their attention elsewhere.

Invisibles do not undervalue the importance of courageous open opposition in the streets and courts as in the civil rights and labor and women and LGBTQ and current No Kings movements. They support in myriad inconspicuous ways these public efforts to topple econoculture — but not at the visible street level and not as captured in media. Invisibles avoid public exposure. They operate behind the scenes. They undermine the regime by unobtrusively eroding its foundations until opposing forces collectively, aboveground and below, can prevail and the inevitable collapse occurs. The sooner the better for all concerned, though who can say which straw will break the poor old camel's back.

What follow are invisible countermeasures commonly taken in resistance to econoculture values. Withdrawing consent is a critical post-disillusionment act of purging views and sentiments that once held meaning but have since outlived their usefulness, if they ever had any, and dismiss them as failed values they can no longer approve or agree to or permit.

To some econoculture values, invisibles grant no consent whatever and sever all ties as best they can and still survive. To others they distance themselves, recognizing them as offering something essential to human well-being but grossly distorted and out of balance under econoculture. To such values they grant grudging consent until a more humane equilibrium can be restored.

Hyper-Individualism: No Consent

This econoculture value simply has no redeeming qualities. It's all bad — any good that comes from it is accidental. It is hazardous to human life on Earth and to the health of human communities everywhere. It is an aberration in human evolution and the sooner it goes extinct the better. Until that comes about, widespread withdrawal by the disaffected can at least blunt its worst effects with neutralization as the initial object.

To this end, invisibles take a hard line of total opposition to hyper-individualism. Whereas hyper-individuals assert themselves and their interests aggressively, invisibles take care not to be noticed and not to draw attention to themselves. Where hyper-individuals strive to stand out from the crowd, invisibles become adept at blending in and disappearing into the background — they go invisible! In their manner of dress, choices of livelihood, places of residence and modes of transportation, invisibles learn from the octopus and stay camouflaged. Their lives are an active refutation of everything hyper-individualism represents, operating behind the scenes in families and friendships and circles of love rather then in the streets and on the nightly news.

Can one opposite value neutralize another? Invisibles are determined to find out.

Competition: Grudging Consent

Competition under econoculture, especially its endless hyped-up rivalries, has become so powerful and omnipresent in our lives that many invisibles feel compelled out of sheer contrariness to oppose it in equal measure by withdrawing consent entirely and going competition-free. Even a game of backgammon or bid whist might involve more competition than some allow themselves, much less *Call of Duty*, online job searches, daytime TV and all that 24/7 sports programming. For this and other reasons (like staying invisible) they do not run for political office or accept awards. They no longer care who wins or loses any of the unending public contests going on around them all the time. They become immune to team loyalties and indifferent to all competitive outcomes. Cheering for one team or another loses appeal knowing who really wins and loses in these econoculture diversions and entertainments.

Many post-disillusioned invisibles find this advanced practice too painful — it just doesn't work for them. They still enjoy their games, at least those among family and friends (what invisibles call their circles of love). In many such, the values of friendly competition and socializing outweigh any win-lose hyper-individualism. But much as they may indulge in such friendly competitions, invisibles cannot lose sight of the fundamental need to avoid exposure to professional sports and most of the college rivalries that serve as farm teams for the pros. Families with children in schools must often weigh the benefits of supporting a child's athletic ambitions against their own aversion to competitive sports. Some compromise is unavoidable. What if your kid gets drafted into the NFL? (Not to worry — the odds are astronomical. Better play the lottery.) Invisibles have more concern for losers than admiration for winners. Blurring the distinction between winners and losers is an existential crisis for econoculture, a crisis all invisibles aggravate as best they can.

Athletic considerations need not compromise withdrawal from and resistance to all the other econoculture arenas of competition — the game shows, video games, casinos, horse races, arms races, yacht races, beauty pageants, crypto wagers, sports bet apps, political contests and so on so on creeping into every waking moment (taking up dream time too). These bouts all promote/indoctrinate a winners-losers worldview. This is entirely harmonious with econoculture's good-better-best-excellent ambitions for all its subjects, needing as it does to sell them its latest better-best products and meet quarterly quotas. Invisibles consider all these competitive mutations best avoided whenever possible by whatever means necessary.

Each invisible decides for themselves how much competition exposure is for them too much. When is equal or greater consideration given to cooperation, collaboration, consensus, partnership, joint ventures, other ways of getting things done without butting heads in combat? What's wrong with a harmless tennis match? Nothing at all until one player wants to *crush* the other or a syndicate is betting on them. That's when things go bad. Invisibles give little quarter here and distance themselves as best they can from pernicious econoculture competitions but with respect and admiration for those among us just curious to test the human body's and mind's capacities and endurance, theirs in particular. Go for it! More power to them! We learn from them. There's a Spanish extreme athlete from whom we have learned that a man can climb 72 peaks in 31 days, biking and running between ascents. Wow! There are a couple of Hawaiians who have slapped the shit

out of their opponents in the World Slap Fighting championships. Double wow! What do we learn from such things? That intensive physical training regimens, masochism and sadism can deliver loads of precious human attention to greedy harvesters on social media.

Invisibles say by all means give skilled athletes and chess masters and jazz saxophonists their due accolades, especially when competing with themselves to test their own limits — and then move on to more important matters where human survival is at stake. Abandon halls of fame as crass idolatries.

We here introduce the controversial invisible defense of mediocrity as yet another challenge to econoculture's Way. This counter-value repost drives econoculture pundits positively batshit. In a ruthlessly competitive world mediocrity is a nasty vile word. Excellence is its triumphant better-best lord and master, widely acknowledged as the way forward to progress and prosperity. No sane sentient being, econoculture's PR professionals declare in unison, would ever choose mediocrity over excellence. Excellence is obviously…superior. Top notch. State of the art. Preferred over all others. Mediocrity on the other hand is an inferior product or idea or human being, average at best as econoculture would have it. No offense intended, it's just how things work. The operations of the market are, after all, well known to be pitiless in pursuit of excellence.

In defiance of this cold-blooded econoculture excellence value that by definition consigns half or more of humanity and human endeavor to a much-maligned mediocrity, invisibles champion that half and more of humanity encompassing all those not crowned champions by econoculture measure. They champion instead the losers, the also-rans, the misfits and the ne'er-do-wells. Econoculture's neo-eugenicists would have these defectives (by their definition) pulled off the assembly line and discontinued by simply letting "Mother Nature" (unregulated commerce without protective safety nets) take her course and weed out the weak and vulnerable via malnutrition, disease, suicide, bankruptcies, exposure, contempt, sterilization. Pitiless is the unregulated marketplace, econoculture's Holy Grail.

Invisibles even dare extol mediocre products and services over those econoculture declares excellent. Econoculture demands to know how this can be! Mediocrity over excellence does not compute! It is madness! Populist ignorance! *Consumer Reports* rails in a rare editorial against the

practice as un-American. Invisibles, contrarily inclined, insist on giving whatever econoculture dismisses as inferior a second favorable look. More often than not they find beneath and behind the experts' blue-ribbon stamp of excellence yet more deception in the unending commercial wars to discredit and crush competitors. It's the Ur econoculture rivalry that never ends.

Mediocrity under econoculture gets wrongly beat down; Invisibility comes to its defense. Encouraging revolt among the losers and also-rans is to the prevailing regime a disloyal, treasonous offence. That's why invisibles do it. And why they stay invisible.

Consumption: Grudging Consent

Invisibles feel shame at participating in this American econoculture consumption feeding frenzy knowing where it all comes from and the true costs of the plunder. They withhold full consent from consumer culture and commit to a less materialistic, more humane way of life. They go into hiding from econoculture's relentless hunt for attention. They shield themselves as best they can from the seductions of marketers and advertisers much as Ulysses had himself tied to the ship's mast to experience the Sirens' irresistible call without throwing himself into the sea.

Consumption is of course unavoidable for those who have chosen to go invisible in place rather than retreat to a sanctuary far away from econoculture, the idealized island retreat or cabin in the woods — and even there life must still be consumed for life to exist. Despite their contempt for endless greed for gain, invisibles must compromise to sustain their lives and their circles of love. They cannot wholly withdraw consent from econoculture consumption but must make the best if it until something better comes along. They ask their postman not to deliver catalogues of any kind. They unsubscribe to all publications carrying commercial messages. For many, political messages are also shunned. The aim is minimal exposure to econoculture's Siren call. This requires minimal or no exposure to social media with its influencer infections and algorithmic fevers. Here is where invisibles' All Lies Defense gets called into action. Sometimes we just can't believe a damned thing we see and hear in our media. It's best to admit this up front and deal with it uncompromisingly. The All Lies Defense gives invisibles temporary breathing space and time to sort things out.

Invisibles also employ a caustic but essential defensive weapon against econoculture's wiles: cynicism. While it can be dangerous in the wrong hands, cynicism goes beyond mere skepticism to suspect self-dealing and ulterior motives behind much of what passes for truth in econoculture. After all, it happens to be true. Factual. Verifiable. Invisibles concur with George Bernard Shaw: "The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who don't have it."

Invisibles decline to consume beyond acquiring the necessities of life, and those as sustainably as possible. Of course what is considered necessary can vary widely. As reluctant consumers they all strive for invisibility in the marketplace, unrepresented in marketplace surveys. In opposition and resistance to econoculture's ceaseless shopping goad, invisibles practice reluctant consumption by limiting retail contact to only small businesses, joining coops, and purchasing as much as possible from local farmers markets and craftspeople. Vegetarians and vegans are well on their way. Many invisibles consider themselves minimalists, owning as few possessions as possible. Of course it is also possible to reduce material possessions while spending bigtime on spas, cruises, luxury vacations, concerts, fine dining, self-care facelifts and nose jobs. This too is unsustainable consumption that must be, if not abandoned, at least indulged only in guilty moderation. No more guiltless consumption allowed until this Earth gets back in balance.

Hard Work: Grudging Consent

It is impossible under present conditions to take seriously econoculture's insistence that all must work hard to succeed and prosper. The hypocrisy is just too in-our-faces blatant. Econoculture presides over the greatest rich-poor income and wealth divides in U.S. history. The generation now reaching maturity will see history's greatest transfer of wealth from rich parents to rich children who with little or no effort on their part enjoy lives of rare privilege and luxury. Anyone who thinks these genetic lottery-winners have done anything to earn their entitlement wins a complementary family pass to the new Disney World Dystopia.

Certainly no hard work is required of these scions. It might be that great grandfather and his dutiful wife worked hard for their fortunes (or not, who

can say, might be slave money), but that history is far behind the new inheritors. They will by the millions be leaving the hard work to others — warehouse workers, farm workers, Lyft drivers, assembly line drudges — and enjoying the universal hyper-individualist dream to do any damned thing they please with minimal consideration for others. For half a century now the productivity gains of working people have been systematically siphoned upward to the rarified realms of those whose hard work may consist of consulting now and then with lawyers, bankers and accountants about tax avoidance, or managing household servants, or learning to sail the new yacht.

Invisibles do not shirk their fair share of hard work in life, as econoculture PR has charged. When fires or floods threaten their communities, invisibles are among the first and hardest working to clear firebreaks and fill sandbags. What they don't do is take the "hard work" injunction of econoculture at unquestioning face value without inquiring into hard work for whose benefit, for what purpose, and who stands to win and lose in this win-lose world we find ourselves stuck in. Hard work in pursuit of career advancement is less valued by invisibles than hard work in service to curiosity, to wanting to learn how things and creatures like human beings work and why. Or in artistic expression. Or raising sheep. Or teaching or doctoring or doing nails in a strip-mall salon. Whatever brings you joy!

It is widely recognized that hard work expended doing something you love, a labor of love, is not really hard. Invisibles apply to hard work the minimalist principle of keeping only possessions that bring us joy. Their rule of thumb is that whatever hard work they do should bring them joy. Given that joy is unevenly distributed in this life, why should joyful work be the privilege of only a few? If hard work does not bring joy, it may be time to slow it down.

The first workers slowdown was by the brave United Tailoresses of New York in 1825, a century ago, the first women-only union, who slowed their production to protest intolerable working conditions. Joyless workers may take inspiration from the United Tailoresses and slow their hard work down to an invisible pace in protest against intolerable life conditions.

Ambition: No Consent

Invisibles value curiosity over ambition. Ambition is competitive and restless, never content, always looking ahead to the next challenge, the next obstacle between now and some future goal. Curiosity is more meandering, less forceful. Like flowing water, it finds a path of least resistance while the ambitious, especially the hyper-individualistic variety, just blast through to their goals and ignore the collateral damage. It was ambition, not curiosity, that led Victor Frankenstein to create his monster. Invisibles allow their natural curiosity to guide them through life rather than econoculture's career paths.

Gender is a consideration here — all the great monsters of ambition have been men. No female perpetrators of mass slaughter come to mind. Where econoculture alarmists see danger in what they call the feminization of our culture, invisibles welcome this growing influence of female sensitivities as a great blessing. It's a promising fluid counterbalance to the unyielding testosterone muscle of dominant males on a glorious quest for greatness.

Very often those who actually realize their highest ambitions, like climbing mountains or running Fortune 500 companies, experience a profound disillusionment when their achievements fail to deliver the happiness and satisfaction they'd expected and considered their due. Their biographies are illuminating and recommended reading. There we find high achievers often discovering that ambition has actually led them far astray from what turns out to be meaningful and fulfilling in human life. They will not confess this even to themselves — mountaineers and CEO's alike often extreme egoists with limited introspection, their attention directed exclusively outward on worlds they feel destined to conquer. Since invisibles, quite the contrary, do value inner worlds, contentment, quiescence and serenity, ambition has little to offer them but aggravation and object lessons in what not to do.

Stardom: No Consent

Invisibles find no value whatever in celebrity stardom. They encourage their children to look for better role models in their own families, neighborhoods and communities — at least real human beings and not media-manufactured fairy princes and princesses.

They steer clear of awards show extravaganzas and are indifferent to who wins the prizes — they find better pathways to music and films they enjoy

that may or may not be prizewinners. There's always word of mouth from friends and family and fellow travelers whose taste can be trusted. Invisibles find themselves drawn to reclusive, unpretentious artists and craftspeople more absorbed in their work than in themselves and their public images. Invisibles avoid products or services owned by or endorsed by celebrities. They hope that in time, as more and more people become disillusioned with econoculture's cheapened values, such endorsements will become more liabilities than assets.

As a brainwashing and grooming service to econoculture, stardom has no useful purpose at all in invisibles' lives and is in fact considered a noxious influence. Invisibles give it as little attention as possible and look forward to the happy day it falls out of fashion.

Personal Branding: No Consent

Cattle are branded. Slaves were branded. Now all humans are branded? No, worse — this time the slaves are branding themselves! So convenient for their enslavers!

Personal branding is the new slavery. The econocultured public willingly, eagerly, naively brand themselves as products for sale. Talk about selling your soul to the devil! Talk about Jesus raising hell with moneylenders in the temple! How would the Christ rail today against this voluntary surrender of precious selves and souls to market greed?

Invisibles consider those who market themselves as branded products to have surrendered their humanity to econoculture. They are best avoided, since like Judas once they've gone this far there's no telling who or what else they may be willing to sell if the price is right. It may be too late for many of these unfortunates, but millions of others might be spared this degradation by a nationwide insurrection to preserve the integrity of the human spirit in a time of econoculture's AI-assisted hegemony.

Invisibles feel self-objectified at the prospect of promoting themselves as products in the marketplace. It's not a good feeling and they refuse it as the ultimate alienation. They choose to not live in a world of brands and branding strategies. Invisibles do not wear garments advertising their likes and dislikes or brand preferences. They do not follow fashion trends to make

fashion statements. They do not tattoo themselves to convey messages (though many are receptive to pleas from tattoo repentants seeking absolution and resorting to GoFundMe pleas for the cost of removal).

Invisibility considers human personhood sacred territory off limits to uninvited subliminal snoops, especially those driven by greed for gain. They resist corporate-think and find work outside corporate systems if possible. They limit consumption as best they can to off-brand merchandise and hand-crafted locally grown products that are not posing as people.

Invisibles are human beings resisting enticements to become products in the marketplace and temptations to buy econoculture-branded products. They see themselves as an invisible resistance, quietly without fanfare or rebellious posturing turning their backs on this commercialized way of life and its imposition of buy-sell values on all human endeavor.

And so much more…

Hyper-individualism, competition and ambition work together in econoculture like mixing saltpeter, charcoal and sulfur — any moment it's apt to go bang. It's an explosive combination. Stardom and branding will only feed the flames. Uncountable invisibles devote their lives to distancing themselves from ground zero in this mad econoculture race to self-destruction. They opt out in favor of contrary more people-oriented values such as benevolence, kindness, modesty, commonality, honesty, empathy, friendship, justice, trust, social responsibility, love between brothers and sisters. That word, love, is the most abused, tormented and dehumanized word in econoculture's PR vocabulary. It sells everything from dog flea collars to chocolate caramels to mail-order brides.

Invisibles have been opting out in growing numbers for generations now. But only recently, as econoculture's explosive potential exceeds even that of nuclear proliferation, have they risked exposure in this *Invisible Manifesto*. Their invisibility is a value they treasure, an act of defiance in opposition to the dominant cultural creed. Just revealing that there are alternative ways of life offering far greater rewards is enough to draw down econoculture's indignant wrath. This is not a fury to be taken lightly. Econoculture truly has the power to shock and awe.

Invisibles find comfort in hiding. It's that kind of world under econoculture.

A Call to Strike

Invisibles of America unite in calling for a national general strike against the corrupt and venal regime of econoculture and its self-serving values. Should this grow into a worldwide strike against the spread of these unleashed appetites gobbling up our world, all the better. Since American econoculture leads the world in the extent of its commodification of public and private life, it's only right that American Invisibility show the world a way out of this market colonialism short of violent revolution.

Instead of withdrawing labor as in an industrial strike, an Invisibility values strike withdraws first consent, then commitment from econoculture's warped, disjointed, unbalanced pretense of moral principles. Shaken by a heartbreak of disillusionment with the current regime, strikers lose confidence that the old ways, blue-blooded American values they grew up with, can still be trusted to reflect their needs, and they can no longer approve and agree and go along with that status quo. Invisibles believe that when enough fellow citizens experience such a heartbreak of disillusionment with things as they are, recognize econoculture' materialistic mercantile values as the source of their grave disaffection and alienation, and commit to no longer contributing to this inhumane madness, a profound unsettling will occur, a cultural realignment of values comparable to a realignment of tectonic plates we call an earthquake.

What might bring about such a profound loss of faith? The underground radical revolution of values we call Invisibility is offered here as America's best shot for a sanguine future. It is well suited to a David-Goliath conflict where one side initially commands a great preponderance of power economic, political, and in public sentiment; but which ultimately must fall to the disdain of a deeply disgruntled people, in this case all those whose heartbreak of disillusionment leads them into Invisibility and abandonment of econoculture's decadent values.

Invisibles' mediocrity is their strength. Because they practice modesty, humility and commonality, invisibles disappear into the background. They cannot be identified by invasive monitoring and surveillance. By no longer

consenting to econoculture values, invisibles withdraw support that justifies this regime's status quo and thereby hastens its collapse to make way for a sustainable way of life for all people sharing this planet — the only source of life, so far as we know, in an utterly lifeless and incomprehensible universe of infinite extent.

The day will arrive when econoculture can no longer remain blissfully ignorant of Invisibility's destabilizing assault on its foundational values. It will see its waning influence on Americans gravely threaten its grip on power. Hyper-individualism will become widely vilified as a corrosive inflammation. Communities valuing benevolent interdependency will encourage their anarchic libertarians to migrate to tribes more receptive to self-centered greed whose inevitable implosion invisibles can observe from a safe distance. Consumer surveys will document rising levels of disaffection and disengagement among former econoculture shoppers. Marketing campaigns will report declining impacts on sales. Millions of marketers will find themselves out of work, training for more useful occupations like nursing and teaching. Productivity will slump as workers rebel against the futility of making the rich richer and themselves poorer. Celebrity endorsements will no longer move the merch. Professional sports will see declining attendance and empty bleachers. Concerts will no longer sell out.

Econoculture will panic and freeze when it finally grasps what is happening — a radical revolution of values, a rebellion that cannot be repressed because its rebels are invisible. At last the meek will inherit the earth as Jesus prophesied. Invisibles of all stripes will unite in anonymous opposition to econocultures everywhere, having nothing to lose but centuries of enslavement to endless greed for gain.

Join the world's first invisible strike! Hopeful times! There's a world to save!

Sam Thayer
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For more information, visit howtogoinvisible.com