

ARCHEOFUTURISM: EUROPEAN VISIONS OF THE POST-CATASTROPHIC AGE

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I sometimes think of my project to pass Reaction through the refiner's fire as beginning with the raw material of a simple stout tree, which has grown straight but has many branches. My task is to examine and prune those branches, and to plane down the tree to its core, creating a smooth and solid piece of wood, to which can be fitted a forged head—a lance of destiny, we can call it. This book, Guillaume Faye's *Archeofuturism*, is one of those branches, and today we will lop it off, though perhaps some of its wood can be used to fuel the forging furnace. That said, this book is mostly insane. But not completely. And, if I am being honest, it prefigures, in part, my own preoccupation with a future that combines the politics of Reaction with the technology of tomorrow.

I had heard occasionally of this book, but very vaguely. It's well regarded in circles in which I do not travel. One can guess this from the short forward, by someone named Michael O'Meara, who beneath his signature lists "two vital books" he has written, one called *Toward the White Republic*. Very evidently, we are not in Kansas anymore. The author is French, of course, and not of the American scene. George Hawley's excellent *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism* spends quite a bit of time on the European New Right, primarily a French phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s, referred to as the *Nouvelle Droite*, with which Faye is connected. It's still around, but today has little impact, and is dying out. Its core leader was, and is, Alain de Benoist, and their thought usually features what is to American ears an odd blend—opposition to immigration from outside Europe, combined with anti-racism (declaimed a bit too loudly to persuade their enemies); opposition to America, viewed as a cultural and economic enemy; dislike of the free market; and, to cap it all off, violent opposition to Christianity and an endorsement of various ill-defined forms of what is supposed to be paganism, but boils down more or less to testosterone-laced pantheism.

All this overlaps, it appears, with elements of the "white nationalist" movement in America (there really is such a thing, although it's tiny and the term itself has been ruined by its use as a propaganda term of

abuse), and with other European thinkers that are even farther afield, such as Julius Evola, the thought of whom Steve Bannon is famously acquainted with, to what end exactly is not clear. (Bannon is at this moment in Europe drumming up support for a new populist right-wing coalition; yesterday he signed up Matteo Salvini, the leader of the Italian League and, according to the *New York Times*, the most important politician in Italy today, so we have apparently not heard the last of him.) The Nouvelle Droit is therefore not “right” in any recognizably American sense, and, to compound the confusion, de Benoist today regards himself explicitly as a man of the Left, and says he would have voted for Bernie Sanders. Regardless of where we can pigeonhole their thought, some of it is now available in English, due to the efforts of Arktos Press, started by a Swedish businessman to spread such “alt-right” works (a press of which I heard from Hawley), and who published the copy of *Archeofuturism* that I read—though the first translations of Nouvelle Droit works into English were done by Telos Press, a left-wing publishing house. Go figure. (I will note that the translator here did an excellent job with the footnotes; without them, most references to events and people would be incomprehensible to an American.)

However, we are not here to survey the Nouvelle Droit, but its second-most famous member, Faye. He was one of the original core members of the Nouvelle Droit, but he split from them and mostly disappeared from view around 1985, only resurfacing with the publication of this book, in 1998. (In the meantime he did things like radio comedy acting and starring in pornographic films. Like I said, go figure.) *Archeofuturism* is a set of somewhat disjointed and rambling essays, but with a solid core of repeated assertion of what Faye believes, and why. In fact, while it is not well organized to convey a coherent message, a coherent message nonetheless comes through quite clearly. Two men hover over nearly every page—Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Faye seems to regard as the ultimate seer, and Carl Schmitt, largely for his vision of the *Ernstfall*, Schmitt’s thought about how emergencies justify actions by the state that could not otherwise be justified, in particular suspension of the rule of law (as Mark Lilla has pointed out, Schmitt was fond of the Roman practice of temporary dictators, though Faye does not mention this specifically).

What Faye wants, at its broadest level, is for humanity to recapture the “victorious life,” which is certainly a Nietzschean-sounding phrasing. The overall frame of the book is a specific rejection of the modern world, the “catastrophe of modernity.” This means, for Faye, the denunciation of all mainstream political thought, Left and Right (the former is unalloyed evil; the latter, “traditionalism,” is just neutered, weak, and stupid). Faye insists that what we want, and what we will get, is “a return to archaic and ancestral values, while at the same time envisioning the future as something more than a mere extension of the present. Against modernism, futurism. Against attachment to the past, archaism.”

Archeofuturism is not a set of recommendations for creating a new world, though. It’s more like a future history (and in fact it ends with a long fiction piece looking backward from 2073). Faye is telling us what is certain to happen, and what he is trying to do is prepare us for it, not really guide or change the future. I’ll go through it blow-by-blow, but Faye’s claims can be boiled down to their essence as follows. First, the entire global political and economic system is going to collapse before 2020. Billions will die. Second, from the ashes will arise six megastate blocs, consisting of ethnically/racially similar people (Europeans; Africans; Muslims; East Asians; North Americans; South Americans), which will be autarkic as between each other and which will contain within them numerous smaller states, organized around sub-cultures of the culture that characterizes the megastate bloc, each of which will have a very high degree of autonomy. Migration between blocs will not occur, though limited travel will. Third, ninety percent of the people in each imperial bloc will live like fifteenth-century peasants, with era-appropriate technology, health care, and life expectancy. Ten percent will live awesome techno-futurist lives completely separately from the peasants. Everybody will be happy in his sphere. The end. For, Faye says, this is the natural state of man, and striving for any other state is a fool’s errand.

Here also, Faye first formally defines “Archeofuturism.” Faye loves neologisms. This seems to be a big thing among radical thinkers, who think (perhaps correctly) that using new words avoids constraining thought. (He cites Foucault for the proposition that words “have a crucial importance,” “to state and describe is already to construct.”) The key philosophy that underlies Faye’s thought he terms “vitalist

constructivism.” Vitalist constructivism is meant to be the opposite of egalitarianism and to embody a “Faustian spirit” (meant as a good thing) of progress, to embody a “will to power” that stands for “an organic and non-mechanistic mentality,” though he defines it at some further length. Anyway, Archeofuturism is “a future society that combines techno-scientific progress with a return to the traditional answers that stretch back into the mists of time. . . . It is necessary to reconcile Evola and Marinetti [the apostle of Italian Futurism], and do away with the notion of ‘modernity’ produced by Enlightenment ideology.” The problem I face is that when I hear this it sounds pretty good. It’s in the details that we get lost in the weeds, and then realize the weeds are nightshade.

Faye begins, before we talk about the specifics of the future, with a long explanation, or apologetic, about his relationship and break with the Nouvelle Droite. At first, this seems of only modest interest (who cares what obscure Frenchies did in the 1980s?), but if you realize that what he describes is relevant to any group that is pushing discourse outside the Overton Window, it becomes quite insightful and potentially useful. His first major claimed flaw is that the ND attempted to apply the principles of Antonio Gramsci, by achieving dominance of a society’s cultural institutions, from which is to follow political power, but failed to grasp that all such actions must take place within a political frame, not just an intellectual one, or they are ephemeral. He specifically objects to the ND’s willingness to endorse “Third-Worldist and pro-Islamic positions,” evincing “post-colonial masochism,” when those were rejected by any normal people likely to be interested in the ND, as well as refusing to endorse a coherent economic plan, which is something average people demand. The ND refused to talk about concrete things, that is, and preferred abstractions hoping to influence the upper crust of intellectual culture, which focus does not lead to power.

His second major flaw is that the ND, when censored by those who held the levers of power in the media and the academy (as conservatives are today in America), did not fight by implementing “disorienting and provocative action,” but rather was complacent. Faye says if they had fought, if they had “sought to launch provoking debates and formulate radical ideas,” the media would have had to cover them, because “the media must necessarily attack—and hence advertise—everything that opposes their system.” There is some truth to this—Exhibit A is Donald

Trump. On the other hand, Exhibit B is the successful blackout of the Sweden Democrats, and any facts that would support them (such as that essentially 100% of the very many rapes now committed in Sweden are committed by young immigrant men) by the Swedish establishment. (As of yesterday, we can see that blackout is not suppressing the Sweden Democrats effectively, though.) And Exhibit C is the opening skirmishes by the American Lords of Tech in their formal plan to totally quash all conservative thought on all tech platforms, with proof of concept being the total depersoning of Alex Jones. I don't think the ND or anyone else is Donald Trump—there is only one, for now—so I suspect Faye is wrong here, and it is not generally true that “[t]alent always prevails over censorship, when it is accompanied by daring and intelligence.” It certainly didn't work under Communism, and there is no reason to believe that our neoliberal overlords will be any less censorious in the teeth of rising opposition than Communism was.

His third major objection to the ND is their attempt to turn paganism into an actual religion, rather than a mere internal feeling to be encouraged. This alienated many potential supporters, who are “sentimentally tied to local traditions” (by which he means Catholics). And paganism as religion was a silly distraction from real, concrete political problems, which the ND then failed to address, in the eyes of those who could have added to their power. Faye's fourth major objection is that contrary to mainline ND thought, actually the United States “is better regarded as a rival and opponent (*inimici*) than as an enemy (*hostes*).” And certainly it is not the case that “Africa, Asia, and Latin America” should be viewed as allies of Europe against the “Yankees.” Finally, and related to the first claim, Faye strongly holds that the ND should be “ethno-nationalist,” not “ethno-pluralist.” The immigration of, or rather colonization by, other cultures is a disaster for Europe (and, Faye notes, is purely one-way). It creates “rapid ethno-anthropological alteration; the erosion of European cultural roots; and strong economic and social setback, leading to poverty and endemic crime.” These three factual claims are difficult to argue, certainly, and it's bizarre to think that when Faye wrote, the problem was some tens of thousands of alien invaders, not the million in a year that Angela Merkel and George Soros have blessed the continent with recently.

The weeds show up here, though. Faye has a solution for the problem of “ethno-anthropological alteration,” which is to deport anyone who’s not of “European stock,” including those here for generations. To Madagascar. Which, you will remember, was the Nazi idea before they decided on another, not that Faye adverts to that dubious historical precedent. I suppose this is a common enough historical action and solution (there are no Prussians in East Prussia today), but whatever your political orientation, it’s not something most people could countenance nowadays. No observant Christian could stomach it, certainly. You have to hand it to Faye, though—he does offer internal consistency. My stock objection to even any attempts to limit inbound immigration has been that they are inadequate unless the desiccated Europeans experience a renewal of virtue, something they appear far from. No point in being Japan, a homogenous country that will soon be homogenously empty. Faye thinks this problem will solve itself, because as part of the coming catastrophes, so many people will die, and there will be so much violence (started by the undesirables, no less) that mass deportations won’t seem like such a big deal, and at the same time those catastrophes will bring out, and bring back, the natural moral fiber of those of European stock (pan-European—from the Bering Strait to Brest; the English do not seem to figure). Note that he does not say “superior” moral fiber—as with those on the American right who not-very-convincingly say they are white “separatists,” not white “supremacists,” Faye is careful to never say that any of the forthcoming ethnically-based megastate blocs is necessarily better—just different. “One land, one people: this is what human nature requires.” So he skips the problem of convincing people today that deportations are a good idea, substituting a magic wand of a future time of troubles. Which is, as I say, consistent, if not persuasive as such.

Still, even with the unpleasant taste Faye’s program of deportation leaves, the reader keeps getting pulled back to the things that Faye says that do make sense. It is true, unfortunately, that every modern multi-racial society is actually “multiracist.” It is, for the most part, true that Islam “is an intrinsically conquering, theocratic and antidemocratic religion that seeks—as General DeGaulle had foreseen—to replace each church with a mosque.” It is probably true that Islam, in the terms of Carl Schmitt, is an “objective enemy: he who identifies you as an enemy

for the very reason that you exist, whatever you may do,” though even Faye admits that part of his objection to Islam is that paganism, like his own, is still less approved of by Islam than Christianity. That said, Faye was certain that European multiculturalism would collapse by 2008, and yet, Europe staggers along, so his actual predictions of disaster haven’t been proved right.

The problem, I think, is Faye’s identification of culture with ethnic groups. While it is a complete myth that Europe has been, in any time in the past thousand years, the result of significant movements of people, it is true that Europe is the result of many influences, under the overarching rubric of Christendom. Not only is there far less ethnic commonality among Europeans than Faye suggests, a strong, vibrant culture has a nearly infinite capacity to absorb those from outside, without falling into the error of tribal identity politics—as long as those allowed in from outside are forced, directly or indirectly, to conform to the new culture and to mostly abandon their (in the case of non-Westerners, inferior) cultures. (Needless to say, modern Left “multiculturalism” is the exact opposite.) For example, I am sure Faye loves Alexander Pushkin, who is as Russian as they come, but after all, Pushkin’s great-grandfather was from Cameroon, and served the Tsar as a military engineer. This conformity doesn’t have to be a state-coerced adoption of a new culture, although it could be, and probably has to be with massive immigration; informal pressures, such as the need to adopt the new culture in order to advance in society, can work just as well—witness the old American melting pot, or the gradual adoption of Islam and Islamic culture across the lands conquered by the Arabs. Not for Faye, though—for him, the choice is binary, and based on ethnicity, by which he means mostly (undefined) race. Which is both foolish, and antithetical to the Christian view of all men as brothers that was essential to making the West what it was.

But Faye can never admit that. It cannot be over-emphasized how opposed to Christianity Faye is. Like Nietzsche, he rejects any inherent human dignity, and says that “love thy neighbor like thyself” is “an apology for weakness and a pathological form of emasculation and self-blame.” He also blames Christianity for suggesting that science should benefit everyone, rather than just the elite, resulting in despoliation of the planet. Although he does not say so directly, Faye basically

envisions the future as pre-Christian Scandinavia with rockets, having “a certain harshness, a resolute frankness, a taste for pride and honour, pragmatism, a rejection of all non-selective social organizations,” along with a willingness to use violence. Etc. Faye seems to forget that for as much as Vikings fascinate us, they were a predator society that produced nothing at all, except awesome sagas. They are not a template for civilizational progress.

Thus, Faye claims that the Romans executed “dangerous criminals and the physically or mentally disabled” by throwing them off the Tarpeian Rock. I don’t think this is correct—it was traitors, primarily. The translator notes, not infrequently, quotations or minor facts that Faye gets wrong because he was working from memory, although he does not note that this claim is incorrect. I think this slip is revealing, though—what Faye wants, though he only says it here, is for the physically or mentally disabled to be killed. (The Romans did expose disabled babies, a practice ended only by Christianity, and which has returned today, but I have never heard that they killed disabled adults, much less by such a dramatic method.) Faye’s future time of blood is really an eternity of blood.

So, on the details of how we are getting to Archeofuturism. As far as the predicted collapse, Faye’s belief is that we are facing an imminent “convergence of catastrophes.” There is much florid language surrounding this idea, such as “the century of iron and fire is looming near,” but the specific alleged causes of this convergence are three. First, environmental collapse of unspecified origin, but derived ultimately from overuse of permanently limited resources by trying to give everyone a high standard of living. Second, economic collapse due to an aging population, which is caused by “anti-natalism,” a function of Left modernity. Third, destruction of the European social fabric by colonization by immigrants from the South, primarily Muslim ones. This is both a cultural destruction and a huge increase in crime, ultimately leading to “urban revolts,” which will combine with environmental and financial collapse to create a firestorm of anarchy and destruction, with the ultimate re-imposition of order in Europe by local warlords (and righteous Russian invasion).

Certainly, from the perspective of 1998, extending then-happening events forward, from the Asian financial crisis to riots in the suburban

ghettoes of Paris, this seemed vaguely plausible. Faye also predicted the massive increase in Muslim terrorism before it actually began, and the turn of north Africa into fundamentalist Islamic “republics.” But it is now clearly wrong that collapse will arrive shortly after 1998, and imminent collapse doesn’t seem likely now, given that Europe has absorbed many more immigrants and has borne even fewer children, though to be sure it is impossible to say, since collapses are step functions. Moreover, a bigger problem with Faye’s picture is that the specifics show that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about. His understanding of economics is on a par with Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, and his sources proving imminent environmental collapse are the World Health Organization and Fidel Castro (really). Every time he tries to offer detail, to leave the high plane of Jeremiah-type predictions, on which he comes across as mildly convincing to someone like me, the reader realizes Faye has no idea what he is talking about.

But Faye thinks he has a trump card—regardless of the details, his claim is that it shows “faith in miracles” to believe “the myth that a high standard of living could be achieved on a global scale, or the idea of extending economic systems based on high energy consumption to all.” Thus, trying to make everyone richer will result in certain doom for everyone. This means we are in an *Ernstfall*, to be solved by a turn, after the collapse, to Archeofuturism. Faye doesn’t demonstrate that he’s right, though—he just tells us. This is the core question for anyone who thinking about the future—do we believe in, in Charles Mann’s terms, Wizards or Prophets? That is, do we see the physical future as constrained, such that we must limit man’s choices and opportunities (the Prophet vision), or unconstrained, such that technology will be able to advance all mankind (the Wizard vision)? Certainly, as Mann demonstrates, for the past century, the Prophets have gotten all the soapbox time, and been repeatedly proven wrong, while the Wizards have accomplished, well, wizardry. So if past performance is any predictor of future results, Faye’s trump card is worthless.

As far as the predicted megastate blocs, supposedly dictated by the nature of man, there is no particular reason to believe that this is in fact dictated by the nature of man, and Faye does not deign to offer us any. Certainly, empires have arisen many times in history, and just as many have fallen. Why this should be the natural end state of man, though,

rather than, say, Francis Fukuyama's liberal democracy, is not clear. And as far as the ninety-percent peasantry under the ten-percent god-men, we will get back to that.

Running parallel to these concrete predictions are a series of philosophical thoughts about the correct approach to the future. These ramble quite a bit, but contain pithy thoughts, like "Winning the favour of the Left is a delight for the [traditional] Right." Truer words were never spoken; just ask Jonah Goldberg. Faye attacks spectator sports as stupid and the opium of the people, which is also entirely true, though his objection is ideological, that spectator sports are neutral events that have no real impact on anyone's life, which society's masters are "charging with [false] meaning" in order to "infantilise consciences and conceal social problems and the failings of politics." Maybe, but given that spectator sports have been popular throughout history (see, e.g., Byzantine chariot races), this seems a bit overblown. My objection to spectator sports, as I have always said, is that they celebrate the accomplishments of others, while I want to celebrate the accomplishments of me. That's a narrower objection.

Faye also talks much about French politics, including the National Front, which he admires but does not endorse its platform. He discusses how a revolutionary party should act when seizing power in a crisis. He criticizes Carl Schmitt for focusing only on identifying who the enemy is, when identifying who one's friends are is just as important—by which he means "one's folk," by which he mean one's ethnic compatriots, so we are back to that. He offers sonorous summations: "The true politician is an artist, a drafter of projects, a sculptor of history. He is someone who can immediately answer the questions: who is part of my people and what are their values? Who are its enemies and how can we fight and defeat them? And finally: What destiny should we choose to acquire power and carve out a place for ourselves in history?"

At the highest level of generality, Faye calls for "radical," "revolutionary" thought that "must necessarily be non-dogmatic and must constantly reposition itself." No compromise is permitted, though, and "effective radical thought" also requires recognizing "*heterotelia*, which is to say the fact that ideas do not necessarily yield the expected results. Effective thought acknowledges its own approximate character. One sails by sight, changing course depending on the wind, yet always

knowing where he is going and what port he is trying to reach." Again, I find this entirely compelling, divorced from Faye's actual program. It is the approach of all successful revolutionaries (see, e.g., Lenin), and something not found among today's American conservatives, who are fighting a Left that has followed this approach for fifty years, and is following it today. William F. Buckley and his crowd brought a knife to a gun fight, which is why their successors have now been successfully purged from the structures of real power in society.

Back to Faye's concrete predictions. Where we end up will be "archaism," by which he means a non-specific, but pre-Christian, form of societal organization. This will mean "visible and structuring social hierarchies; the separation of gender roles; the de-individualization of marriage; [and] the prestige of the warrior caste," along with much else along the same lines, the core thread being the rejection of "the erroneous idea of individual emancipation promoted by the philosophy of the Enlightenment." These values "see man for what he is, a *zoon politikon* ('social and political animal within a communitarian city') rather than what he is not—an asexual and isolated atom possessing universal and pseudo-rights. Concretely, these anti-individualist values enable the attainment of self-realization, active solidarity, and social peace. . . ." Again, this vision has something to recommend itself, in the abstract, certainly as against the dying Enlightenment, choking on its own vomit.

But this is far from a passive society. It is aggressively "voluntaristic," because that is in the European nature, and will create "vast plans that represent the anticipated representation of a constructed future." In other words, maglev trains and rockets to Mars. (Notably, Faye has nothing to say about the philosophical drives of the other prophesied megastate blocs, other than to say the Indians refuse to teach any history to anyone, for some reason.) Not change for the sake of change, but "planning for the future [through] work in motion." We are not returning to actual archaism; rather, "futurism must be tempered with archaism." It is a question of "simultaneously embracing ultra-science and a return to traditional solutions that date back into the mists of time." "The fallacious idea of progress must be replaced with movement."

And what is the ultra-science? Well, yes, it's maglev and rockets. But it's also human-animal chimeras that will serve us, or rather the ten percent, as slaves. It's also "decerebrated humans," that is, brainless

men, who will be grown to give us organs. And there we go, off the rails, tangled in the poisonous weeds again. What Faye does not seem to grasp is that a society with pre-Christian values but the technology of the future, would not be an enhanced Rome, but a boot stamping on a human face, forever. Without the moderating influence of Christianity, technology will be used for ill, and a fatal ill, as can be seen by Europe's (and America's) current "anti-natalism," which Faye correctly diagnoses but the causes and mechanisms of which he ignores. Reading between the lines, Faye hopes that the reinvigorated European spirit will make everyone want to have children. But hope is not a plan, and that's what Faye offers.

And as to those not participating in ultra-science, the ninety percent? They have to live that way, Faye tells us, because there is not enough energy to go around. They will live on the steppes in "neo-feudal networks" (though even the cities will be much depopulated, and the globe as a whole very reduced in population), but they will be happy to co-exist underneath the god-men, because they will remember the failed attempt to at globally extending industrial society as a failure, as a dark age, and "these neo-traditional communities will be pervaded by strong irrational or religious ideologies sanctioning their mode of life." In other words, the priests will keep them down. The end result of this sounds more like the Matt Damon movie *Elysium*, where the poor masses live on Earth while the rich live on an orbital habitat. Spoiler alert: it doesn't end well.

Faye ends the book with a science fiction short story, a "day in the life" of a high official in the "Eurosiberian Confederation," in 2073. It's not really a story, since there is no plot; it is simply didactic exposition, message fiction. The protagonist is one Dimitri Lenidovich Oblomov, a man past middle age, but with a life expectancy of 105. (Faye is very much of the mind that Russia will save Europe, and the Archeofuturist Europe of tomorrow is Russia combined with Europe. In fact, by 2073, Europe has been saved by Russia invading Europe, killing and expelling the Muslim invaders.) Oblomov is traveling in the space of a few hours, in a maglev train in a vacuum tube (hello, Elon Musk!), from Brittany to eastern Siberia, where he will spend two weeks with his wife and family. Along the way, he meet and talks to other people, all members of the technological elite, discussing in an expository way how global society

is structured (which is, of course, along Archeofuturist lines) and the history of how it got there. We are treated to sentences like “In contrast to the catastrophic practices of the old world, and in agreement with slogan number 65 of Vitalist Constructivism (‘Like the Eagle in search of prey, politicians make decisions quickly because everything is urgent’), [Oblomov] reacted quickly. . . .” He also passes by, and under, happy peasants trudging along with their flocks, and similar emanations from Tolstoy. It’s somewhat clever. It does reinforce Faye’s vision in the reader’s mind. But it’s partially ruined by its creepiness—Oblomov spends a good part of his time ogling hot women in their twenties, including his interlocutors, such as an aristocratic Indian student who happens to be on the train, along with ogling the hot holographic woman who is the interface to his personal computer. One gets the distinct impression that Oblomov is Faye himself, or how Faye would like to be, making ultra-important, instant executive decisions that affect a significant portion of the globe, while filled with the joy of youthful testosterone and the admiration of women. As opposed to who he is, an aging and bitter ugly Frenchman, of no real influence, surrounded by young Muslim men.

While it may sound from all this that I found this book worthless, that’s not true. My problem with this book is that it reflects too much of myself back to me for my own comfort. Looking into the abyss, and so forth. I think that it is time to break the world; Faye does too. I reject the Enlightenment; Faye does too. I want a revitalized West; Faye does too, and offers a specific path to that, where I have none at all. It really frankly disturbs me that several times Faye says things that I know the derivation of as basically Nietzschean, but which seem obviously correct. “The essence of history is both real and unrealistic, for its motor is comprised both of fuel—will to power—and combustive—the power of will. Those who out of weakness choose to give in when faced by disagreeable and coercive historical events should heed the words of William of Orange: ‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way.’” I am not sure I like what this commonality says about my own lines of thinking; maybe the (more) examined life is worth living after all.

True, we part company entirely on the ethno-nationalism. And the other big point of difference is in what that technological future looks like. Leaving aside the inherent immorality of it, I reject out of hand the idea that society could, should, or needs to segment into those who

benefit from the technology of tomorrow and those who are, in effect, serfs. First, I do not think it is practical to think that any large group of people is going to allow themselves to be serfs, with their children dying and themselves starving if the rains fail, while their betters zoom through the skies. Even if they think it's preferable to the past dark age of turmoil, and even if their priests tell them this is the way it should be, I just don't think it'd ever work. It would only work in a repressive state that clamped down on the knowledge of how the ten percent lived. Such as, say, North Korea. That's not a great example to live by.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, I disagree that we can't have it all. Whatever may be the flaws in his political thinking, Steven Pinker is right that the material world has gotten and is continuing to get a lot better than it used to be. (The non-material world is a different story.) This is the result of one thing, and one thing only—the technology created by the West, and gifted to the rest of the world. Faye is, again in Charles Mann's vision, a Prophet, a harbinger of the doom that never arrives, like the Club of Rome, William Vogt, the Progressive eugenicists of the mid-twentieth century, and all their pessimistic, anti-human ilk. Faye fails totally to demonstrate his claim that the world cannot keep getting better through technology. He waves his hands and shrieks about environmental collapse, but that is something that is also getting better, not worse. We are bombarded lately, for example, with cries that the world's oceans are drowning in waste plastic. They may be (or they may not be—most of such claims are ultimately shown to be false or grossly exaggerated), but what the shriekers don't like to admit is that essentially all of that plastic comes from Third World slum dwellers dumping their plastic into rivers. The richer a country is, the better it treats the environment, and the better its environment gets. Wealth, not constriction, is the solution to environmental woes. And any solution to cheap energy, such as practical fusion, would make permanent total global wealth possible (for those societies capable of receiving the gifts of the West), obviating Faye's entire logical progression.

Third, and more philosophically, Faye's idea that archaism can produce science is disproved by history. It is no accident that the archaic world produced no scientific progress—only one society has ever done produced modern science, namely pre-Enlightenment Christendom. But Faye hates that society; he regards Christianity as an emasculated

slave religion (like his high priest, Nietzsche) and could not credit any Christian society with the will to create the future. The reality is, though, that almost certainly if we reach a futurist cornucopia, it will be because of a renewal of the spirit of the seventeenth-century West, where, as has been said of Hernán Cortes, he “conquered Mexico for God, gold, and glory, and only a mundane imagination would distinguish these impulses, for they were one and the same,” not because the Vikings have been reborn.

Now, it is true that I am unsure whether a society where everyone is rich can be a virtuous society with the drive to seize the future, to go to Mars and the stars. Maybe, just as it seems to be true that rich societies don't suffer from coups, rich societies don't accomplish anything (not dissimilar to tropical societies, which universally lack drive, apparently due to unearned plenty). Certainly, this was the view of many late Roman writers, and of many others through the ages. Wealth, perhaps, necessarily implies decadence, ennui, and enervation. Maybe wealth and advanced science will always be used for ill, and cannot be constrained by virtue. Maybe too much technology will always be dehumanizing. I don't have a solution for these possible problems, other than that since I think the world must be broken, or break, before the renewal, perhaps that fracture will reinvigorate the West, and thread the needle to reach a wealthy, futuristic, yet virtuous and striving society.