

A Voluntaryist Completes the Proust Questionnaire

"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing sporadically, by Verbal Vol.

For the sake of brevity and expedition, I have previously published the answers to the first half of the questionnaire. The first 18 questions are answered at [this link](#). I now return to complete the set.

Remember the premise, to wit: This would be a good architecture for an interview with a very objective voluntaryist. So I have put myself into the personification of a scholarly, principled, individualist voluntaryist to imagine how honest answers to these questions might look.

On we go:

19. What do you consider your greatest achievement?

In the time period immediately following the 9/11/2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, I began my conversion to formal non-statist principles and philosophy. I knew I had been sorely disappointed in the choices presented to Americans on national election days, I knew our country was in the direst of straits, and I was discouraged with the shallowness of public discourse. I was thrashing around for a new concept, but I became gradually aware of a strong streak of individualism that ran in my veins. I knew that we could not return to the lack of direction of the prior administration, but I was disgusted with the dogged determination to go in the wrong direction by the then current administration. I read both *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, by Ayn Rand, before the end of the year. Then I became aware of Sheldon Richman, Robert Higgs, Frédéric Bastiat, Harry Browne, and Ron Paul. By the time we had begun raining shock and awe on Iraq, I was a full-fledged anarcho-capitalist. My development continued until 2013, when I began writing for EVC, wherein I learned the higher reaches of my path, Voluntaryism.

20. If you were to die and come back as a person or a thing, what would it be?

I am not sure that I could continue to live in the confusion that plagues humanity about how to be free. I would need to simplify. At this writing, the life that appeals to me is that of the migratory water fowl. I would hope to keep, on an elemental level, a memory of how treacherous and deadly are *homo sapiens*.

21. Where would you most like to live?

I would move to New Zealand immediately, if the ones who are there had not clamped down on newcomers. This is the conundrum. Places that are free need to resort to statist

coercion to remain small enough to be free, thus being less free.

I would also like to live in Ireland in the day of the *Tuatha*. But my lack of access to a time machine is problematic here. Ireland poses a hard truth — any place that has already reached a zenith is currently on another reach of its trajectory.

Perhaps it is best to grow where one is planted, to attain freedom in the spirit, wherever you are.

22. What is your most treasured possession?

Myself. My individuality. My space and time in the Universe.

23. What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

War is the most devastating Horseman of the Apocalypse.

24. What is your favorite occupation?

If one is lucky, one cannot tell the difference between one's vocation and one's avocation. Therefore, the best occupation is living your unique life. You can share this unique experience with any 1-to-1 relationship you devise. Don't be a leader, and don't be a follower. If your story influences others, so it may. But don't recruit. Don't intervene.

25. What is your most marked characteristic?

I am an individualist — so, not only am I unique, I am made up of a unique set of experiences. One is all of the stations in space-time one has ever filled. One is all the dynamic action you have ever done. If you have lived in a dozen places, you are made up of those places. If you have visited a thousand places, your qualities draw character from those places. Whatever unique combination of music you have ever listened to, you wear it as a badge. If you begin to list experiences you have had, ask the people in the room to hold up a hand if they too have had that experience. You will see many hands with each telling. But if you ask them to hold up a hand on the first case, but ask them to lower that hand as soon as you name a case that they do not share, at some point you will be the only person in the room who has shared all of the experiences. You are 1-of-a-kind.

26. What do you most value in your friends?

I find value in a friend who has befriended me voluntarily, not to become a parasite on some other association I have cultivated. I am more than happy to introduce friends to my other associations, but they should accept me and the association as voluntary acquisitions.

27. Who are your favorite writers?

In the fiction world, Mark Twain, Robert Penn Warren, Albert Camus, Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Heinlein, Ross Macdonald, Leo Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll, Cormac McCarthy, and Michael Connelly. For nonfiction, I love John McPhee, Bill Bryson, Frédéric Bastiat, David Hume, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, H. L. Mencken, Lysander Spooner, Ludwig von Mises, Murray Rothbard, and Robert Higgs. In poetry, I admire Homer, William Shakespeare, Robert Frost, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Donne, T. S. Eliot, and William Butler Yeats. This is to name but too few.

28. Who is your hero of fiction?

Heroes began to acquire clay feet in the 60s. I will have to refer here to protagonists. Jack Burns in *Lonely are the Brave*, Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Cool Hand Luke, in the book and movie of the same name. If the thread among these characters is not apparent, let me just say that each made a difficult choice, and suffered for it, in the face of the status quo.

29. Which historical figure do you most identify with?

I often identify those who were villains of history. They far outweigh the admirable figures. It takes principle and good luck to make it through a fulsome life with nothing to go awry. Those who came closest might be Gandhi, Blaise Pascal, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, John Harrison, John von Neumann, Jesus, and Lao Tzu. This list contains no politicians, officeholders, conquerors, or rulers.

30. Who are your heroes in real life?

Ted Williams, the baseball nonpareil who stood apart as the greatest hitter in the game, without compromising his stellar individualism, would be first. Others would be Andrew Carnegie, Larry McMurry, Mark Twain, James B. Eads, Theodore Judah, Socrates, and Plato. This list contains no politicians, officeholders, conquerors, or rulers.

31. What are your favorite names?

Alphonse and Gaston, Punch and Judy, Frick and Frack, Dog and Pony, Gargantua and Pantagruel, Joe and Frank Hardy, Rockford, Hannibal Lecter, Edmund Dantes, Dashiell Hammett, Sam Spade, Atticus Finch, Chicago, Auckland, Boston, Great Lakes, Torremolinas, Kentucky, Waddy, Derby, Porkpie, Ploughman, Private Eye, Yeats, Shakespeare, Donne, Robert Frost, Zoroaster, Laugharne, Knobs (controls, hills, door handles), Dorothy Parker, Emily Dickinson, Sherlock Holmes, Cate Blanchett, Evangeline Lilly, Jacques Tati, Hector Berlioz, Olympics, Liechtensteinerklamme, Lamborghini, Hupmobile, Gran Prix, ...

32. *What is it that you most dislike?*

Short lists are objectionable because they imply that there are only a few choices, when 7 billion are available.

33. *What is your greatest regret?*

I quit having regrets when I became a voluntaryist. I keep only the regret of not becoming a voluntaryist sooner.

34. *How would you like to die?*

I would not like to die. I want to live at least long enough to upload the vastness that has been my life to a data store. I have no illusions that everybody would like my life, but there could be some who draw something from it.

35. *What is your motto?*

He can't even run his own life, I'll be damned if he'll run mine. — Jonathan Edwards
— or —

Always do right. This Will Gratify Some People and Astonish the Rest. — Mark Twain
— or —

For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong. — H. L. Mencken
— or —

Ockham's Razor: the simplest explanation that fits all of the facts is usually the correct one.
— or —

Therefore, send not to know. For whom the bell tolls, It tolls for thee. — John Donne