

A Call for Counterfactuals

One of the most frustrating things in the world is the inability to definitively prove what *might be* if conditions were different.

It's intellectually prudent to avoid making claims about what cannot be proven or disproven. But action requires more than sound logic. Action requires imagination.

Fear of the unknown is so powerful that people will tolerate horrific knowns rather than step into the unknown. I could tell a slave that freedom is better, but I can't prove that their life would have been better had they been free all along, or that it will be better in the future if they escape.

If I only allow myself to make provable claims, I can't convince them to attempt freedom at all.

Great actions are motivated by imagination. Grounded in logic, yes. But beyond the provable alone. If we can't explore what might have been, and what might be, we have no reason to change.

That's why sci-fi is good.

We need more counterfactuals.

How much global prosperity would there be today if World War II had never happened? If Communists hadn't murdered millions? How many geniuses were killed by the state before inventing the next big thing? What would the economy look like absent central bank money manipulation? It's easy to see the most economically free countries are by far the most prosperous. But what would they look like if they had been totally free? How much would each individual in your neighborhood change if taxes were zero? What ripple effects would this have on the structure of productions? What might the true market interest rate be? How much further ahead would tech have advanced absent crippling regulation and diversion towards weapons of war?

It's worthwhile to imagine in detail various alternative scenarios, past, present, and future.

You can't prove it, but the process of dreaming it will open your eyes to opportunity and motivate action.