

## Living Narratives

### 1. Capitalist Prosperity story

*For most of human history, the world's material production was mired in oppressive and inefficient economic systems such as primitive communalism, slavery, feudalism, mercantilism, and more recently, socialism and communism. In eighteenth-century Europe and America, however, enterprising men hit upon the keys to real prosperity: private property rights, limited government, the profit motive, capital investment, the free market, rational contracts, technological innovation—in short, economic freedom. The capitalist revolution has produced more wealth, social mobility, and well-being than any other system could possibly imagine or deliver. Nevertheless, capitalism is continually beset by utopian egalitarians, government regulators, and anti-entrepreneurial freeloaders who foolishly seek to fetter its dynamic power with heavy-handed state controls. All who care for a world of freedom and prosperity will remain vigilant in defense of property rights, limited government, and the free market.*

### 2. Scientific Enlightenment Story

*For most of human history, people have lived in the darkness of ignorance and tradition, driven by fear, believing in superstitions. Priests and lords preyed on such ignorance, and life was wearisome and short. Ever so gradually, however, and often at great cost, inventive men have endeavored better to understand the natural world around them. Centuries of such inquiry eventually led to a marvelous Scientific Revolution that radically transformed our methods of understanding nature. What we know now as a result is based on objective observation, empirical fact, and rational analysis. With each passing decade, science reveals increasingly more about the earth, our bodies, and our minds. We have come to possess the power to transform nature and ourselves. We can fortify health, relieve suffering, and prolong life. Science is close to understanding the secret of life and maybe eternal life itself. Of course, forces of ignorance, fear, irrationality, and blind faith still threaten the progress of science. But they must resist at all costs. For unfettered science is our only hope for true enlightenment and progress.*

### 3. American Experiment Story

*Once upon a time, our ancestors lived in an Old World where they were persecuted for religious beliefs and oppressed by established aristocracies. Land was scarce, freedoms denied, and futures bleak. But then brave and visionary men like Columbus opened up a New World, and our freedom-loving forefathers crossed the ocean to carve out of a wilderness a new civilization. Through bravery, ingenuity, determination, and goodwill, our forebears forged a way of life where men govern themselves, believers worship in freedom, and where anyone can grow rich and become president. This America is genuinely new, a clean break from the past, a historic experiment in freedom and democracy standing as a city on a hill shining a beacon of hope to guide a dark world into a future of prosperity and liberty. It deserves our honor, our devotion, and possibly the commitment of our very lives for its defense.*

#### 4. *Progressive Socialism Story*

*In the most primitive days, before the rise of private property, humans lived in communities of material sharing and equality. But for most of subsequent human history, with the rise of private property, the world's material production has been mired in oppressive and exploitative economic systems, such as slavery, feudalism, mercantilism, and capitalism. The more history has progressed, the more ownership of the means of production have become centralized, and the more humanity has suffered deprivations and injustice. As the calamitous contradictions of capitalism began to intensify in the nineteenth century, however, a revolutionary vanguard emerged who envisioned a society of fraternity, justice, and equality. They proclaimed the abolition of private property, the socialization of productions, and the distribution of goods not according to buying power but according to need. Right-wing tycoons and magnates who have everything to lose to the cause of justice fight against the socialist movement with all their power and wealth. But the power of workers in solidarity for justice will eventually achieve the utopia of prosperity and equality. Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!*

#### 5. *Expressive Romantic Narrative*

*Once upon a time, people were free to experience the exhilarating power of nature, to assert their primitive selves, the shout raucously, to dance wildly, to fight hard, to love harder. They were noble, authentic, primal, unrestrained. The encroachments of civilization, however, have gradually domesticated humanity, smothering our authentic, primeval selves under blankets of repressive and formal rationalities. Modern people hardly know any more who they are, what they feel, how to express their will and passions. Only a few free thinkers have broken through the suffocating restraint, and at great cost, but they point the way to authentic life and self-expression. They flaunt convention. They walk the less trod roads. They get in touch with their deepest selves. They beat drums. They splatter paint and scrawl poetry. They run naked through forests. They dance in the rain. They party wildly, altering states of consciousness. They are not bound by the bourgeois mores and manners that extinguish the human spirit. They fear not the Dionysian orgy, nor violent rebellion, nor bohemian isolation. They are troubled souls on wild and lonely quests, yet are society's only hope for authentic and expressive living, perhaps even for redemption itself through pain and art.*

### 6. *Liberal Progress Story*

*Once upon a time, the vast majority of human persons suffered in societies and social institutions that were unjust, unhealthy, repressive, and oppressive. These traditional societies were reprehensible because of their deep-rooted inequality, exploitation, and irrational traditionalism—all of which made life very unfair, unpleasant, and short. But the noble human aspirations for autonomy, equality, and prosperity struggled mightily against the forces of misery and oppression, and eventually succeeded in establishing modern, liberal, democratic, capitalist, welfare societies. While modern social conditions hold the potential to maximize the individual freedom and pleasure of all, there is much work to be done to dismantle the powerful vestiges of inequality, exploitation, and repression. This struggle for the good society in which individuals are equal and free to pursue their self-defined happiness is the one mission truly worth dedicating one's life to achieving.*

### 7. *Ubiquitous Egoism Story*

*Once upon a time, people believed that human self-centeredness was a moral flaw needing correction through ethical and spiritual discipline toward self-sacrificial love for neighbor and commitment to the common good. Even today, many people believe this. But as noble as it sounds, more perceptive and honest thinkers have come to see the cold, hard, simple fact that, beneath all apparent expressions of love and altruism, all human motives and concerns are really self-interested. In fact, notions such as love and self-sacrifice themselves have been tools of manipulation and advantage in the hands of Machiavellian actors. Idealists persist in affirming moral commitment to the welfare of others, but they are naïve and misguided. Truly honest and courageous people who have intellectually “come of age” are increasingly disabusing themselves of such illusions and learning to be satisfied with the substitute idealism of helping to build the best society possible, given the constraints of ubiquitous rational egoism.*

### 8. *Community Lost Story*

*Once upon a time, folk lived together in local, face-to-face communities where we knew and took care of one another. Life was simple and sometimes hard. But we lived in harmony with nature, laboring honestly at the plough and in handcraft. Life was securely woven in homespun fabrics of organic, integrated culture, faith, and tradition. We truly knew who we were and felt deeply for our land, our kin, our customs. But then a dreadful thing happened. Folk community was overrun by the barbarians of modern industry, urbanization, rationality, science, fragmentation, anonymity, transience, and mass production. Faith began to erode, social trust dissipated, and folk customs vanish. Work became alienating, authentic feeling repressed, neighbors strangers, and life standardized and rationalize. Those who knew the worth of simplicity, authentic feeling, nature, and custom resisted the vulgarities and uniformities of modernity. But all that remains today are tattered vestiges of a world we have lost. The task of those who see clearly now is to memorialize and celebrate folk community, mourn its ruin, and resist and denounce the depravities of modern, scientific rationalism that would kill the Human Spirit.*

**Elements of your Narrative:**

<b>Story Element</b>	
Setting	
Problem	
Solution	
Villains	
Heroes	
Threats	

**Climate change – according to your narrative**

Prompt:

*Increased carbon dioxide emissions from scientifically advanced modern societies have substantially warmed the Arctic, leading to sea-ice decline, disrupting the Arctic ecosystem and the indigenous people that rely on it. Through collective government action, we can curb emissions to right this injustice, and stave off a larger disaster.*

Response from your narrative (also, underline any words/phrases in prompt that resonate):