

THE CHANGE BOOK

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WHAT IT'S ABOUT

This book is about change – from the small and seemingly insignificant changes in our day-to-day lives to the big and almost incomprehensible changes in world history. And it is about the nagging feeling many of us have that we ought to be challenging the status quo. But if we want to change things we have to understand them first.

Why do we have less and less time? Why has everything become so complicated? Is democracy the right political system? Who governs the world? Why are we unfaithful? Why has air travel become so cheap?

For this book we talked to experts, studied theories and cross-examined existing knowledge. We wanted to understand, make sense of – and present – some of today's fundamental upheavals. The result is a visual travel guide through our time, a compilation of practical models, concrete theories and bold thought experiments that explain our world. Of course, the fifty-two theories in this book are only a selection. Some are more serious than others. And none of the theories are explored in depth: they are food for thought that we hope will whet your appetite to find out more.

This book is an attempt to present complex ideas succinctly and in layman's terms. You have to limit yourself to explain something. So don't expect academic tracts or state-of-the-art infographics. Instead, look forward to surprisingly simple explanations of our inexplicable world – and to having some of your preconceived ideas radically challenged.

WHY MODELS?

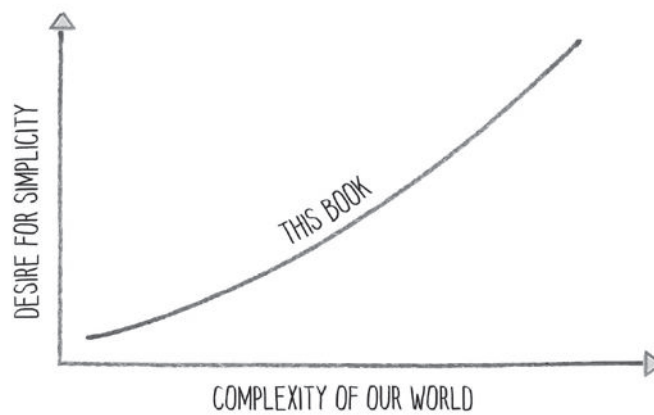
We tend to perceive things first in images, then in words. We remember pictures better than text and are more likely to recognise patterns in images than in sentences. Which is why science often attempts to explain highly complex ideas using simple formulae. But as we set out to write this book, we found that not every idea we wanted to explore had an existing model. So we collaborated with the Norwegian designer Dag Grødal, whose day job is to visualise the change processes of a big Scandinavian bank and developed our own visual models. These models are illustrations of our time. They attempt to explain in images ideas that cannot be grasped in words.

In our quest for models to explain our world in terms of change, it soon became clear that we would have to revise our own concept of change. Contrary to what change management would have us believe, change does not imply a temporary transition from one state to another. The idea of *being* has to be replaced by the notion of *becoming*. This academic term describes the paradoxical simultaneity of stagnation and change.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Borrowing from the French philosopher Michel Foucault, we would like our book to be used as a kind of toolbox. The models are folding rules, screwdrivers, hammers, drills and spirit levels that you can use to measure, unscrew, modify and reassemble your world. You can open the box, take out individual sentences or models and use them as tools to break up your ideas of the world into their different components – including the ideas from which this book emerged.

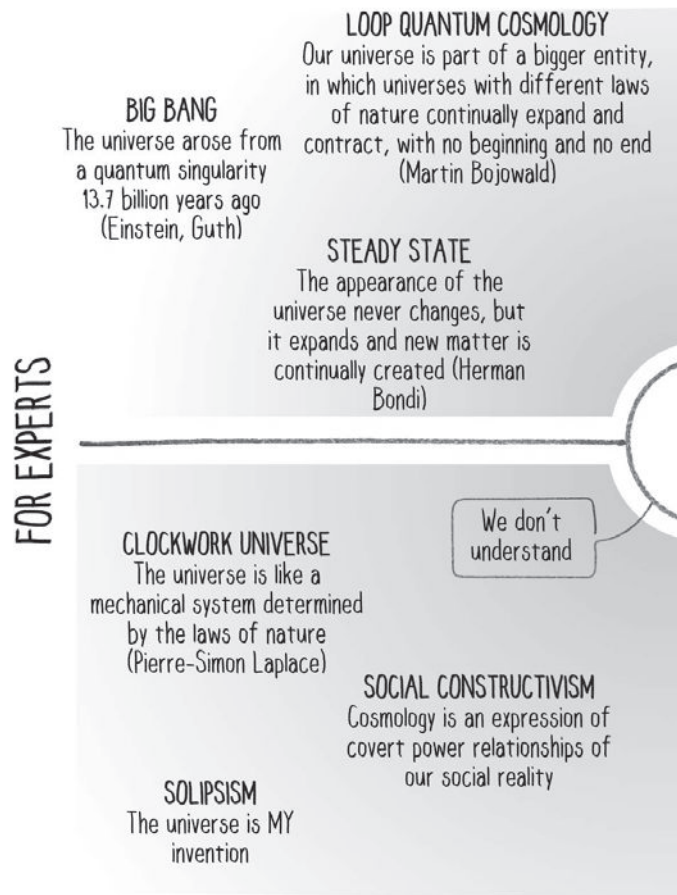
There is nothing that can't be explained.



EXPLAINING OUR WORLD



HOW IT ALL BEGAN



How the world came into being has always been a matter of heated debate. Which version do you agree with?

TOO COMPLEX

C. F. VON WEIZSÄCKER

Ur-alternatives:
Quantum-physical reality of the universe results from information-theoretical consequences of the subject-object dichotomy

STEPHEN HAWKING

Universe with imaginary time without a beginning or boundaries is a mathematical necessity from the yet-to-be-discovered 'theory of everything'

ANTHROPIC PRINCIPLE

The universe developed in such a way that conscious life-forms capable of understanding the universe could come into being

JOHN WHEELER

'It from bit': matter is an epiphenomenon of information

CREATION

God created heaven and earth (Old Testament)

MATRIX UNIVERSE

We are living within the computer simulation of a more advanced civilisation

INDIAN COSMOLOGY

The universe is 'uncreated', it moves in endless cycles (Buddhism)

KALEVALA

The universe was always there (Finnish mythology)

FOR ALL

TOO SIMPLE

WHAT HAPPENS IF NOTHING HAPPENS ANYMORE?

'What is the engine of history?' There is a raft of theories that deal directly or indirectly with this question.

Thomas Hobbes believed in the survival instinct, Adam Smith in self-interest, Karl Marx in the class struggle. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel said the engine that led us from primeval tribal society through serfdom to democracy was the 'struggle for recognition'. According to his philosophy, historical development is about the recognition of the individual. History ends in a state without political contradictions in which the human desire for recognition is satisfied: in the liberal democratic state. (Karl Marx's approach was similar but the development he described had a different aim: a communist and classless society, which is not based on the principle of recognition but on redistribution.) Hegel believed the end of history had been reached in 1806 when Napoleon defeated Prussia in the Battle of Jena, which signified the triumph of the French Revolution over the aristocracy. Friedrich Nietzsche was also influenced by Hegel. He called a person who received recognition in the Hegelian sense 'the last man': 'Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same ... whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse ... "We have invented happiness," say the last men, and they blink! In the 1990s the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama seized the notion of the end of history and proclaimed that it had materialised with the end of the Cold War since only one system had survived: liberal capitalism. He was severely criticised. His critics called the terrorist attacks of 11 September 'the end of the end of history'. Fukuyama was refuted most convincingly by the fact that great powers such as Russia and China remained authoritarian states which have little in

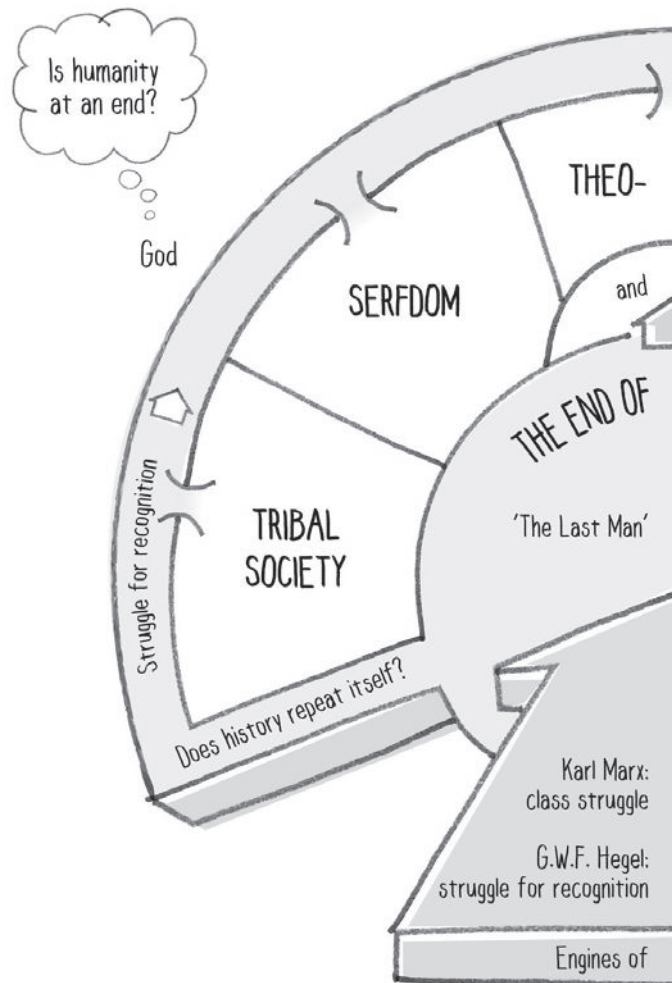
common with liberal democracy but still become ever richer thanks to capitalism.

Fukuyama defended his argument, pointing to the fact that even the recent financial crisis had not resulted in a fundamental change of the capitalist economic system and that even more recent revolutions like the uprisings in Arab countries were inspired by Western liberal values. In short: history is still at an end.

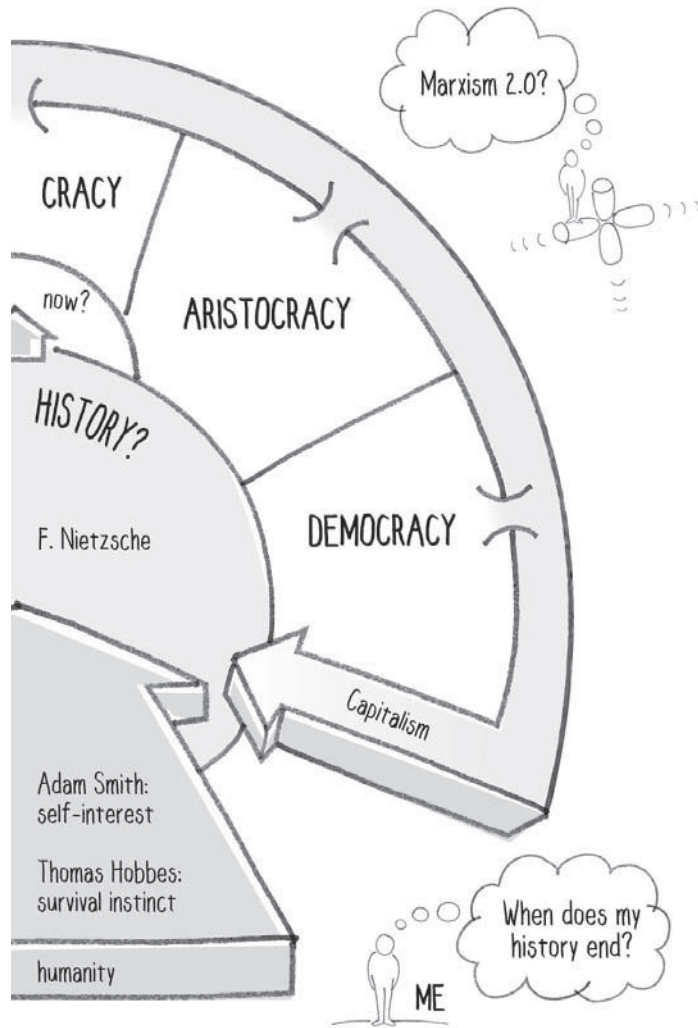
So, what next? Fukuyama predicted an age of boredom once history had ended. The terrible feeling that in a world without contradictions, in which everything is possible, nothing has value any more. What are the possible consequences?

- History could start again. Or repeat itself.
- A return to nationalism, as the experience of a crisis-ridden Europe indicates.
- A renaissance of communism.
- A step towards a new world order.

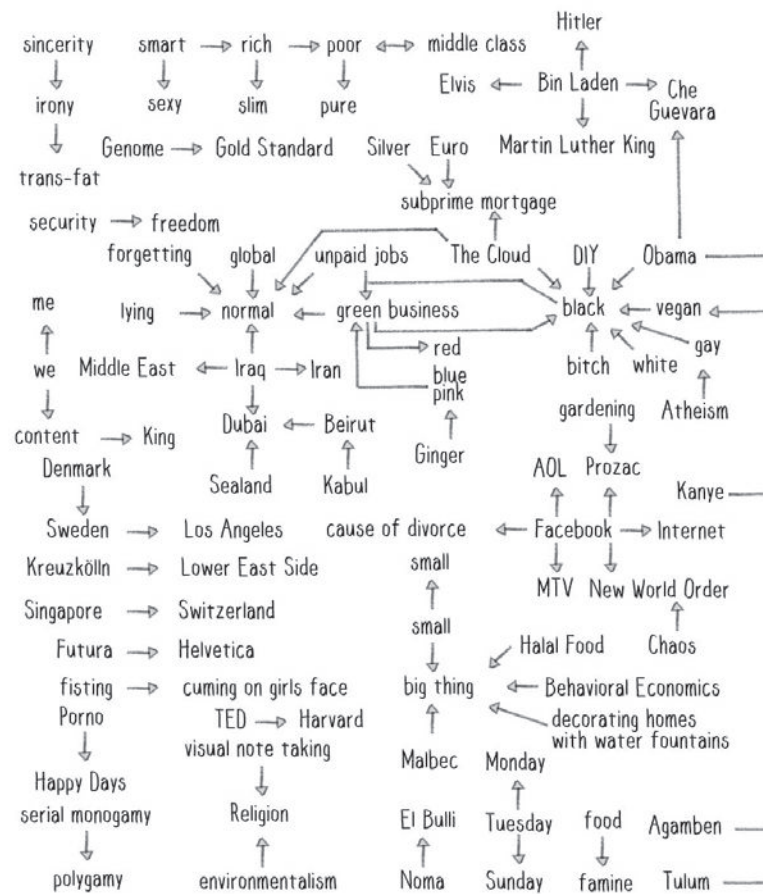
'It is completely wrong to imagine that the [Arab] revolutionaries want the same liberal capitalism that exists in the West. They want more!' *Slavoj Žižek*



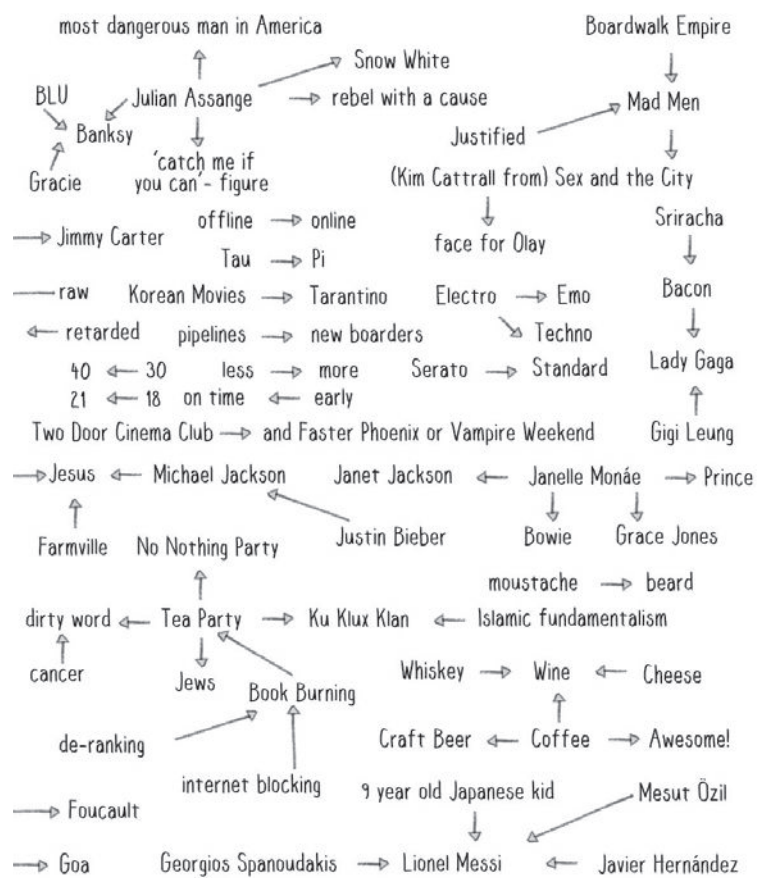
The model shows the stages of social development from the first tribes to democracy. What was the engine of this progress?



WHY X IS THE NEW Y



For this model, variations of the sentence 'x is the new ...' were typed into Google (e.g. 'Green is the new ...' or 'Bin Laden is the new ...').



Here is a random selection.