

The "New" Job Market

Challenges and Solutions

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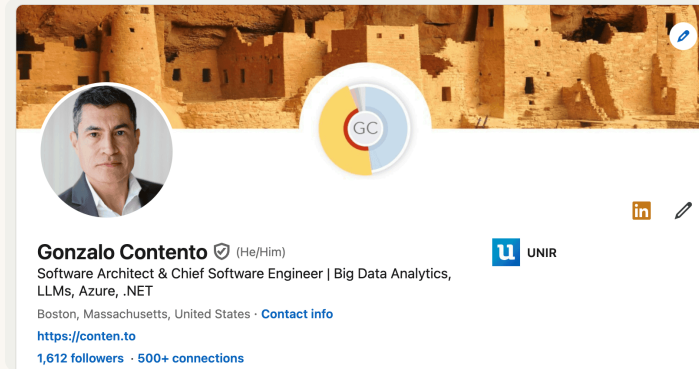
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us [...]

in short, the period was so far like the present period.

— Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)

Me?

- X: [@GonzaloContento](#)
- "PhD" from YouTube
- "Masters" from Instagram
- 30+ years in the industry



I'm not a Tourist

Robert Cornelius, 1839 — the first ever selfie.

publicdomainreview.org

Robert Cornelius' Self-Portrait: The First Ever "Selfie" (1839)



Do We Have a Problem?

"Houston, we've had a problem here."

Apollo 13, 1970 — the actual quote, in past tense. We tend to narrate the crisis *after* it has already begun.

Photo: NASA (public domain)



What you are *supposed* to care about

- **Sara Imari Walker** — how life emerges from non-life; Assembly Theory as a measure of complexity.
- **Edward Witten** — Morse theory, knot theory, and M-theory unifying the string landscape.
- **Nima Arkani-Hamed** — replacing space-time with more fundamental structures like quantum geometry.

Important, fascinating, and almost entirely orthogonal to what pays your rent.

What you *actually* care about

- **Vision** — of your future.
- **Jobs** — BS jobs, ghost jobs, "investment" jobs.
- **Money** — all kinds of it.
- **Social relevance** (not social appearances).
- **Emotional connection.**
- **Solidarity vs. handouts.**
- **Social mobility vs. meritocracy.**

*Die Masse der Menschen führt ein Leben
in stiller Verzweiflung.*

*Was man Ergebung nennt,
ist bestätigte Verzweiflung.*

— Henry David Thoreau

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.
What is called resignation is confirmed desperation.*

— Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854)

Market vs. Economy

We live in a **global market**, and we must compete not just to survive but to thrive — while the **economy** we actually live in is stubbornly local.

Your competition is in Bangalore and Bogotá.
Your rent is on your street.



Opportunity vs. Meritocracy

Historical & contemporary context —

- **Yuval Noah Harari** — *Sapiens; 21 Lessons for the 21st Century*
- **Richard Wolff** — *Understanding Capitalism; Solidarity*
- **Michael Sandel** — *The Tyranny of Merit*
- **Scott Galloway** — *The Algebra of Wealth*
- **Jeffrey Sachs** — sustainable development and international finance

Revenge of the Nerd

"If you build it, he will come."

— *Field of Dreams*

The quiet, patient builder has the advantage again.



Fictions! | Fictions?

- Stories
- Myths
- Agency
- Corporations
- LLMs

The things that move the world are almost never physically real.

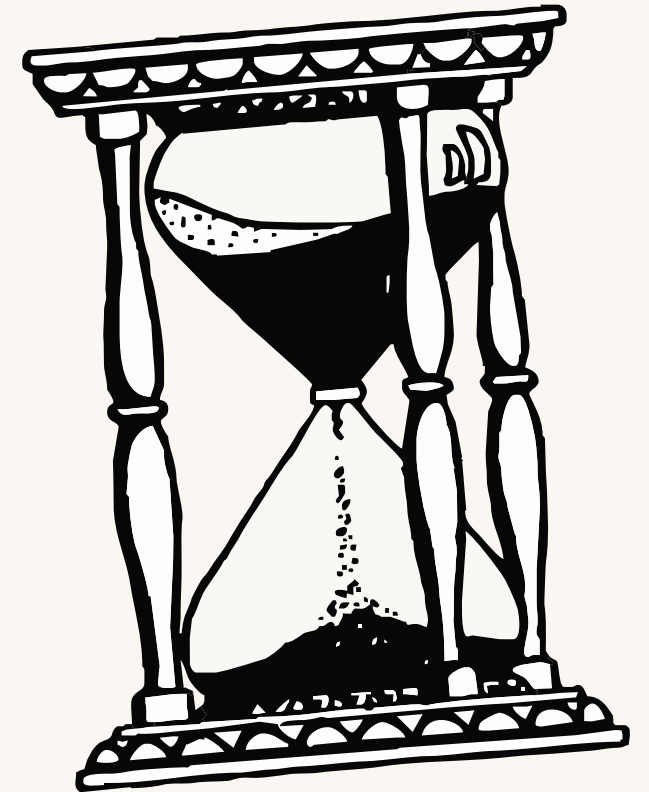


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Time is (isn't) on your side

*You will need not merely to invent new ideas and products — you will above all need to **reinvent yourself again and again.***

— Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens*



Perspective Matters

4.5 B years — Planet

6 M years — Apes / humans

70 K years — Fictive language

12 K years — Agriculture

~3000 BCE — Hinduism

~500 BCE — The Buddha

2 K years — Christianity

1440 — Gutenberg printing press

1760 — Industrial Revolution

1895 — Radio

1947 — Transistor

1971 — End of gold standard

1991 — World Wide Web

2007 — iPhone

2016 — DeepMind AlphaGo

2017 — Transformers (attention)

2019 — GPT-2: too dangerous to release

2020 — GPT-3: language at scale

2022 — ChatGPT: AI goes consumer

2023 — GPT-4, Claude: multimodal

2025 — Agents: from tools to actors

The 4Cs

An education based only on **Skills** vs. the **4Cs** —

- **Critical thinking**
- **Creativity**
- **Communication**
- **Collaboration**

[Partnership for 21st Century Learning \(P21, 2002\)](#)

If you do follow your bliss you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living... Follow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be.

— *Joseph Campbell* —

Five Hundred Dollars

"Mr. Bixby, will you teach me the river?"

"For what?"

"For anything you choose to ask."

"Well, sir — I'll take five hundred dollars."

"All right."

A pilot, in those days, was the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived in the earth.

— Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)

F.F. Palmer / Currier & Ives, *A Midnight Race on the Mississippi* (1860) — public domain



Things we need to let go

"Let go, Luke."

Entitlement. Titles. The idea that the last 30 years of rules will describe the next 30.

© Lucasfilm / Disney — *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)



Things we need to cultivate

Patience. Craft. Depth.

Like coffee on a Vietnamese plantation — the things worth having are slow, deliberate, and compounding.

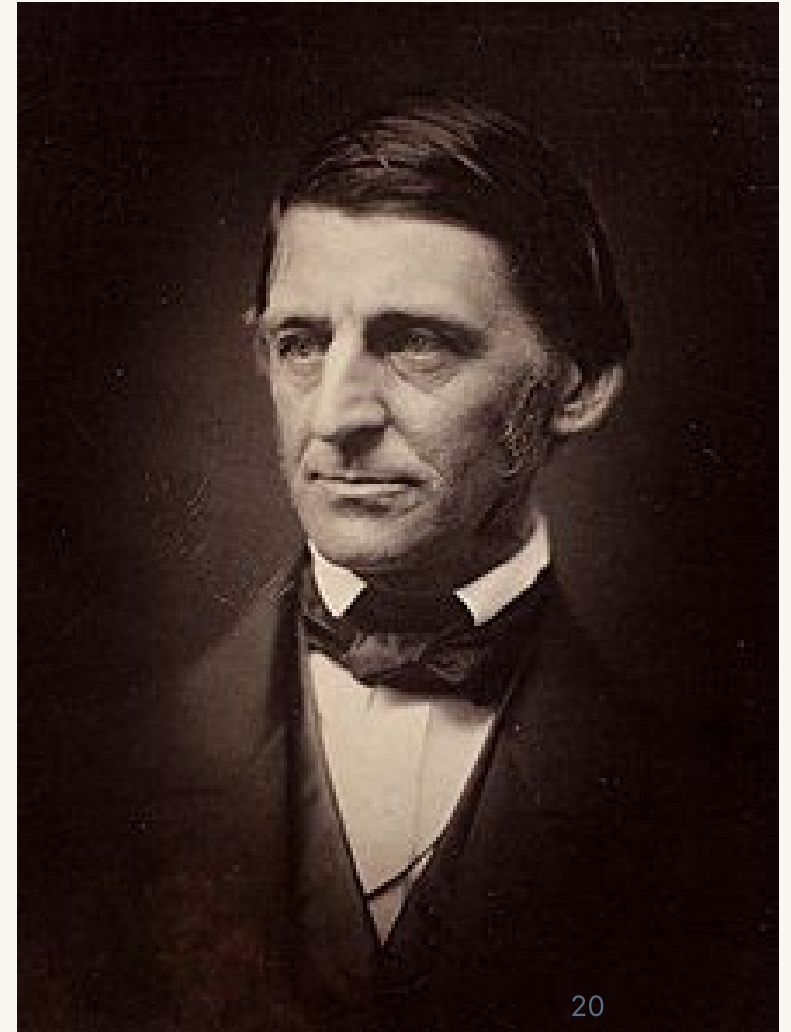


Self Reliance (Agency and AI)

"Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string."

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)*

In a world where the machines will do the averaging for you, the only durable signal is the part of yourself **nobody can replicate.**



Universal Basic Income (UBI)

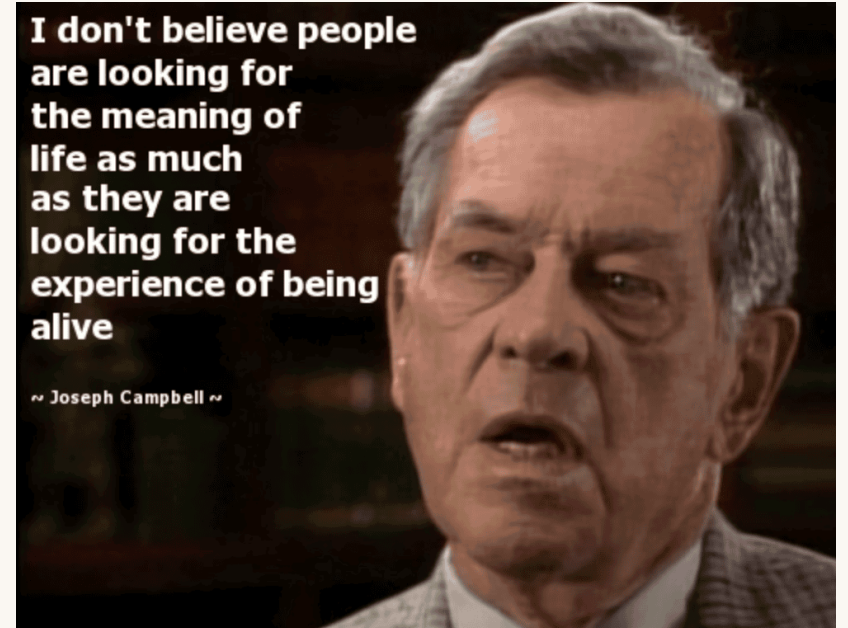
- **Why?** Hyper-automation, and humans' inability to keep up with AI.
- **How / what kind?** TBD.
- **Who / where?** ~67% of humanity — i.e. everywhere.
- **When?** TBD — but sooner than the techno-feudalists are saying.
- **CUBI** — *Conditional* UBI: tied to participation (education, community), not entitlement.



References



gc2.me/refs



Q&A

*We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

— Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses* (1842)