

# The "New" Job Market

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## *Challenges and Solutions*

Gonzalo Contento · [@GonzaloContento](#)



[gc2.me/njm](https://gc2.me/njm)

*Il regardait la cathédrale pendant quelques instants en silence, puis il étendit avec un soupir sa main droite vers le livre imprimé qui était ouvert sur sa table, et sa main gauche vers Notre-Dame, et il promena un regard triste de l'un à l'autre.*

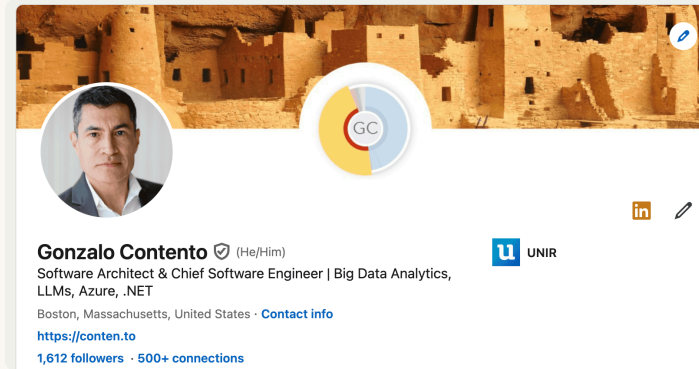
**« Hélas, dit-il, ceci tuera cela. »**

— Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831)

# Me?

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



# I'm not a Tourist

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Robert Cornelius, 1839 — the first ever selfie.

[publicdomainreview.org](http://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

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- **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

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- **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

*Elle avait lu Paul et Virginie et elle avait rêvé la maisonnette de bambous [...] Elle aurait voulu vivre dans quelque vieux manoir, comme ces châtelaines au long corsage, qui [...] passaient leurs jours, le coude sur la pierre et le menton dans la main, à regarder venir du fond de la campagne un cavalier à plume blanche qui galope sur un cheval noir.*

***Elle ne savait pas que, sur la terrasse des maisons, la pluie fait des lacs quand les gouttières sont bouchées.***

— *Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (1857)*

# 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

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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

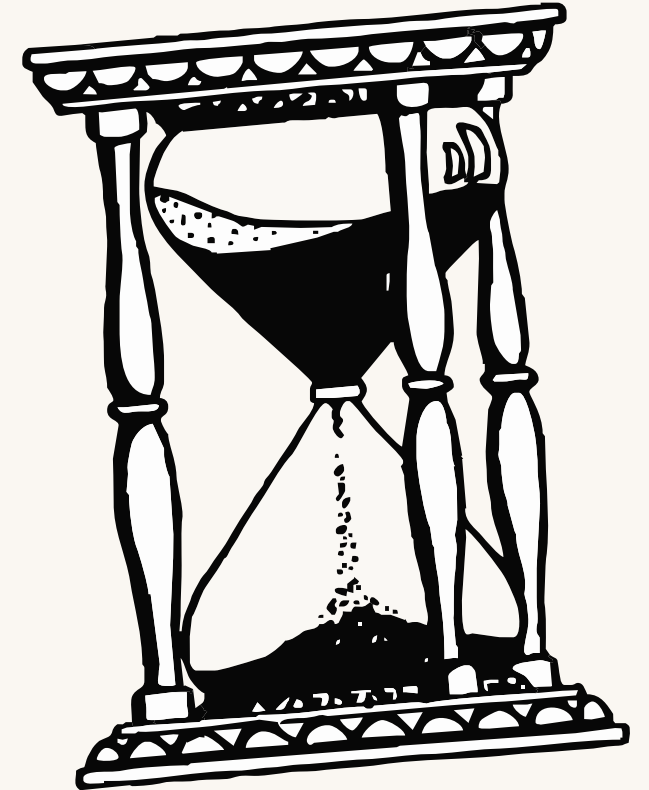
*The things that move the world are almost never physically real.*



# 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

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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

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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* —

# À nous deux maintenant !

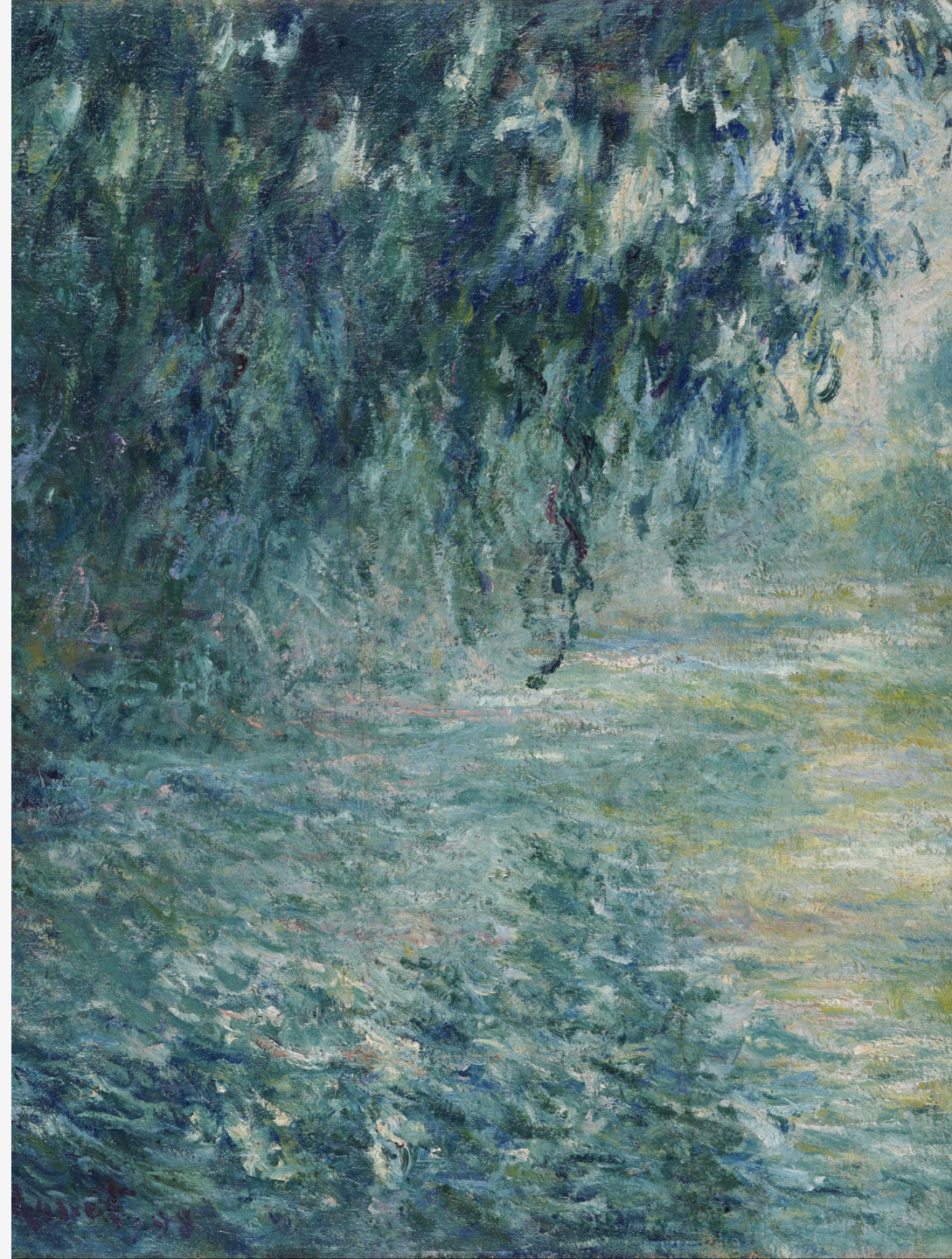
*Rastignac, resté seul, fit quelques pas vers le haut du cimetière et vit Paris tortueusement couché le long des deux rives de la Seine [...] Ses yeux s'attachèrent presque avidement entre la colonne de la place Vendôme et le dôme des Invalides ; là vivait ce beau monde dans lequel il avait voulu pénétrer.*

*Il lança sur cette ruche bourdonnante un regard qui semblait par avance en pomper le miel, et dit ces mots grandioses : « À nous deux maintenant ! »*

— Honoré de Balzac, Le Père Goriot (1835)

Claude Monet, *Morning on the Seine* (c. 1897)

— public domain



# Things we need to let go

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*"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

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**Patience. Craft. Depth.**

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



# Self Reliance (Agency and AI)

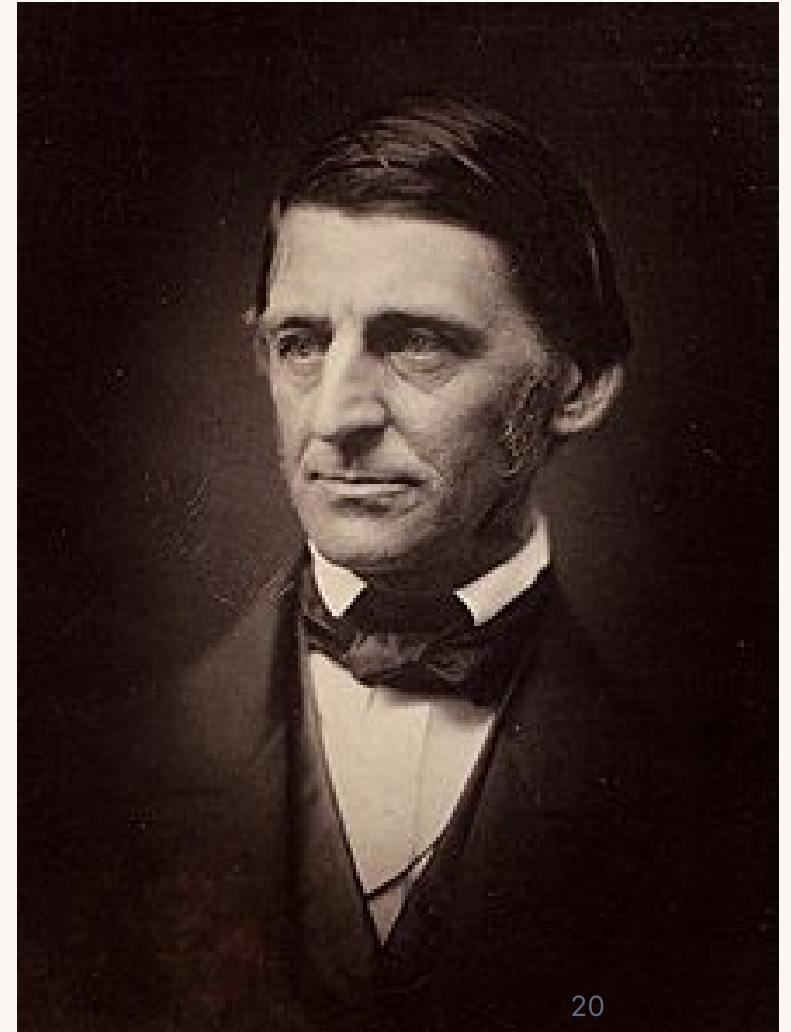
*"Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string."*

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)*

## Traduction sartrienne :

« *L'homme est condamné à être libre.* »

Dans un monde où les machines font la moyenne à votre place, le seul signal durable est la part de vous-même **que personne ne peut reproduire.**



# 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.

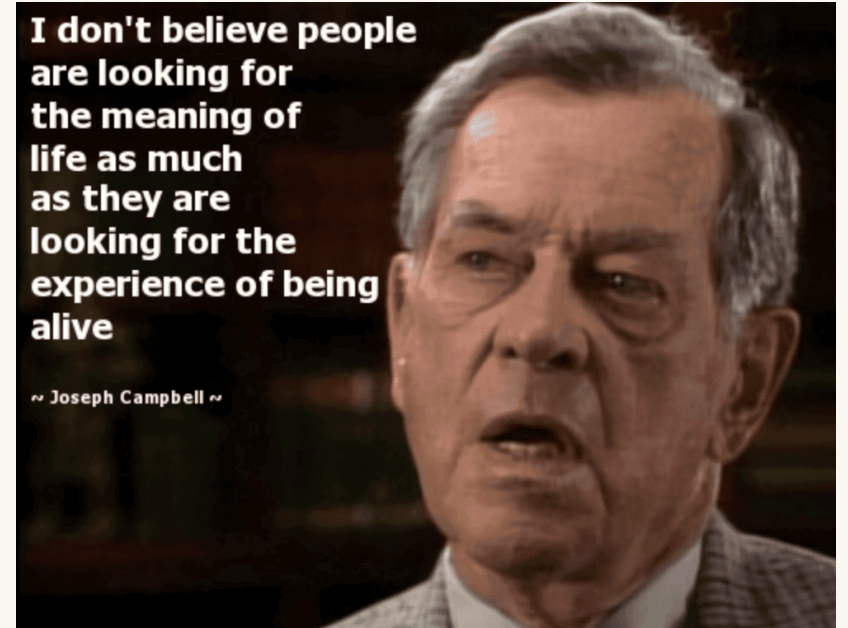


# References

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[gc2.me/refs](https://gc2.me/refs)



# Q&A

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*Je laisse Sisyphe au bas de la montagne !  
On retrouvera toujours son fardeau.  
Mais Sisyphe enseigne la fidélité supérieure  
qui nie les dieux et soulève les rochers.  
Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux.*

— Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942)