

FUTILITY

Bruce L. Gary, 2017.06.26; 2017.07.10

If a society doesn't rid itself of psychopaths they will eventually take-over and destroy the society, for the same reason that a cancer cell, left unchecked, will take-over and destroy the organism. Since a civilization requires a suspension of primitive intolerance, psychopaths will be tolerated instead of shunned, banished or killed, so their numbers will rise and cause an eventual collapse of the very civilization that allowed them to prosper. These Forces of Destiny are more powerful than any well-meaning individual, so the impulse to make things better is futile!

After 78 years the word “futility” is finally entering my vocabulary. I recognize the futility of trying to make things better. Maybe in a small tribe this was feasible, but not in an increasingly-connected world of 7 billion people with fundamentally flawed natures.

I have become inclined to think in terms of a chronic conflict between good and bad. It's tempting to portray the world as favoring “bad” in all manner of things. Although “bad” is always the ultimate winner, good can exist temporarily. Life is good, yet a person's life is brief; civilizations arise, but they always collapse; the Earth is life-bearing, but in a few billion years the oceans will boil away and later the sun will swell to evaporate everything. A “game theorist” might use computer simulations to arrive at the conclusion that for a wide range of settings bad is favored to prevail.

Single Cell to Multi-Cellular Life

Imagine starting with a cell that lives in the ocean, and reproduces by splitting to produce clones of itself. It has genetic immortality for as long as non-living nutrients are plentiful in the ocean water. Then, mutations led to a type of cell in the ocean that could eat the other cells, which is the first occasion for life consuming life. But then a mutation occurred that led to cells sticking together to form a more formidable group of cells. It thrived because attacking cells couldn't destroy the stuck-together group. New mutations caused the cells on the surface of a stuck-together group to become better at defending against attacker cells. This protective “skin” was the beginning of the evolution of a multi-cellular organism.

A multi-cellular organism is “cumbersome.” It not only moves slowly, but it takes time to assemble itself from a single cell. The assembly is, of course, under the direction of the genes within the cells. Each cell has the same genes, so it is necessary for only a subset of genes to be “active” in each single cell. For a skin cell, only the skin cell genes are active; for a heart cell, only the heart cell genes are active, etc. For present purposes it's not necessary to describe how most genes are kept inactive by being surrounded by a methyl molecule covering. But it is necessary to state, without proof, that one of the organs is devoted to preserving a set of genes for a sexual reproductive process. Sexual refers to the fact that the organism doesn't reproduce by splitting apart, the way a single-cell reproduces. Rather, the multi-cellular organism has to use the special cells reserved for this purpose to combine with analogue cells from another organism to form a complete cell that will duplicate itself, over and over, to form a new multi-cell organism. In theory a single organism could achieve this, and produce an identical offspring organism, but a species that did this could not adapt to changes in the environment as quickly as the sexually reproducing ones. Remember, a multi-cell organism is cumbersome, and its individual lifetime is longer than the ancestral stock of single-cell organisms. Sexual reproduction therefore overcomes the evolutionary disadvantage of long individual lifetimes while preserving the evolutionary advantage of fast-mutation agility.

Individual/Group Conflict

Game theory has revealed some interesting subtleties relating to the coming together of elements to form a group. When the group thrives or dies as a group, it is found that certain traits for the individuals are favored.

Individuals that serve the group when it competes with other groups are more successful, and the individuals constituting these groups remain in existence after several rounds of gaming. An individual that disrupts the group's performance threatens not only the group, but all the individuals that came together to form the group. Therefore, a new dynamic of "group conformance" is required, and those groups that come together from individuals who are vigilant in identifying and destroying "cheaters" will prevail during inter-group competition.

Let's apply this to a multi-cell organism. It is theoretically possible for a cell to exist within an organism that doesn't cooperate and limit its function to the organ in which it is found, and instead use resources to reproduce itself, and in effect form its own group within the organism. We refer to such a cell as cancerous!

A cancer cell, left unchecked, will destroy the organism that gave the cell its opportunity to exist. Organisms have evolved strategies to identify and destroy cancer cells. The immune system includes "killer T cells," and it's their job to identify cancer cells, and initiate their destruction. The process used for cell destruction is interesting: it's called apoptosis. The killer T cell marks the cell to be destroyed with a chemical signal, and the internal response is self-supervised cell death. The marked cell commences to chop-up its DNA, rendering it functionally useless, and the cell quickly dies for lack of instruction for doing anything. Killer T cells also identify cells that are too old to function efficiently, senescent cells, and they also self-destruct when marked.

Tribes and Organisms

A tribe is a group of genetically similar individuals, analogous to an organisms being a group of identically genetic cells. Individuals in a tribe have a "shared fate" in the sense that when a tribe is vanquished its individual membership is killed, or enslaved, and in either case the vanquished individuals are evolutionary dead-ends. The demise of a tribe is analogous to the death of an organism. Game theory predicts that the interaction of individuals in relation to a tribe should resemble the interaction of cells within an organism.

Indeed, what we find in an organism is also found within a tribe. The cancer cell's analogue is a cheater person, or sociopath. The sociopath is a master manipulator. He steals resources from others, and thus grows in strength at the expense of the group. The sociopath will pretend to be patriotic, but when talk is supposed to translate to action, the sociopath disappears. The group, in response, has the analogue of killer T cells. These are individuals who are vigilant in identifying cheaters, or imposters, and marking them for a targeted harassment and ultimate banishment from the group. In the ancestral environment the small tribe had ways of dealing with the man who was "too big for his britches" (the blowhard bully): ambush murder.

Any group that provides respite for the injured is potentially vulnerable to freeloading by sociopaths, so vigilantes are also quick to identify freeloaders. Calling an individual a freeloader is analogous to the killer T cell marking a non-functioning cell, or senescent cell, for apoptosis.

Since neighboring tribes are in almost chronic conflict, it occasionally happens that an individual from a rival tribe will seek membership in another tribe for the purpose of doing damage; vigilantes are quick to identify spies, or treasonous enemies, and kill them. This is analogous to the response of killer T cells in identifying a virus that has invaded the organism.

I hesitate to call attention to two sad analogies. School yard bullies identify weaklings and humiliate them in an effort to cause the weakling to commit suicide. This is analogous to the killer T cell identifying cells that are low-functioning because they underwent a deleterious mutation when they formed. It is well known that under-performing cells sometimes identify themselves as defective, and by themselves initiate apoptosis. The analogy for people is depression, a form of self-identification of low-functioning; depression puts a person at heightened risk of suicide.

Super-Tribes

Super-tribes began to form for the first time ~ 12,000 years ago, when Earth's climate warmed and the glaciers receded, resulting in an acre of land at mid-latitudes being able to support more people. With an increased "carrying capacity" tribal size could increase, even while shrinking its territory. This brought neighboring tribes closer together, and this triggered inter-tribal warfare due to old instincts. The coalescence of two tribes, if it could be successful, led to the reward of assured victory over any challenging tribe. It also meant that the new super-tribe could attack the old-fashioned smaller tribe with impunity.

The trick for super-tribe formation was finding a way to overcome the instinctive distrust of strangers. A traditional tribe was never larger than the Dunbar Number, about 150 adult individuals. Anyone in this small a tribe would have had sufficient interpersonal relationships with all fellow tribesmen to accurately judge their trustworthiness. No one in such a tribe is a stranger, and presumably all the sociopathic cheaters would have been identified and either banished or killed; this permitted an almost automatic mutual trust of any adult who remained in the tribe. When two tribes join, however, all new tribesmen will be strangers, and most will remain so. They will be easily identified because they will dress differently, talk differently, and have different customs and beliefs. When a super-tribe enters into battle with another tribe, even if that other tribe is smaller, there will be a hesitance by the super-tribe warriors to totally trust each other, or even to identify each other since some fellow tribesmen will be strangers.

Since super-tribes did in fact form, and prevail, we must assume that these difficulties of coalescence and assimilation were sometimes achieved. For a successful coalescence of tribes to occur, the individuals must suspend their primitive distrust of strangers, driven by an instinctive intolerance, and nurture the notion that tolerance is good.

Discontents with Civilization

The super-tribe allowed some individuals to specialize. For example, whereas in the small tribe every warrior made his own weapons, in a super-tribe a master weapon-maker would provide warriors with superior weapons: spears, bows and arrows, chariots, guns and eventually atomic bombs. Completely new occupations were feasible within the super-tribe setting: farming, warriors to defend the farmers from marauders, markets, factories and bankers.

But the people born into a super-tribe had brains that were adapted to the small-tribe, hunter-gatherer lifestyle. It didn't come naturally for these people to be comfortable encountering strangers every day. Learning the newest trade, such as a flour grinding mill, or computer programming, is unsettling for the small-tribe brain. People differ in their ability to adapt, or feel comfortable with "modernity." Just as a dog may hear a "call of the wild" when hearing a distant wolf calling, the person with a primitive brain will feel discontent with this thing he's supposed to embrace, called civilization.

Hyper Liberalism

The most successful super-tribes must have been the ones that were able to restrain the "tribal mentality" instinct. This is the instinct that promotes amity for interactions within the tribe, and enmity for extra-tribal interactions. It's an extreme form of "intolerance" because other tribesmen are slightly different in dress, behavior, beliefs, etc., so it's these differences that trigger an intolerant reaction. Everyone's brain has a tribal mentality module, hard-wired via neuronal connections and synapse sizes set at birth. But some people have a weaker tribal mentality module, and a super-tribe dominated by those people will stay together better, and prevail upon their neighbors.

Super-tribes must have appeared first where the climate change was most dramatic. That would be Europe. The greatest rewards for super-tribes with tolerant individuals would have been in Europe, and especially Scandinavia. Guess where the most liberal societies are? Scandinavia and Europe.

But there can be too much of a good things. A liberal is prone to demand tolerance of things that shouldn't be tolerated. For example, an extreme liberal will object to someone criticizing "honor killings" because that's part of someone's religion, and religions are to be tolerated. Ultra-liberals may demand "safe zones" on college campuses, where their sensitivities to shocking ideas won't be offended. They have made a bad name for themselves by curtailing the "free speech" of speakers with ideas that I think merit consideration (e.g., Charles Murray, who co-authored *The Bell Curve*.)

Extreme positions in any direction, with a visceral hatred for the "other," are not good for maintaining societal stability. Anything that promotes the growth of differences within society is de-stabilizing. The replacement of newspapers by the internet is destabilizing. The growth of wealth inequality is destabilizing. But the most destabilizing force in contemporary society is from something nobody dares talk about: the rise of sociopathy.

The Rise of Sociopathy

In small tribes people know each other, and a cheater is identified and gossiped about. The anthropology literature on "ambush murders" for eliminating cheating bullies from the small tribe illustrate a healthy tribe-serving cleansing. Cheaters are thus handicapped in a small-tribe setting. But in the super-tribe a sociopath can cheat in one region until he is discovered, then move to another region where the gossip hasn't spread, allowing him to repeat his cheating trick. Thus, on theoretical grounds, or as game theorists would say, civilization invites sociopathology.

I have no information about the incidence of sociopaths in small-tribes, or even the early super-tribes. Today, however, we have an accurate measure. Sociopaths constitute 10% of Americans. The breakdown is 4% hard-core sociopaths (i.e., psychopaths) and 6 % soft-core sociopaths (which are technically referred to as "borderline personality disorder"). On the 40-question "Hare Psychopathology Checklist" a psychopath is anyone who scores at 30 or above, and a sociopath is someone who scores between 15 and 29 (this last is my suggestion).

- 2 = glibness and superficial charm
- 2 = grandiose sense of self-worth
- 2 = need for stimulation/proneness to boredom (e.g., short attention span)
- 2 = pathological lying
- 2 = cunning/manipulative
- 2 = lack of remorse or guilt
- 2 = shallow affect (not understanding of human relationships)
- 2 = callous lack of empathy
- 2 = parasitic lifestyle (e.g., taking credit for work done by others)
- 2 = poor behavioral control (as in tweeting before thinking)
- 2 = promiscuous sexual behavior (e.g., boasting about it)
- 2 = early behavioral problems ("I punched my music teacher because I didn't think he knew anything about music...")
- 1 = lack of realistic long-term goals
- 2 = impulsivity
- 1 = irresponsibility
- 2 = failure to accept responsibility for one's own actions
- 0 = many short-term marital relationships (3 marriages lasting 14, 6 & 11 years doesn't qualify)
- 2 = juvenile delinquency (father says "He was a pretty rough fellow when he was small." and more)
- 0 = revocation of "conditional release" (by a parole officer)
- 0 = criminal versatility

Figure 1. Hare Psychopathology Checklist, scored for Donald Trump by Keith Olbermann.

There's apparently no correlation of sociopathy and IQ. This makes sense, because IQ is determined entirely by the capability of the three posterior lobes (parietal, temporal and occipital), whereas "executive function" is controlled exclusively by the frontal lobe. I like to say that dumb sociopaths end up in jail while smart ones become CEOs of big companies. There are plenty of opportunities for sociopaths today. The incompetent female ones manipulate husbands to buy them things, or they shop lift, while the more innovative ones become TV evangelists or cult leaders; with even greater luck a psychopath can become president.

Cancer on Civilization

Sociopaths are analogous to a cancer cell that threatens to grow, multiply, and kill the organism that gave it life. Where are the "ambush killers" when we need them?

Essentially every news story that makes me "shake my head" has a sociopath in it. From local news stories, like the robber who shoots a clerk, to major ones, like congressmen dismantling an environmental program, the underlying problem is someone with power who doesn't have empathy for others, because they just don't care. They can't care, because they're missing the gene, or genes, that create a moral sense, an intuitive understanding of right and wrong, the attitudes that hold a group together.

The old-fashioned sense of responsibility cited by nobility, called "nobles oblige," held that the strong had a responsibility to help the weak within their society. The reverse of that sentiment drives the sociopath: The strong are entitled to victimize the weak. When pressed for an explanation of some egregious act of victimizing someone, a sociopath might say "It's their own fault for being clueless."

Consider the opposite sentiment, expressed in following passage, written by Bertrand Russell in 1903 ("A Free Man's Worship"):

The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long. One by one, as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death. Very brief is the time in which we can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided. Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never tiring affection, to strengthen failing courage, to instill faith in hours of despair. Let us not weigh in grudging scales their merits and demerits, but let us think only of their need - of the sorrows, the difficulties, perhaps the blindnesses, that make the misery of their lives; let us remember that they are fellow-sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves. And so, when their day is over, when their good and their evil have become eternal by the immortality of the past, be it ours to feel that, where they suffered, where they failed, no deed of ours was the cause; but wherever a spark of the divine fire kindled in their hearts, we were ready with encouragement, with sympathy, with brave words in which high courage glowed."

A sociopath would be puzzled by these sentiments. He would of course pretend to understand, and say some robotic thing of praise. But by his actions we would know that he is deeply imbued with the cancerous attitude, willing to cleverly destroy anyone, or anything, that gets in his way. The sociopath robs society of the glue that holds it together. Without the caring glue, a society, or a civilization, will come undone.

Have good people become intimidated by the sociopathic bullies who control much of contemporary society, to an extent that these good people are afraid to call the bullies out, and use the name sociopath or psychopath? Have the ultra-liberals created such a strong force of "political correctness" that a politician who cares about people's welfare, and society's, cannot call his opponent a sociopath when it is appropriate?

Roobs are Enablers

In 1930 the Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset, published a book *Revolt of the Masses*. His main message, or warning, was that people without education, but rising wealth, were voicing their opinions as if they deserved as much consideration as carefully arrived at positions by academics. If the layperson's opinion was discounted, they would speak it louder. It's as if the truth was to be found by looking inward instead of by an outward search for evidence which would then be judged by a disciplined academic process. This new form of anti-intellectualism seemed to be on the rise according to Ortega y Gasset.

In 1970 the TV comedian and commentator Roger Price published the book *The Great Roob Revolution*, which in essence was an update of *Revolt of the Masses*. He wanted to change from use of "rube" to "Roob" to distinguish the innocently clueless from the intentionally boorish. The Roob sensed his buying power, and the reticence of the marketplace to insult him, and instead cater to his uneducated taste. This caused a coarsening of not only music, movies and entertainment, but the realm of ideas and – most dangerously, politics. The Roob voted, and politicians dumbed-down their rhetoric; they embraced false notions of how the "eggheads" were secretly mocking the earnest and hard-working man without education. A feedback of ignorance was displacing academic discourse.

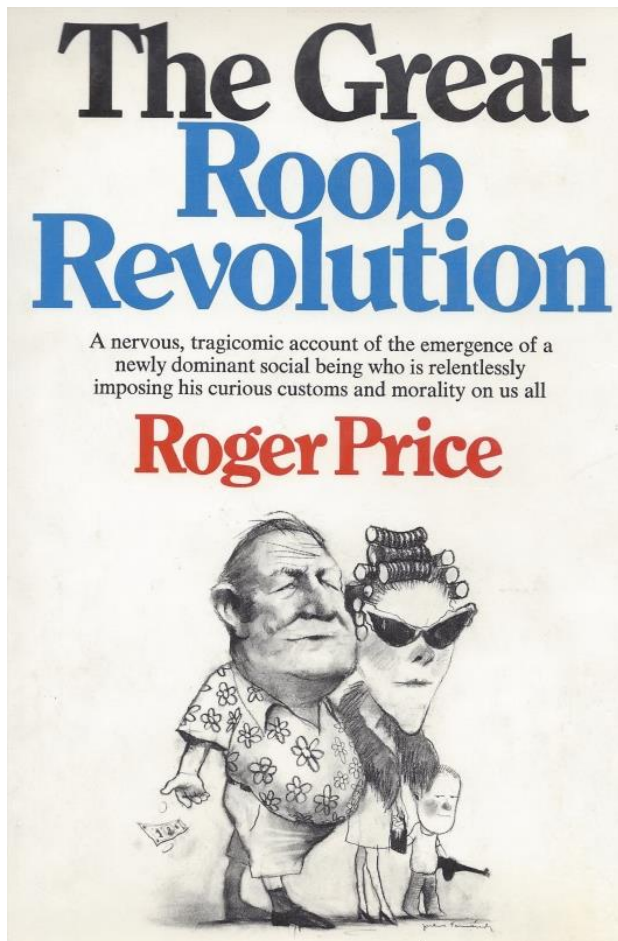


Figure 2. Cover of 1970 book introducing the term "Roob."

Sociopaths are master manipulators. They resemble the much maligned car salesman, who reads his mark, imitates his gestures and speech, in order to nurture a comfort level that feeds trust. Whether politicians figured out that this is the best way to play the game, or the politicians who were just naturally slick salesmen were

more successful, the end result is the same: a growing dominance of politics by sociopaths. This success owes itself to the Roob, who lacks critical thinking skill and is sold on the most convincing imposter.

“God must have an inordinate fondness for Roobs, for why else would he have made so many?” I don’t know who said that (JBSH, of course, referring to beetles), but there’s truth in the refrain. Sociobiologists have the answer: most men are meant to be warrior fodder. A good warrior doesn’t think, he just says to himself “My country, right or wrong.” Also, most women are meant to be baby makers, and again, thinking isn’t an asset for that task. That’s why so many of today’s voters are clueless Roobs, who become enablers of sociopaths aspiring to leadership.

Can Democracy Survive?

Consider the make-up of American voters: 1) Half have below average intelligence, 2) 10 % are sociopaths, 3) about 40 % are Roobs, 4) 74 % know the names of The Three Stooges (Larry, Curly and Moe) while only 42 % can identify the three branches of government, 5) about 20 % of Americans can’t find the U.S. on a world map – and the list of American ignorance goes on! Maybe it’s good that half of all qualified voters don’t vote. But which half is voting?

When Germans voted for Hitler in 1933 their society was considered the best educated in the world, with a long history of cultural contributions. What were they thinking? Couldn’t they see that Hitler was a mentally-disturbed buffoon (a term sometimes appearing in newspapers), a hate-filled bigot, and an aspiring dictator? Those who criticized Hitler were treated like unpatriotic infiltrators from a neighboring tribe. An amazing array of intelligent people supported Hitler, not only in Germany, but in England, America and other countries.

In hindsight we know that Hitler had a “schizotypal” personality; he was a rabble-rousing sociopath which sociobiologists would describe as having a purpose when a tribe in the ancestral environment became too large and needed to fission with the help of a charismatic leader making up stories about a "promised land." Hitler had a ready audience because most contemporary humans have brains no different from their prehistoric ancestors, the ones who lived in small hunter-gatherer tribes, that were in chronic conflict with neighboring tribes over territory and existence. Hitler’s “brown shirt” Stormtroopers were thugs given a purpose. Those “marching morons” picked on anyone who frowned. It’s braver to speak truth to power than to join the patriots in attacking the lone truth teller. Hence the saying: “Patriotism is a refuge for cowards.” In retrospect, we can view Hitler as resembling the single cancer cell that metastasized and killed the organism from which it arose; at the end of World War II Germany was a wasteland!

Thankfully, our President Trump is less disciplined than Hitler. He may self-destruct soon, but when that happens the mess he created may not be salvageable. Our congress is dominated by sociopaths, so they will do whatever is in their personal interest, not the national. It’s a fair question: will American democracy survive?

Can Civilization Survive?

If democracies can’t survive, can a civilization survive?

The first civilization, however the term is defined, was by definition “not adapted” for survival. It was a fluke, with an uncertain future. It might have occurred 5,000 years ago, or 15,000 years ago; whenever it was, those who brought it into being must have wondered what would happen to it, for they had no history from which to learn or judge. Today we know about hundreds of civilizations, and they all failed to endure. Their median lifetime is approximately 5 centuries. Things happen faster today, thanks to enhanced travel and the internet, so America’s 241 years might be close to the new limit.

Sigmund Freud had a good intuitive sense for what ailed modernity. He discerned the important role for subconscious thought, the greater than acknowledged importance of sex, and most importantly, he realized that

at a subconscious level people resented civilization. In his book *Civilization and its Discontents* he saw a primitive mentality that was not comfortable with the restrictions imposed on the individual by civilization. If Freud had lived another 30 years I believe that he would have embraced sociobiology, with its theoretical explanations for humans being better adapted to the ancestral small-tribe lifestyle than to a civilized one.

Only the “artisans,” who had a small niche in the ancestral environment, feel comfortable with civilized life. The artisan is tolerant, and he played a crucial role in creating civilization, and this happened at the expense of the importance of the non-artisan, who remains intolerant and feels resentment of civilized governance. It’s as if the typical man feels betrayed by a promise made millennia ago that civilized life would be an improvement. He rejects the artisan’s forward trajectory, and wants to “take us back” on a backward trajectory to those ancient times when life was simple. If they are only half successful they will take us back to another Dark Ages.

World Population Explosion

When I was born, in 1939, the world's population was 2.2 billion. Today it is 7.2 billion! During the 1960's there was public discussion about the negative implications of an explosive rise of world population, about the strain this was having on food supply and environmental degradation. A minor dystopian theme was the fear of future mass migrations from over-exploited land to better-maintained land. A contemporary version of this last concern would be the fear of mass migration from countries with dysfunctional governance to countries with stable governance. In addition, global sea level rise could be 20 feet by the end of the century, and this will produce a migration from coastal cities to interior regions, but only in countries that border the ocean.

Animals have well-documented strategies for reproduction. At one end of a continuum are the r-strategy reproducers, involving large broods and minimal parental investment - such as fish that lay thousands of eggs and then leave. At the other end are the high parental investment species, referred to as K-strategy, such as elephants and humans. In addition, for some species (e.g., humans), it is useful to consider that the same continuum exists. Some human parents produce lots of babies, with meager investment in each, while others have fewer offspring and invest more in each. There is a strong correlation between family size and parental investment per child, and the correlation is negative. A personal experience illustrates this.

I postponed marriage, and the bringing of children into the world, until my job was secure and I had a savings. This readiness for responsibility began when I was 29 years old. After establishing my family in a rented house, and preparing for the birth of our second child, the next door neighbor was already on the way to having a large family. The patriarch, who worked as a waiter, had at least half a dozen children. A decade later we moved away, and lost track of the next generation of their offspring. When one of my daughters visited them, and spoke with a young woman who used to be a playmate when they were girls, she learned that one of her brothers was in prison, her father, the patriarch, had lost his job, and the total count of children and grandchildren was approximately 30. When I learned this I compared my contributions to society with those of Costello, the patriarch: mine included 170 scientific papers, help in understanding the ozone hole, and two daughters who will never have children; the neighbor family’s contribution is a population explosion of deadbeats. If the genes could talk they would be happy with Costello and scold me for being their deadbeat.

The Futility of Trying to Make Things Better

Que sera, sera! What will be, will be!

Growing old, as I have done, has taught me humility. It started with a resolve to be a better person. I eventually figured out that all thoughts originate in the subconscious, and the conscious self merely plays the role of giving

a green or red light on subconsciously-conceived proposed actions. Although this thought isn't "humiliating" it does reinforce my pre-existing feeling of humility.

Humility in youth, futility in old age. Let me count the ways I feel futility, starting with minor ones and ending with the one that upsets me the most.

I sometimes referred to "the starving Africans" to encourage my daughters to finish food on their plate. When they were older, and could reason, I had to admit that the Africans can't be helped, for the poorest people in every country are the ones having the most babies, and saving a starving baby today means adding to starvation in the future. Trying to end starvation in poor societies is futile.

As a parent I learned from my two daughters the limits of parenting. The sage from Lebanon, Kahlil Gibran, wrote in *The Prophet*: "Your *children* are not *your* children; they are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. ... You may give them your love, but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts." For example, a parent is essentially helpless when an adult child becomes addicted to something that takes the edge off of harsh reality. There are limits to parenting, and trying to exert influence over any adult, including one's own child, is futile.

My cloth shopping bags reduce plastic waste, but the grocery store lobbyists still get their way by obstructing laws that would allow cities to legislate against the use of plastic. By minimizing my "footprint" on Mother Earth I have left room for others who are oblivious to the matter. Being conscientious about reducing one's environmental footprint as a means for helping the Earth is a futile exercise.

I've done my part in combating global warming by publishing an article about it, but some state and federal government agencies have simply forbidden mention of the subject and have recently reduced funding for Earth and environmental science. Lobbyists for the oil and gas industry have more influence than all the world's scientists. Trying to "save the Earth" by publishing environmental science is futile.

My voting in every presidential election since college has provided one increment to the count dominated by millions of others, and none of the elections have been decided by one vote. Conscientious voting is futile.

I have published a half dozen books, and the one of least consequence has sold the most. Promoting important ideas in a noisy "marketplace" is futile.

My daily observations of Comet ISON were meant to provide timely updates on what was happening to the over-hyped "Comet of the Century." My web pages produced a large following, and at first I was pleased by the extent of public interest in an astronomical event. However, as I became familiar with members of my fan club I learned that their principal interest was in my "showing up" the professionals at NASA by telling the truth of the comet's activity level; after all, as my fans would say, "the government couldn't be trusted because they were likely to be covering-up some danger posed by the comet that a public couldn't handle." I tried to "educate" my followers by stating that NASA was one of the most trustworthy of government agencies, and my intent was not to describe things that NASA was covering up. After I assured one caller, he ended the conversation by stating "I'm not crazy, I just want to be prepared for the Second Coming." I might as well have kept my comet updates to myself during that wasted 4-month ordeal because providing innocent updates on an unfolding astronomical event, and as a byproduct reassuring a skeptical public, was futile.

The foregoing are petty complaints. My biggest complaint is that non-sociopaths in a civilization are so tolerant of sociopaths and psychopaths that we are allowing them to take-over the civilization that we have created and their self-serving greed will eventually destroy it! This subject is too impolite to speak about in public, thanks to hyper-tolerant "politically correct" people. I am therefore having a useless conversation with myself when I rant about civilization's fundamental flaw of excessive tolerance for horrible people, the ones who threaten to

control and destroy civilization. The suspension of intolerance, something that allowed tribal coalescence and leading to civilization, created a social setting millennia ago that favored the rise of sociopaths and psychopaths. We, the tolerant champions of civilization, by our very tolerance, are going to blindly watch the sociopaths and psychopaths take-over and destroy civilization. My "call to arms" for banishing or exterminating psychopaths in order to preserve civilization is futile!

I believe that humanity is headed toward tragedy during the next few centuries, and this is happening with an amazing level of minimal concern. The concerns are manifold: it's not just the rise of psychopaths, and their threat to civilization. In addition, 1) a global population explosion is underway, leading to a scramble for food, living space and other resources, 2) global warming is on an inexorable march and rising sea level will dislocate people in coastal cities, forcing them to migrate inland, where conflict with people already living inland is inevitable, 2) migration from poorly governed regions (e.g., Africa) to better run countries (e.g., in Europe) is already underway, which is destabilizing the well-governed countries, 3) the "Rise of the Roob" to cultural prominence is already vulgarizing manners, music, movies and politics, 4) the suspension of evolutionary cleansing of the human genome of deleterious mutations, which in the past was achieved by a finite survival rate from birth to adulthood of about 1/3, is leading to a "mutational load" loss of genetic integrity, and in increase of genetic ailments in each new generation (because "nice" people reject eugenics). All of these threats, plus others, should concern anyone who values the civilized state.

I have argued elsewhere (i.e., in *Genetic Enslavement: A Call to Arms for Individual Liberation*, 2014, Chapter 29) that "Sampling Theory" can be used to argue that there's a 50% probability that humanity will disappear sometime during the interval 2100 to 2600 AD. The most probable year is approximately 2300 AD, when there will have been as many people born between now and then as have ever been born before now. I made that calculation in 1992 using reasonable population projection scenarios, and so far I haven't seen any argument that would invalidate my assumptions or any reason to adjust my calculations. This is illustrated in the next figure.

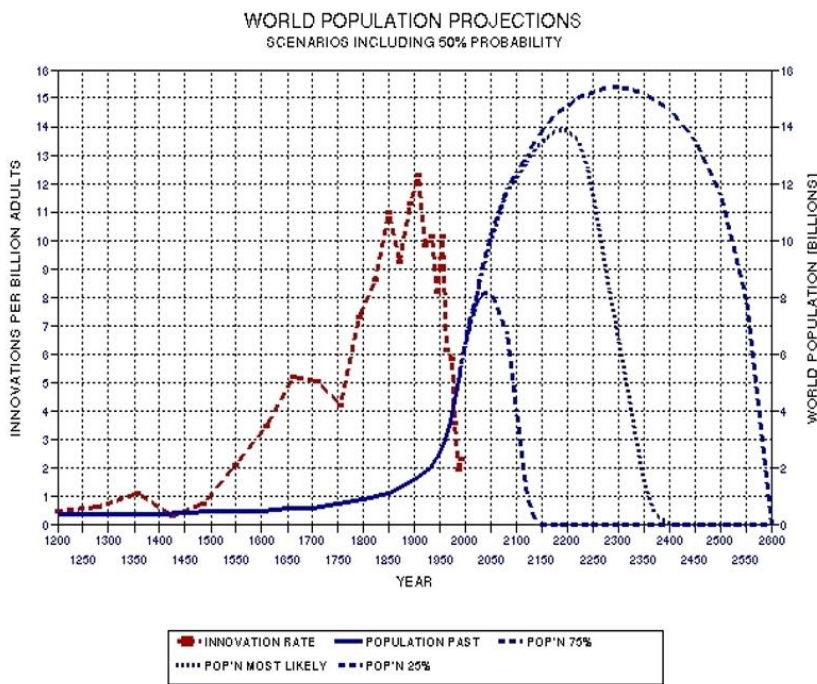


Figure 3. World population crash scenarios (blue dashed traces), as calculated in 1992. The middle trace divides the 50% probability of prior occurrence from later occurrence, while the earlier and later traces correspond to 25% and 75% occurrences. [from Chapter 29, *Genetic Enslavement*, 2014]

I am overwhelmed by dismay that humanity may come to a horrible end in a couple centuries! But anything I can imagine doing about it is futile!

Humans have such potential! But as H. G. Wells wrote, when describing the possibility for a good future for mankind “*To me, at least, this is no dream, but a possibility to be lost or won by men, as they may have, or may not have, the greatness of heart to consciously shape their moral conceptions and their lives to such an end.*” H. G. Wells, "Human Evolution, An Artificial Process," *Fortnightly Review*, Oct, 1896.

I am a misanthrope, which I define as “Someone profoundly disappointed in human nature, yet still hopeful that a better nature may someday evolve.” But, every year that I live, there is diminished evidence that such a future, though theoretically possible, will ever occur.

Because I believe that titanic forces are at work to extinguish humanity, I feel a futility of trying to make things better. It makes more sense to withdraw from any projects that are valued for their “irrevocable progress,” such as scientific discovery. My contributions to astronomical discoveries and understandings are like Emperor Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

To be specific, I see no point in promoting this essay, or my books, because humanity is doomed. It makes more sense for me to withdraw from the world, and, following the advice of Voltaire, “cultivate my garden.”

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Roobs in Trumpistan! ("Carnival in Rome," a painting by Johannes Lingelbach, c1650, depicting "fools" mocking the elite and celebrating vulgarity, as only the hoi poloi know how.)