

Sociopathology

My first encounter with psychopaths was in high school, when the Thurston bothers proudly announced how they had inserted a firecracker in a cat's anus. No one else thought that was funny, and I'm sure the brothers were clueless about this reaction. A psychopath's brain works differently than a normaloid's. Animal cruelty in childhood is widely regarded as the first sign that someone is a psychopath, and possibly headed toward a life of criminality (the dumb ones become criminals, and the smart ones become CEOs). According to the Hare Psychopathology Checklist, 4% of adults are psychopaths by scoring "yes" on at least 30 of the 40 questions (see [link](#) for Trump's score). The questionnaire includes such things as "callous lack of empathy" and "pathological lying." There's a borderline version of psychopathology, and it goes by the name "Borderline Personality Disorder," or BPD. A recent government mandated study found that 6% of Americans are BPD (women slightly outnumber men, 6.2% vs. 5.8%). The criteria for BPD resembles the Hare checklist, so I'm going to lump the two categories together with the term "sociopath." The simplest way to think about a sociopath is that they are cunningly selfish, manipulative, and a horrid human the more you get to know them! Given that half of any population has below average IQ, and 10% of people are cunningly manipulative, in a democracy where all adults are free to vote what could possibly go wrong?

I'd like to dive into an answer to "what could possibly go wrong" but I recognize that my argument requires a discussion of how today's modern civilization came about, and how poorly adapted human nature is to maintaining it. Humans seem loathe to acknowledge our animal origins, and this renders us fundamentally ill-adapted to the civilized state. A brief review of "sociobiology" theory is in order.

Sociobiology

It is an indisputable fact that all living things are assembled by genes. Whereas the genes live for millions of years, the individuals they create have brief lives. One way to view this situation is to think of an individual as a gene's way of competing with other genes that occupy the same chromosome location in some individuals of the same species. This last sentence may be a "mouthful," but it's extremely important (go ahead, read it again).

When two genes are competing for presence at one location one gene usually wins; this happens when the forces of nature consistently reward that gene over its competitors. Occasionally a steady-state partitioning of presence occurs, leading to two (or more) genes continuing to exist because the rise of the incidence of one leads to a shift that favors survival of the other. Within a social group (i.e., a tribe) there may be two or more distinct niches that need to be represented by different style individuals in order for the tribe to compete successfully with neighboring tribes. The longer a species lives in a constant environment, the longer evolution has for fine-tuning the species genome to render individual members adapted to that setting. That last sentence is how traditional evolutionists would summarize things, but a more accurate statement would be "The longer a species lives in a constant environment the longer evolution has for fine-tuning the species genome for rendering the genome adapted to that setting." This last way of stating things is more accurate because the genes often enslave individual members for gene competition, and individual welfare can become irrelevant as one gene wins over another. (For example, among some insects, such as the walking stick, the male will prolong copulation so as to allow the female to slowly eat the male, starting with his head, and thus prevent other males from copulating with her and jeopardizing the first male's genetic contribution.)

The last paragraph was meant to persuade you, dear reader, that humans are adapted to living in small tribes as hunter/gatherers. I could have merely stated that, and you would have accepted it, but I have a purpose in presenting the matter in this round-about manner.

The Ancestral Environment

The Ancestral Environment (AE) can be thought of as beginning about 250,000 years ago and ending abruptly 12,800 years ago. During the 10,000 generations of the AE humans lived in small hunter/gatherer tribes. Human nature evolved, and is adapted to the social requirements of a small tribe lifestyle. Tribal size was limited by how much game could be hunted by the men, given their limited mobility, and how much food could be gathered by the women, also limited by their mobility. It's likely that each tribe had a territory which it protected from neighboring tribes. Tribal size must have been smaller than the Dunbar Number, which is ~ 150 individuals; this is a typical maximum number of people with whom social interactions are sufficient to justify trusting relationships (Dunbar, 1996). This is also the maximum number of people who can be controlled without a formal social hierarchy (as Dunbar argues).

Anthropologists report that tribal decisions are arrived at through consensus at meetings of all tribesmen (note the term "men"). This does not mean that every man's opinion counted equally, or that every man expressed an opinion. If the matter involved moving to a better hunting ground, for example, the opinion of the best hunter would surely be more influential. This is "democracy" in its purest form.

Anthropologists also report that occasionally an individual who is disruptive had to be dealt with. The man who was uncooperative, or bossy, or who stole from others, may have prospered if the traits were mild, but when they were extreme the other men would conspire to kill him. Genes that created men's minds to confront excessive selfishness among their fellow tribesmen had an evolutionary advantage over genes that overlooked selfishness in others.

The paleontology record shows that the style for weapons and tools became standardized beginning about 70,000 years ago. I have speculated (Gary, 2014) that at that time tribes began to support a small number of "artisans" who specialized in making weapons and tools. Before then each warrior made his own throwing stick, or bow and arrow, and not every warrior would have been proficient in this. Artisan weapon-makers were the first division of labor among tribal men, and led to more warrior victories, as well as a higher standard of living for the tribe that tolerated the non-warrior with special talent. Artisans in different tribes must have learned from each other, perhaps by inspecting captured weapons and tools from other tribes, or possibly by the capture of artisans from a vanquished tribe.

If a tribe consisted of 100 individuals, for example, the tribe would consist of ~ 30 adult men, so if each tribe needed at least one artisan, plus another "in training," the artisan niche would be ~ 5%. Too many artisans would reduce the number of hunters and warriors, and too few would render the tribe vulnerable to irreversible loss of superior weapons and tools. (This is an example of a steady-state for two niches.)

The artisan's opposite would be the uncooperative thief, whose cheating and selfishness subtracted from tribal strength. I'm referring to what I described above as sociopaths, whose incidence is currently ~ 10%. As I will argue below, the incidence of sociopaths must have been lower when tribes were small, so let's imagine that only ~ 1% of people in the AE were sociopaths.

There is much speculation about inter-tribal conflict being chronic during the AE. Territoriality seems ingrained in human nature, so skirmishes over contested territory may have been common for our ancestors. Among chimpanzees, troops numbering 15 to 150 individuals engage in troop warfare on occasion, but their most common conflicts are better described as "opportunistic skirmishes" when a small number of males encounter a smaller number of other-troop chimpanzees near a territorial border. The home troop benefits when such aggressive action is automatic. Any hesitation would signal weakness, so chimpanzee mentality must incorporate the display of unmistakable readiness for combat.

The same unhesitating readiness for combat must also exist in human nature. But there's a big difference between humans and chimpanzees in intelligence. Presumably, a human male can think about personal well-being with greater understanding than a chimpanzee. To overcome any hesitation for self-sacrifice on behalf of the tribe, the genes that assemble humans must include some that promote the thing we call "religion." It's my belief that the main purpose for religion is to keep the individual enslaved to the tribe. Religion is therefore fundamentally opposed to intelligent understanding, which any contemporary with "critical thinking skill" must have already noticed. Therefore, to the extent that intelligence evolved during the AE the rudiments of religion co-evolved.

An aside with minor relevance: Every living thing can be thought of as a hierarchy of elements. Genes exist within a cell, cells are assembled to produce an organism, and organisms live together in groups. "Apoptosis" is a process of extinguishing a cell that threatens the viability of the organism (rendering it less useful to the genes that assembled the organism). Cells that cease to function (e.g., senescence), or that reproduce unchecked (i.e., cancer), are identified for destruction by the immune system, and the bad cell's chromosomes are cut into dysfunctional pieces (by the apoptosis mechanism). Individuals in a group function in a way that is analogous to the cells that form an organism. When an individual becomes useless to the group (such as lacking patriotism), he is banished; when an individual becomes sick with a contagious disease, he is quarantined; when an individual becomes self-servingly disruptive (sociopathic), he is killed. All of these reactions are coded into the brain by the genes, because the survival strategy for genes is to create a hierarchy of entities for competition with each other, with the genes indirectly controlling behavior at every level.

Holocene

During the past million years variations in the Earth's orbit and tilt produced 15,000-year warmings, called inter-glacials, at intervals of ~ 110,000 years. The last warming began 14,500 years ago. (Aside: after 1700 years a comet, or asteroid, collided with Earth, i.e., 12,800 years ago. The comet broke into many pieces during atmospheric entry, and they impacted Arctic glaciers and released immense amounts of water that produced floods, clouds and ocean current changes that led to a cooling lasting 1200 years, so warmth resumed 11,600 years ago.) The warm conditions (of the past 11,600 years) is referred to as the Holocene epoch. Receding glaciers created new places for humans to occupy, leading to migrations and new cultural adaptations. Population density increased, and tribal boundaries were allowed to shrink, even as tribal size increased.

Tribal size increases beyond the Dunbar Number of ~ 150 individuals led to never-before encountered problems. For the first time humans mingled with strangers who were supposed to be treated as "home tribe friendlies" instead of "other tribe enemies." As tribal size continued to grow, and it had to if the tribe was to avoid being vanquished by neighbor tribes that were growing, individual discontent with the new tribal setting also grew. Recall that any group larger than the Dunbar Number required governance by some formal new "organizational hierarchy." This was also new and upsetting to the person with a mentality evolved for the AE setting of small hunter/gatherer tribalism, in which tribal decisions were arrived at during democratic meetings. In addition, all-out warfare became more common than skirmishes, which escalated the stakes for tribal survival. The need for tribal loyalty grew, so religion morphed into its new crucial role of enforcing allegiance and unhesitating aggression when required by tribal provocations.

What happened to the niches for artisans and sociopaths during the transition to super-tribes and chronic warfare? The artisan niche enlarged, because farming became feasible and supporting technologies were therefore important (e.g., irrigation, food storage, food transport, commerce, etc.). By historical times the artisan niche may have exploded to 10%, for example, and today it may be 15% or 20%. The evolutionary rewards for artisan genes surged at the beginning of the Holocene (12,800 years ago), and they gradually increased as the need for technology and commerce increased.

Sociopaths also fared well during the Holocene. Consider that a cheater is easily detected when he is known by everybody in a small tribe setting, where he has social relations with nearly everyone. But within a super-tribe a sociopath can cheat

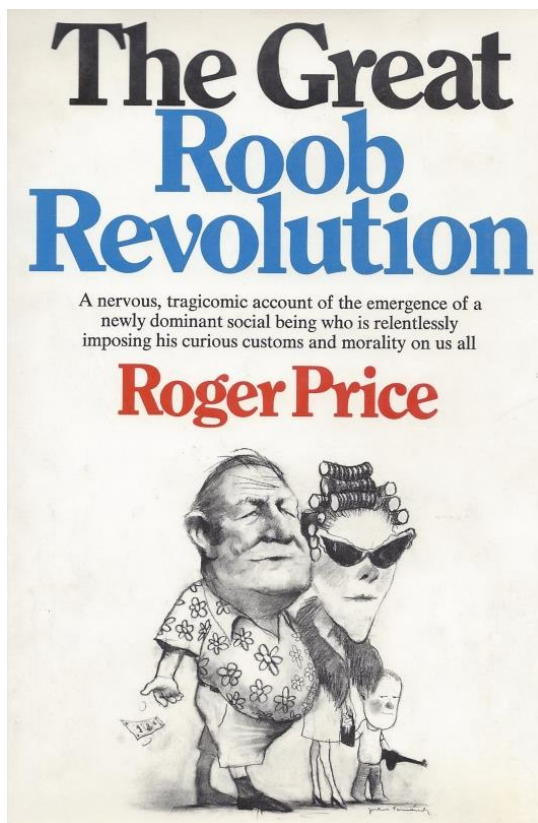
in one region and simply move to another where he is unknown, and repeat his tricks. The incidence of sociopaths must have grown, from 1 or 2% in the AE to 10% today. The evolutionary rewards for sociopath genes must be proportional to society size, so it must be at an all-time high today!

How prepared are the 90% of non-sociopaths for dealing with sociopaths? Can the sociopath be identified and avoided? I'm sorry to report (from personal experience) that we non-sociopaths have trouble identifying the sociopath. Today's sociopath is very clever at concealing himself. Even more troubling is the success of the high IQ sociopath in today's capitalist business environment. It is well-known that most CEOs of large, successful corporations are sociopaths. I have more to say about the rise of the sociopath in modern society, but there's another strand to my overall argument that needs attention first.

Rule of the Roob

Jose Ortega y Gasset wrote *Revolt of the Masses* (1930) to call attention to a trend in which the common man was losing respect for academics and people in authority. He gently suggested that the origins for the growth in the disparagement of knowledge was related to the common man's increasing wealth. The commoner had become accustomed to equating wealth with privilege, so if the commoner had as much wealth as the academic why should the academic's opinion matter.

Roger Price wrote *The Great Roob Revolution* (1970) perhaps without realizing that he was updating the same trend that Gasset wrote about 40 years earlier. Price called attention to the coarsening of manners by people who had more money than sense. In the following image of the book's cover, imagine that this is a depiction of a Roob family touring Europe, with several cameras hanging from the man's neck, and he's complaining about people not using "real money," and he talks louder instead of more slowly when a Frenchman has trouble understanding Alabama talk.



These Rooby thoughts were with me when, in 1995, I wrote: *A civilization has few friends and many enemies! It is the subject of a war waged by the genes. A civilization favors some genes, and puts others at a disadvantage. Individuals are tools for waging this war. Some people appear to be tools that endeavor to destroy civilization, just as others are unwitting generators and maintainers of civilization. Depending on a person's attitudes and behaviors, he is either a friend, a bystander, or an enemy of civilization.* In other words, people are tools of the genes who engage in competition with each

other, so don't assume that people can be counted on to act in ways that enhance individual welfare - as in preserving civilization. These thoughts, and others, led to the next update to the gradual Roobification of humans, Gary (2014), in which I gave this trend a genetic evolution context.

During my lifetime I have seen a loss of good manners. My first awareness of the world was when America was at war with evil Germany and Japan. When a country is at war, all citizens pull together because they have a shared fate. This is described as "parochial altruism" by sociobiologists Choi and Bowles (2007). These authors used game theory simulations to explain that during inter-tribal conflict all members can be expected to contribute to tribal defense, because of the "shared fate" of the membership of a vanquished tribe facing extinction, whereas during interludes of peace selfish individuals (sociopaths) will victimize the same people they had been pulling with during war. Thus, sociopaths who were an asset during war become a threat to society during peace. The American psyche has been at peace since the end of World War II, and the sociopaths have finally prevailed. They have coarsened discourse in a conscious effort to appeal to the masses.

What About Trump?

There's a popular saying that "birds of a feather flock together." Among sociobiologists the "Green Beard" theory is a speculation meant to account for such things. It states that individuals who resemble each other must share genes, so it should reward genes for such individuals to associate, and to not only face environmental challenges together, but to produce offspring together. Since some genes aren't necessarily easy to notice from physical appearance, or behavior, it would serve them well to express themselves in some additional way than what is being selected for, such as a "green beard" that is noticeable. This is just a humorous way of stating that genes are best served when individuals who share genes "stick together" as they compete with individuals who don't share those genes.

Trump is a master at imitating the masses of people who are stupid, uneducated and vulgar. His language and thinking style is that of a master salesman, or huckster, for its apparent design to victimize the gullible. Trump is an amazing imitation of the Master Roob. Elsewhere I have described in more detail how Trump appears to understand Neuro Linguistic Programming, a sales technique for influencing a target ([link](#)). Some 43% of American voters continue to support Trump (as of this writing, 2017 February 22).

Trump's admiration for Vladimir Putin deserves explanation. As reported in a recent article in *The New Yorker* (Osnos et al, 2017) a former Russian foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, stated "I am very concerned... My fear is that this is probably the first time in my memory that it seems we have the same kind of people on both sides - in the Kremlin and in the White House. The same people. It's probably why they like each other. It's not a matter of policy, but it's that they feel that they are alike. They care less for democracy and values, and more for personal success, however that is defined." This explanation resembles the saying "birds of a feather flock together." Do sociopaths feel more comfortable with other sociopaths? At least they would be able to calculate each others motives without having to understand that mysterious thing called "morality." As Trump states, Putin is a strong leader. True, but so was Hitler, Stalin and all the world's dictators. Is America teetering upon a transition from democracy to dictatorship? Nazi Germany underwent a smooth transition of this sort in 1933, and Russia did it starting in the year 2000. Many of the supporters of a leader bent upon dictatorship are educated, with an IQ above average. These are sobering facts.

Democracies rarely last more than 3 centuries. Is this how long it takes for voters to become complacent, and begin to not care about being ruled by a sociopathic dictator? Will the American congress "roll over" (for the purpose of enacting what they've been trying to do for a long time), somewhat resembling what occurred with Hitler's Reichstag (the Enabling Act of 1933), and Putin's Duma? If so, then America's experiment with democracy will have lasted a mere 240 years, well within that 300-year limit that has been cited by historians.

Unfeasible Solution #1

At the present time only 45% of Americans meet the following two requirements, 1) are not evil, wishing for outcomes that benefit America as a whole, and 2) are intelligent enough to understand an election ballot. The situation is even worse

than 45% being small, because the 5% of high IQ sociopaths are working to "game the system" in all ways possible for their personal benefit, and many of those 5% have the wealth to have influence (e.g., the Koch brothers).

American democracy would stand a better chance of surviving if we disenfranchised the 10% of the population that are sociopaths and also the half of Americans with below average IQ. How feasible is that?

This suggestion, regardless of how effective it would be at preserving American democracy, is unconstitutional, as the constitution now stands. It would require a constitutional amendment, and therefore 2/3 of both congresses, and 2/3 of all state legislatures for approval. Both Republicans and Democrats would be against this proposal, and so would almost all American voters. Academics would complain that the goal, if achieved, would not be a democracy with 55% of citizens not allowed to vote.

This solution is therefore not feasible.

Unfeasible Solution #2

Let's address only the problem of sociopaths. If society could rid itself of most sociopaths, those few remaining sociopath voters who are attracted to voting for sociopathic politicians wouldn't be important. This might buy America a few decades of democracy. So, how might America rid itself of sociopaths?

Eugenics! Yes, sterilize all sociopaths! After 10 or so generations (if only a few genes are involved) the population of sociopaths in America could be reduced from 10% to a much smaller value.

There are three problems with this solution. 1) Academics and liberals would object because "eugenics" is a bad word! Republicans would be OK with eugenics, but only if it eliminated liberals and academics. 2) Congress would have to legislate a eugenic program, and the Republican-controlled Congress would lose voter support if they lost the vote of the clueless ones who put them in office. 3) 10 or so generations, corresponding to ~ 300 years, is too long. America needs help sooner.

This solution is therefore not feasible.

Possibly Feasible Solution #3 - the Only Winning Place

The only idea for a winning place comes from studies of failed utopias. Two forces have been cited for their failure: 1) attack from outside, and 2) corruption from within. As I wrote in *Genetic Enslavement (2014): The philosopher and novelist Olaf Stapledon understood this when he wrote Odd John (1935), a science-fiction account of a genius who founded a utopia on a South Pacific island. It was later noticed by the British Navy and subsequently destroyed. Like Stapledon, I regretfully accept that no society can be established beyond the notice of the rest of fellow humans, and hence no such society will ever endure even if it could be created.*

Therefore, I am forced into the position that the only place for a "winning place" is in space! Maybe it could be a Mars colony, or an asteroid colony, or merely a self-sustaining spaceship. This is the answer to "force #1." Force #2, corruption from within, will also be more feasible to achieve once a colony is isolated from Earth. Membership in the colony will be by invitation only, or at least with the use of a rigorous review of an application. Soon, genes for sociopathy will be discovered, or maybe an easily noticed physical anomaly (e.g., short fingers?), and this will permit a more effective screening for sociopaths.

A continual "cleansing" of the colony will be required, since some sociopath genes may remain unexpressed or unidentified, or mutations predisposing to sociopathy may occur. If humanity has a future, free of the corruption that sociopaths produce, it will require eternal vigilance. Even if the founders are 100% artisans, the prospects for success are daunting. When I feel most honest with myself, I don't believe humanity can either create or sustain even this winning place.

In Conclusion

I continue to believe in a conclusion I reached in my book *Genetic Enslavement* (2014), where I use “sampling theory” to argue that there’s a 50% probability that humanity will cease to exist within three centuries. “That’s my story, and I’m sticking to it!”

References

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[Psychopaths Doom Civilization](#) (biology analogies abound, casting psychopaths as a cancer upon civilization)

[Sociopaths Doom Civilization](#) (the futility of trying to save civilization)

[The Mis-Measure of Men](#) (an illustration of how humanity today is a product of the mis-measure of men)

[Roobification of America](#) (more about Gasset, Price and my follow-up)

[Holocene Experiment](#) (understanding Global Terrorism)

[Fragility of Democracy](#) (earlier version of this essay)

LA Times Series "[Our Dishonest President: #1](#)"

Roy Cohen & Trump, partners in psychopathology [link](#)



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.)