



АМЕРИКА

THE 2009 ARCHIVE.

America is a country full of good people. Amerika is a futuristic vision of hell: soulless, cultureless hollow people pursue empty desires and make meaningless choices, trying to shrug off the weight of mortality with consumerism and a plastic dogma of equality.

Amerika is a type of civilization, not a place. The Amerika-type can absorb every nation on earth because it offers what seems to be liberation of the individual, and few remember the value of what we lose, like culture, heritage, religion and learning. Like a cancer, it works invisibly to destroy us from within.

We have trouble fighting Amerika because (a) it is composed of things that seem like freedom and compassion and (b) our societies in the West have no central principle since we threw away God and the aristocracy.

While Amerika sounds compassionate, its result is total destruction of the good things in life and replacement by a hollow, plastic, insincere, soulless civilization.

We hate ourselves for living in this type of world, and so we self-destruct. This pattern has been ongoing for centuries but picked up after 1945, when the USA decided to spread consumerism and liberal democracy as a means of ruling the world.

In contrast to consumerist liberal democracy, we offer a vision of a new society:

- * Futurism: use technology wisely with minimal impact on our environment and selves.
- * Traditionalism: keep the wisdom of the past, and deny utilitarianism. Cause-Effect is more important than appearance.
- * Divinity: we need a new center, a religion based on science and existential searching for beauty and meaning.
- * Conservationism: we cannot have zero impact, so instead, create zero impact zones for nature taking up 2/3 of earth.
- * Existentialism: instead of living for material ends, live for a positive experience of life in which we overcome our fears and improve ourselves.

Our method is to integrate ourselves with conservative groups because conservative philosophy stresses achieving ends (goals) no matter what the means (methods); liberal philosophy is the opposite, a fear of some methods that avoids them no matter what the consequences, leading to bad consequences through inaction.

Our view is that liberalism is a mental disorder characterized by narcissism, victimhood and paranoia. Its end result will be the apocalyptic Nanny State and a long, slow collapse into third world status.

Conflict avoidance and how to avoid it

Dec 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The hardest thing about being a small hominid is that you run the risk, at any moment, of screwing up and getting killed — and unlike other monkeys, you're aware of it any time a symbol of death or error comes up.

For this reason, most of human history has dealt with conflict resolution and ways to get people going in different directions to work together. It makes us feel good to think we're banishing conflict because then we feel as if we're safe from that conflict making us the one who screws up and gets killed.

But over the years, we go from "conflict resolution" to "conflict avoidance," meaning that we no longer seek working solutions, but to stop the fighting. We assume the fighting is the source of the disagreement, and not the other way around, as would be sane.

Nature, unlike humans, does not think in blocking single linear categories at a time, so when we suppress conflict, we don't eliminate it — we just squeeze it into another realm. If we can't fight with fists, we'll fight in the courts, or in the ballot box, or just be snippy with each other.



Passive aggression, the mentality created, arises from a desire to avoid conflict while a need to fight still exists. If I'm seen doing something combative, I get in trouble; so I try to provoke, needle, backstab, corrupt, etc. in order that I can destroy without seeming to destroy, and get the other guy to be the one who lashes out and gets clobbered by the other monkeys who just want the fighting to end.

All of these ideas are taboo because they cut through our pleasant illusion about ourselves, which is that we're not half-monkeys who rose a few sigma and now are able to use tools but not fully manage our affairs. We like to think of ourselves as gods who intend each of our actions as a benevolent gift to others; the reality is that we're snarling feral animals who've found a way to cloak our aggression in politeness, bureaucracy and a pernicious herd morality.

Tom Wolfe and Mike Gazzaniga explore this passive aggression through a reasonable measurement, which is social status. Status is how you feel you rank relative to your neighbors, and it can be either material or moral. Material is whether their BMW is as cool as yours; moral is whether they're educated, enlightened, progressive people who donate eyeglasses to the Bonobo like you:

TW: Every time we go into a room with other people, it's as if we have a teleprompter in front of us and it's telling us the history of ourselves versus these people. We can't even think of thinking without this huge library of good information and bad information.

MG: When you get up in the morning, you do not think about triangles and squares and these similes that psychologists have been using for the past 100 years.

You think about status. You think about where you are in relation to your peers. You're thinking about your spouse, about your kids, about your boss. Ninety-nine percent of your time is spent thinking about other people's thoughts about you, their intentions, and all this kind of stuff.

[Forum: Tom Wolfe and Michael Gazzaniga](#)

For the last 2,000 years our preferred method of neutralizing conflict has been to insist on equality.

First, it was insisted that we were all equal in civic duty, so should get a vote.

Then, it was insisted that we were all equal in the eyes of God, as we all had souls.

A thousand years later, we upgraded that to the idea that we were all equal citizens in potential, so we should have no limits of role or money.

None of these have worked, because in reality — that physically-convergent world out there — we are not all equal, and in fact, nothing in life is. (Most parts of reality consist of unevenly distributed values in a type of "standard distribution," Poisson distribution or the easily recognized "Bell Curve" with a few at top, a few at the bottom, and most on a graceful convex in the middle.)

When we cannot recognize our inequality, and cannot accept conflict, we are ruled by our fears. In turn, we create a society that because it orients itself around avoiding these fears, sublimates its fear.

The result is the "crab mentality," after the tendency of crabs in a bucket to crawl to the top, in which we compete for social favor. This creates a pleasant surface notion of equality and an underlying truth of constant covert conflict.

In addition, in order to preserve our good social standing, we insist on equality in defiance of the facts, and by making equality such an assumption, we oblige ourselves to tolerate incompetence. That in turn puts us in a society that is forever dysfunctional and frustrating, but no one wants to be the first to admit they are un-polite and un-sociable and don't believe in equality.

In turn that gets us this:

New research from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University explores why powerful people – many of whom take a moral high ground – don't practice what they preach.

The research finds that power makes people stricter in moral judgment of others – while being less strict of their own behavior.

"According to our research, power and influence can cause a severe disconnect between public judgment and private behavior, and as a result, the powerful are stricter in their judgment of others while being more lenient toward their own actions," he continued.

[Science Daily](#)

This public/private split occurs any time we insist on pretending an unrealistic thought is real, more real than reality even since we use it to manipulate each other. In public, we must kowtow to the dogma; in private, we have to get things done and/or become violently self-assertive.

The cost of equality is that we throw out all truthfulness in order to seem like nice people to each other.

It arises from our fear of evolving to the next stage, which would naturally occur from our most capable people, because we're afraid of personally being left behind — just as we're afraid of having a lower place in the current crab bucket of society.

As a result, instead of looking toward the future, we look toward the past — we look backward, and try to divide up what exists, instead of making an even better vision of our world.

Those who are most afraid become "activists" who go around telling us that it costs us nothing to demand equality and suppress conflict, but then there are millions of details like this:

In 2002, civil lawsuits cost the U.S. economy a reeling \$233 billion. With the rise of civil lawsuits over the last half a century, each American citizen is now estimated to pay a "lawsuit tax" of anywhere between \$700 and \$800 a year (27 September 2004 US Fed News). According to Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, if you take the total cost of tort claims and judgments in the United States and divide it by the number of citizens in the country, a tort tax of about \$809 per capita results (15 December 2004 White House Press Releases And Documents).

What's more, lawsuit costs represented about 2 percent of the US Gross Domestic Product, over \$250 billion. Of this, the manufacturing sector bears a disproportionate share of that, at 4.5 percent. (15 December 2004 White House Press Releases And Documents). And costs are rising, with a reported 5.4% increase in the cost of civil lawsuits from 2002 to 2003 (1 September 2005 Design Firm Management & Administration Report).

[Inside Prison](#)

Allow no conflict, and people will take it to the courts, which will lead to irrational animal conflict costing millions. How could that happen?

Imagine the other variables we could add:

- People driving slowly taking up to an additional half-hour of your time every day, for no reason other than their own incompetence. Add that up over the course of a year and think what you could have done with that time.
- Incompetents and dullards on the job must be tolerated, so every concept gets divided into bite-size pieces, and soon you're sitting through two-hour meetings where five minutes among equals would have sufficed.
- Dumb people have no idea their actions have consequences, so they litter, commit crimes, vandalize, or simply break things you might like to use.
- Look at all the areas of our cities that are no-fly zones because they're inhabited by people without a clue who ruin their own homes, riot, commit crimes, and so on. What else could we do with that land?
- Fools are a politician's best friend because they are easily manipulated. Since we cannot call them fools, and make them unequal because they have rights, they're there for any corrupt manipulator to promise them the sky — in exchange for more power of course.

Do we need to go on? These people are taking you for a ride. You have one life and only a certain amount of time in it, but that time is being taken away, passively, to support incompetents!

You go along with it because you're afraid. The idea of universal equality and rights sounds good to us because we're afraid as a group. If you the individual speak out against it, the others may gang up and you and clobber you — for denying their denial of reality.

The guilt and passive aggression that manipulates you has a huge cost, but all the people who are afraid that they might be incompetent are going to insist on it, even if it means that society as a whole moves like a person encased in lead, always pandering to the weakest link in the chain.

The individuals around you are thinking like the crabs in the bucket: they want to claw above you by appearing more egalitarian, more progressive, more compassionate than you. They don't care about the results of their actions. They're just trying to get more popular.

There are two real victims here: civilization itself, which stops rising to a challenge and starts collapsing inward; and yourself, because your time is wasted and all of those resources of time, money and energy you could have applied to something constructive are taken away.

It's a reversal of evolution. Instead of seeking to get better, and when we find something better spreading it around, we're trying to avoid anything better because it might make us look bad.

And they're going to waste your life by slowing everyone down to the speed of that weakest link in the chain.

The following article suggests on means of helping us past this difficult point in — not history, but *evolution itself* — through psychological conditioning:

A recent study led by Phelps found that reminding people of the fearful stimuli, minus any fear-inducing event, shortly before the extinction session can effectively block the first memory. The finding could help improve therapies for overcoming fear.

The mechanism for the initial memory's defeat could be that the initial quick reminder induces the amygdala to store new information, Phelps explains. The window during which the amygdala is "open" is fleeting, however, and could explain why the reminder shown 10 minutes, but not six hours, before the first extinction session, eradicated fear. As Phelps notes, relearning a memory, also known as reconsolidation, takes place much faster, within several minutes, than learning the memory for the first time, or consolidation.

[Scientific American](#)

You're afraid of social trauma, which is when you do something and other people make fun of you for it and exclude you, if not outright beat you with sticks.

In the past, you've accidentally said things that violated a social taboo, and people have swooped in en masse to tell you how wrong you are. They may have summoned a priest, some scientific studies of dubious scope, or the opinions of your favorite Hollywood stars. They're telling you that no matter what you see in reality, *they* are the ones to define official truth — and hilariously, if you disagree, they'll claim *you* are redefining "commonly accepted" truth!

You can see the public/private split here. In public, we're using opinions and logic and science. In private, we're animals struggling against each other for power, and the cudgels we wield are disguised as opinions and logic and science.

With the above type of conditioning, and it wouldn't take much, we could re-organize our people. We should have public rallies where each participant steps out and says, "You know, we're not all equal and we can't pander to the weakest link in the chain just so we seem nicer than our neighbors."

And in the presence of others of our community, we watch as nothing happens. No pain. No nasty commentary. No cudgels. We learn instead to trust our own observations of reality as it is, and stop projecting these social falsehoods onto it just so we can climb a little higher in the social status game.

Pity defines liberalism

Dec 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In this article on the “in progress” nature of feminism, I found a revealing constituent:

My generation — WOMEN — thought the movement would advance on two legs. With one, we'd kick down the doors closed to us. With the other, we'd walk through, changing society for men and women.

It turned out that it was easier to kick down the doors than to change society. It was easier to fit into traditional male life patterns than to change those patterns. We've had more luck winning the equal right to 70-hour weeks than we've had selling the equal value of care-giving. We have yet to solve the problem raised at the outset: Who will take care of the family?

As a young mother and reporter, it did not occur to me that my daughter would face the same conflicts of work and family. Or, on the other hand, that my son-in-law would fully share those conflicts. I did not expect that over two-thirds of mothers would be in the work force before we had enough child care or sick pay.

[Post Gazette](#)



It's easy to kick down doors and start revolutions. All you need to know is what you hate.

We hate the king. We hate the man. We hate the rich. Great — let's get together an angry mob, destroy them and then...

And then what?

Well, see, the thing you hated was only a manifestation of (a) a necessity created by the many demands of reality and (b) a method replying to it. You shot the messenger, and the underlying needs and problems remain.

Those were heady, thoughtless, stupid days, and many a conventional marriage broke up as women took upon themselves the freedom they imagined men enjoyed, while many a professional man became enamored of hippies and New Age escapism, changing spouses accordingly. I knew this cohort well, and almost every one of the feminists I then knew and promoted on my radio programs and elsewhere either had a red family of origin or newly attached herself to some fraction of the left, whether it be Marxist-feminism or New Left feminism, which was odd, because "patriarchy" (the social division that is primary to a feminist) is an ahistoric notion and couldn't be farther from the complex historical analysis that a proper Marxist (or non-Marxist historian) should exemplify. But rules were laid down by the new dominatrices, and compliant guilty males and ambitious females acquiesced, with nary a murmur or moral qualm. And part of this explosion of P.C. animosity took the form of exposing the inadequacies of their ex-husbands or lovers, naming names, the more famous the better.

Role-reversal was a losing strategy, not to speak of its intrinsic immorality in a movement that appealed to "equality." The Battle of the Sexes has not been terminated; rather, new wine has been poured into old bottles. Escapist "magic" makes money as the Boomer generation swells the prospective movie and television audience, and Daphne Merkin struggles with "chronic depression" that she appears not to understand (see an earlier NYT article in which she darkly exhibits her mental states).

The second-wave feminists (a few of them) are now installed in academe and related venues, though their youth has fled, while the masses of women continue to struggle with the same issues that beset them before the 60s-70s feminists made the scene: e.g. women are terrified of aging for good reason. Here is just one example: Discarded women who loved their ex-husbands may continue to feel protective toward them, finally discovering that their concern was never reciprocated in a similar lifelong commitment. And to add to the insult, the older woman may find that she is expected to dress herself as if she were an anorexic adolescent girl.

[Clare Spark](#)



In the case of women's "equality," as the author above found out, that's an equal right to a 70-hour work week — and still someone must raise the children and keep the house in order. Even if you hire maids, day care and a psychologist, much of this labor remains. And unless your career is ahead of his, it's going to fall on you. In addition, you're now spending more money to have a second car, commute, pay those service workers, and so on. Did you really come out ahead?

Of course not.

Feminism is one of a thousand examples of this kind of thinking we could find in our modern world. People see a messenger that has something they don't have; they kill messenger; then they find out that there were *reasons* why things were the way they were.

But they weren't thinking about that. All they were thinking about was what they did not have. And in order to feel better for that selfish thought, about what others did not have. Pity became the order of the day.

The author suggests that approximately 4 percent of the population suffers from Antisocial Personality Disorder, which she refers to as the "condition of missing conscience" and alternatively as "Sociopathy".

Dr. Stout begins by asking the reader to imagine a world where they have no conscience thereby freeing them from, among other downers, guilt, shame, remorse and concern for others. She then asks the reader to imagine, if they were able to conceal this psychological flaw from others, how they might live. They would, after all, be free to seek all the power, money and influence they desired, in the quickest, crudest and most ruthless way without the nagging burden of doing what is right. Or, maybe, Dr. Stout says, you are not ambitious, but seek only to relax and live as carefree as possible from the goodwill of others. Without conscience, you would be free from the guilt and shame that traditionally comes from being a freeloader.

The world Dr. Stout is asking the reader to imagine is the world of a Sociopath. This is not Hollywood's version of a Sociopath, the social recluse with the transparently frightening demeanor, but a real snake in the grass. It is your beautiful and tormented best friend, your overworked and stressed out spouse or your down on her luck mother. Dr. Stout opens the

reader's notion of a Sociopath; warning that the real tell tale sign is not fear but pity. She states, "The most reliable sign, the most universal behavior of unscrupulous people is not directed, as one might imagine, at our fearfulness. It is, perversely, an appeal to our sympathy."

The pity play or attempt to appeal to the sympathy of others was also addressed in research conducted by the Minnesota Department of Corrections and The Hazelden Foundation (2002). There, researchers concluded that criminal thinkers most often attempt to control others by portraying themselves as a victim, turning to fear tactics only when the victim stance fails to get them what they want.

[Psychology Today](#)

The culture of pity — by which we consider each of us potentially unfortunate, a victim of life, and constantly look for victims and victimizers as the narrative of life — could be based on a kind of politically-savvy compassion. When we see another person, we can mimick their emotions, which makes them trust us as if we were extensions of themselves — much as a virus sidles up to a cell, merges with its walls, and then injects its hidden commands.

Mimicry facilitates the ability to understand what other people are feeling. The present research investigated whether this is also true when the expressions that are being mimicked do not reflect the other person's true emotions. In interactions, targets either lied or told the truth, while observers mimicked or did not mimic the targets' facial and behavioral movements. Detection of deception was measured directly by observers' judgments of the extent to which they thought the targets were telling the truth and indirectly by observers' assessment of targets' emotions. The results demonstrated that nonmimickers were more accurate than mimickers in their estimations of targets' truthfulness and of targets' experienced emotions. The results contradict the view that mimicry facilitates the understanding of people's felt emotions. In the case of deceptive messages, mimicry hinders this emotional understanding.

[Psychological Science](#)

Could feminism have been a criminal enterprise? Consider:

- Sales of feminist literature, magazines, movies and political movements, convincing women to avoid stumbling into marriage after college and instead, to live that exciting *Sex and the City* lifestyle.
- Twice the workforce now paid half as much. All the women now show up? Great. Halve the starting salary and let the most aggressive workers prevail.
- Sales of birth control pills, makeup, clothes and perfume soar as women become sexually competitive for longer.
- Twice as many lonely city apartments rented.
- More cars sold because each person now needs one.
- Psychologists thrive as women end up on the couch, wondering how to solve the conflict between biological need and social imperative.
- Men spend more on entertainment since they're not going to be spending it on family. Video games, beer and pizza stocks shoot upward.

I'm not suggesting a conspiracy here; I just want you to hold on to this thought:

Someone did benefit, and it wasn't the people who embarked on the great feminist delusion.

Someone gained power outside of a working political system, destroying lives and accumulated knowledge, and now that the door's kicked in, things aren't turning out as well as they thought.

You know, we had those revolutions in 1917 and 1789 in Russia and France — which one of those produced a paradise?

And 1968, the year when feminism, gay power, black power, equality and marijuana triumphed — did that

make a paradise?

Surely the answer must be that we are controlled by a vicious Satan who keeps us from realizing our grand liberal dream!

Or more likely, that new generations — having none of the experience of the old, and having parents too afraid to talk about politically sensitive subjects — stumble into the same illusions and then must serve under them until when older and surlier, they can point out how their lives were wasted.

But liberalism — of which feminism, class and racial revenge movements, welfare states and subsidy politics are a subset — just sounds good because it appeals to pity. You are the victim. And now you will want to find other victims, and band together, like a mob in the street throwing rocks.

Surely this ancient simian behavior will lead us to enlightenment.

More American New Right

Dec 27th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



Since the last post generated some interesting discussion wherever it showed up on the internet, here's a few more ideas — in the form of "how the American New Right is different from other movements":

Republican

- Abortion and Assisted Suicide. We're not concerned with regulating the sexual morality of women through laws. Our view is that we should reward good behavior and avoid society paying for the consequences of bad behavior, which has a natural "Social Darwinist" regulatory function. Abortion may be murder; not all murder is bad, if the person murdered would not have a place. When people are terminally ill or terminally depressed, let them go. We have enough humans. We need more good humans.
- Stem Cells and Science. "Science is the answer" is not the answer, because science is applied by individuals and corporations with profit motive, and so is the most politically-swayed discipline currently in existence. We want to take this pressure off of science and depoliticize it, allowing research — but then determining carefully what we apply to the broadest segments of society.
- Cradle-to-Grave recycling. Many Republicans resist all Green initiatives because Greens are generally (a) leftist and (b) oblivious to consequences outside an abstract ideology not parallel to reality. However, this is just a common sense move: charge a small value added tax to purchase recycling and land reclamation projects from free market sources.
- Urban renewal. End rent control and other well-intentioned but failed policies for regulating our cities. Don't let people sit on undeveloped properties in downtowns, and start arresting and removing the criminal element so we can redevelop these urban centers and stop wasting gas on commutes from the suburbs and exburbs.
- Homosexuality. It's not an issue for us. While we find divisive political movements like feminism and queer rights to be counterproductive if not outright destructive, and while we defend the right of communities to define what behaviors they will and will not tolerate, we feel that a healthy society

does not need specific policies for homosexuals.

- Socialism. Government has a palette of methods to address a given situation; for many things, collectivization is a good idea. We accept it for roads and other infrastructure items. In some cases, a socialist approach can be helpful, as in education. What we will not do is cripple our most productive people in order to subsidize the least productive, criminal, low intelligence or mentally dysfunctional.
- Church and State. We like the idea of religion, government and culture sharing the same values as this is the best way to bring together a nation. However, we don't like Prayer in Schools just like we don't like *Jimmy Has Two Daddies* in schools — religion needs to be de-politicized and politics, de-religionized.

Democrats

- Post-inequality politics. Instead of chasing the impossible, and then being manipulated by oligarchs and panderers who portray themselves as defenders of the common man or the equality of the masses, establish wisdom and competition and nurture the good. Further, we should call the Democrats out on what they're doing with our immigration policy, which is importing voters who because they cannot ethnically join the majority will always be opposed to it.
- Social roles. Per their mania for egalitarian ideology and class warfare, Democrats are hesitant to allow any "privileged" social roles to exist — which then creates a situation where these roles are determined purely by wealth and popularity.
- Media tax. Media changes minds cheaply, and where that media has political intent, it should be taxed proportionately to make it less of a cheap work-around to acting within the existing political system. We need fewer armchair people informed by political "comedy" shows, and more people active in local politics.

European New Right

- Puritanism. Or rather, a drive toward sobriety and chastity. Europeans tend to mock American "puritanism" without realizing that these rules are common sense. People who use recreational intoxicants substitute those for an ability to socialize and appreciate life, and become psychologically dependent; people who engage in casual sex devalue their ability to appreciate partners as more than bodies, and so damage society's conception of family, leading to dysgenic breeding.
- Libertarianism. Much as in the palette of government methods, socialism is sometimes the best option, so also libertarianism is. Bureaucracies will never be as flexible or responsive or inexpensive as free market forces; even worse, bureaucracies can only be changed through a laborious political process or going through more bureaucracy, which makes them immune to critique except through carefully-edited "audience response survey" types of internal action. Wherever we can, we should replace government agencies with market forces.
- Social Darwinism. Many from the European Socialism-conditioned side of things do not like to see this, but we embrace competition through the market. Let those who are more competent be more productive and be rewarded more, and under no circumstances should we go out of our way to subsidize the non-productive — no matter how ideologically correct they may be. We support job insurance and health insurance as private market options purchased in bulk by the state and resold to citizens, and we support some "socialist" subsidies for artists and thinkers, but maintaining healthy competition is essential to our viewpoint.



And a couple of differences that make us stand out from all of them:

- Aristocracy. We support the maintenance of hereditary aristocracies of the people with the best all-around judgment that we find, so that we may breed a brain trust among us. They do not necessarily have to supplant other forms of government, but should exist as thought-leaders in their communities.
- Wise old people. In each local community, which ideally would have low ingress and egress rates, we support the idea of taking the older, wiser, and through their lives most productive people and learning from them. A council of elders that knows its citizens by name and history, and can help them through difficult decisions, makes more sense than an impartial but also know-nothing bureaucracy.

These ideas are probably too much for our readers already, because they run contrary — in part — to the fundamental ideals of a modern time. However, they're worth considering as we've seen no coherent logical arguments against them and historically, they offered great benefit.

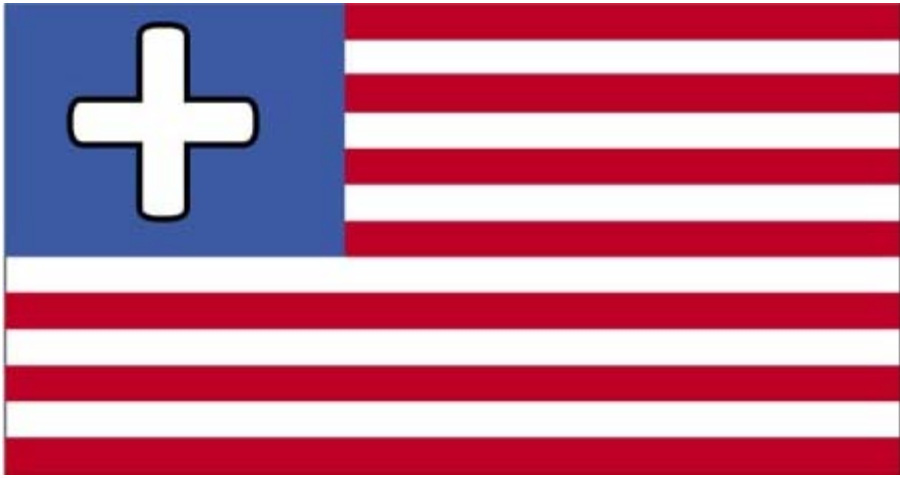
From a reader on Facebook:

I think "diversity" when not rammed down our throat, is GOOD for a society as it brings new ideas and fresh energy to a society.

If we're all equal, then diversity brings nothing new that cannot come from a study of other cultures.

If we're not all equal, then we need to make sure we group people of similar abilities and inclinations as created by the specific evolutionary paths of their ancestors.

This user was brave to post our earlier missive to his Facebook friends, and we advise him to maintain his position, so he doesn't endanger himself and his family by having taboo political positions — it's up to us to suggest the logical corrections above.



Posted in: [Politics](#).

The Sluggard's Fallacy

Dec 27th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I encountered this one in the wild, and figured it might be fun to explore:

Person A: If the wheat crop fails, we can feed the people apples.

Person B: But not every person may like apples, and some apples may be rotten!

Technically, this isn't a fallacy so much as confusing a disadvantage of a proposition with a contradiction. A contradiction occurs when a proposition destroys what it hopes to achieve; on the other hand, all propositions have disadvantages. If I say we should go to lunch at a pizza joint, there's an opportunity cost and the disadvantage that we can't also eat Greek food.

Person A: If we want to influence the world, we should get power by taking positions of responsibility in industry, religion and government.

Person B: But not everyone one of us will succeed in those roles, and many of us will become corrupted by the lure of money, so let's not — let's post on livejournal instead!

The Sluggard's Fallacy is more of a mentality, and it's a very modern one. If a proposition is not 100% successful, or does not treat succeed in every single instance, it is assumed to be bad. This arises from human conversations where one person suggests an idea and others shoot it down. It may technically be simply an inversion of the No True Scotsman fallacy but that's not really the point.

The point is that our mental outlook has decayed to the level of whiners and sluggards — lazy cowards. We want any proposed idea to be magically 100% successful, even though nothing is, or we want it to go away so we can keep being mentally lazy. It's a widely-distributed version of the drunk dad watching sports who doesn't want to be reminded the kitchen's on fire.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Living Forever

Dec 26th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

With the holiday season highlighting beliefs of major religions, it's easy to forget how Western religion evolved over time. For example, my household and those of most I knew growing up were Christian in some denomination or other, so the holidays were filled with stories about the birth of Jesus Christ. Only later did I find out that the origins of some of these New Testament stories were somewhat questionable:

The older European and pre-European holiday traditions were not based upon claimed religious phenomenon, but rather upon the seasonal characteristics of nature. The ancient traditions were founded by people who were highly aware of seasonal change and arranged their lives and festivities around them accordingly, explicitly marking the spring and fall equinoxes as well as the summer and winter solstices. These periods acknowledged and celebrated the Sun god and its relation to society. The Sun god was seen as the provider of the energy for life from which they prospered, and was therefore given reverence.

....

Given the history of these ideas which date back to at least 2000 years before the Christian era, it should be no surprise that the original symbols and practices of [the holidays] persist today, just as our ancestors once celebrated them."

[[±](#)|DateJesus]



Religions, and their respective gods, were in ancient times meant to symbolize reality, rather than creating new realities outside of nature and the seasons. Personifying these beliefs by distilling them down into one person – say, Jesus – only serves to accentuate our modern individualistic views, and that one-man symbol can easily be corrupted as he comes to mean so many different things to so many different people. Rather than a Sun god, you have the Son of God himself, who is all powerful and all knowing. It's easy to see how this tool can be extremely dangerous.

I thought of this recently when working with my father around the holidays, helping him out at a family business he runs. I help out there weekly, and ever since his father died in 1997, we reminisce – especially around the holidays – about how short tempered but funny he was at times, but also about how much he loved his family and the sacrifices he made to ensure they were given what they needed.

This is how people live forever. Family men live on in the stories told to future generations, as I'll surely tell my son about my grandfather. Other men – strong leaders of large groups of people who achieve great things – are written about in the history books, and the lessons from their lives and their leadership are what interests people, as well as the effects of their policies.

Due to the individually-focused major religions of today, people need to believe that living forever involves heavens full of virgins, grandma, and Moses, where you look better, feel younger, and are completely

conscious of this heaven after you die.

Living forever is really about your ancestors: how you remember them, what they did during their lives, and whether or not their actions are translated into valuable lessons for a family to advance – physically, intellectually, morally. The physical being itself turns into dust; memory is how life after death perpetuates.

Extrapolating this idea to society as a whole is how societies become more healthy over time, instead of less healthy, as we see today.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Evil exists, or at least destructive does

Dec 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Nietzsche talks about moving beyond good and evil, but per his excellent *On truth and lies in an extra-moral sense*, his main fear is that by making these external definitions of good and evil, we're swayed by the people with most interest in manipulating us — by definition, the evil ones.

It's a bit heady for me to tackle evil, but let's start with sin. The smarter Christians I know refer to sin as a form of error, but then acknowledge that some people are born broken and are prone only to error. They cannot help themselves. They're like mosquitoes; they live to bite.

Hill said the child had been playing in a common area at the apartment complex with her two sisters, ages 7 and 9, when a man parked his brown pickup in a nearby parking lot and walked over to them carrying a camera.

"He physically grabbed the 7-year-old girl and forcibly took a photo of her," Hill said.

The man then forced Natalie into the truck and drove away.

[AP](#)

So, um, what do we think this man intended to do to this little girl?

If he fits the profile, as he statistically most likely does, his intention was to "sexually abuse" her. Let's dial back that euphemism and convert it to the raw terms: rape, sodomize, and then probably murder this five-year-old girl.

I don't know if that's evil, but I know it's both destructive and compulsive, at a level that's hard-wired in. You don't educate this kind of abuser. You don't put them through therapy. They are never going to change.

Everything that pedophile Theodore Sypnier has to show for his 100 years on Earth is packed in a single duffel bag as he prepares to begin a new chapter in life: freedom.

But 10 years after his last arrest, as Sypnier prepared to shed the closely monitored lifestyle of the halfway house, its director warned that the sly and active Sypnier has not changed from the manipulator who used his grandfatherly charm to snare and rape victims as young as 4.

"Whether he's 100 or 101 or 105, the same person that was committing these crimes 10, 25, 30 years ago still exists today and has an unrepentant heart," said the Rev. Terry King, director of Grace House, which has twice taken Sypnier in from prison. "He is someone that we as parents, as members of the community, any community, really need to fear."

Being grandfatherly was how the 5-foot-5, 150-pound Sypnier found his victims, authorities say. After his most recent arrest at age 90 on charges of raping and sodomizing a 4-year-old girl and her 7-year-old sister, his neighbors in the suburb of Tonawanda recalled what appeared to be a kindly Sypnier offering rides to adults, handing out money to children so they could buy candy, and baby-sitting.

"I'll tell them I never harmed any children," the father, grandfather and great-grandfather told his hometown newspaper, The Buffalo News.

[MSN](#)

That's compulsive behavior. We've had nearly 50 years of re-educating, counseling, chatting up, jailing, rehabilitating and other forms of well-intentioned palaver with this dude. He like others of his ilk are not going to change. They are predators.

There is only one solution: to kill them, and do it without a big show trial and a big showy pandering of "how fair-minded we are!" with endless appeals. He's done something heinous; the evidence is incontrovertible; he's going to do it again and has a history of creepy, molestor-y behavior. People who are not molesters tend to try hard not to appear molestor-y.

The only solution is to kill him. Half of our population would rather we spend the equivalent of two years at college for a deserving student, per year, on keeping this idiot alive — so we don't look evil for having killed someone who has a 0.001% chance of being a pedophile "not guilty" for the crime of which he was tried.

Let's not dwell on failure. Pedophiles are failures. Remove them, and spend the money on a deserving college student, or just throw it into a fund to sew up the ravaged orifices of their victims. But we can't say that realistic sentiment out loud because half of our population will wail about how unjust and inhuman it is to murder murderers, pedophiles, creeps, retards and insane people. They're human too!

Maybe it's time we started looking at these people who are defending the indefensible, point out that sin is error and they are in error, and use the word they really fear: enabler. They are enablers for these criminals, and under their pompous protective arm that insists we be "humane," we tolerate all forms of predators and it weakens us as a society. The barrier to a cure is the enablers, and it's time we called them out on it.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

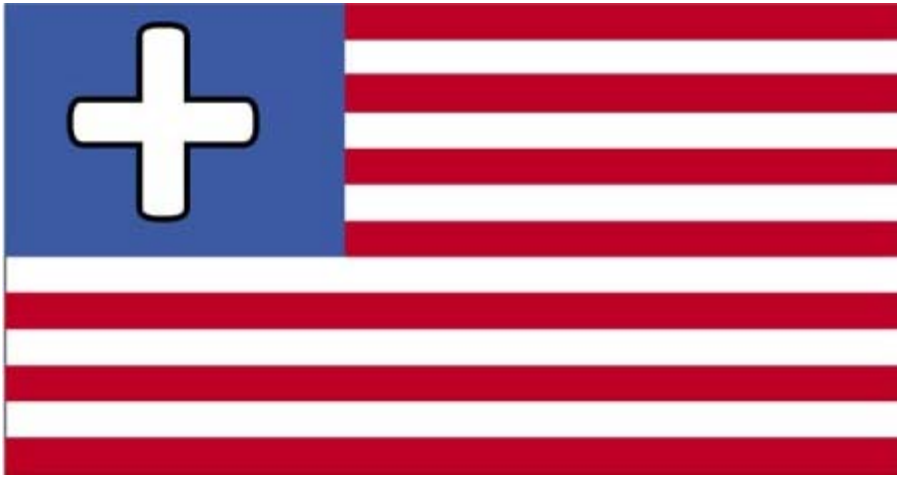
American New Right

Dec 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We're at one of those great times in history where both sides of the political equation are crossing over to the other.

This happens because each has retreated to such extreme positions they've confused their goals and methods.



Amerika.org in particular is a vanguard of what we call the "American New Right." We borrow equally from the American right (Republicans), the European New Right, and — there's no way to honey coat this — the extreme realist fringe of the green movement.

Right now, we're a movement for the readers and thinkers who are too arrogant to allow social mores to control our thoughts. We seek out sensible answers to today's problems and a sensible design for society, and we're not going to twist our truths to curry favor from a society of couch-sitting, television-addicted, self-important yet generally not very autonomous people.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

- The highest and most important question of our survival is people quality. In intelligent, health/beauty and moral character, our people must be on the whole good, or we're going to be babysitters in the monkey house. Some people are good, meaning they are productive and intelligent, healthy and of good moral character. Others are bad; these tend to have health problems, not be that attractive, and they may be clever but they are not intelligent. Bad people disguise themselves as many things, but their main activity is parasitism, whether legal or not. People are born good or bad. Their genes determine most of it but there's a roll of the dice at birth. You cannot educate the bad into the good but you can hobble and destroy the good and turn them bad.
- The goal of government is not to direct, but to conserve. Government should serve the will of the people as a whole, not be a facilitator for each individual's dreams. Civilizations are groups of people united by language, values, heritage and customs. Government must serve the role of protecting these people and their environment.
- Our environment is our lifeline and how we gauge whether we're good people. Our environment is like a giant machine that replenishes our air and water. It creates the conditions for life as we know it. Our science is puny in comparison. Obviously, we depend on it. Even more, its condition affects us mentally: when we feel that we are destructive displacers of the good, we sink into despair. When we feel we exist on an honest level with our environment, and aren't parasites, we feel good. We need to conserve half of each biome for nature — no roads, no railways, no concrete, no humans moving

through it. Just leave it alone.

- Realpolitik is in effect and always will be. Every person and country wants to rule the world, and only one can, so the others will be gunning for that one. Even more, if their neighbors have something they can use, they'll want to take it. Conflict is part of nature and when you think about it, makes sense — nothing ever goes to waste because a frail or obsolete entity is holding on to it.
- Nothing about the human condition has changed or ever will. We are the same creatures we started as and we face the same eternal problems. These don't change with technology or passing years, but get a little bit harder to spot. The idea that it's 2009 and so we should follow some progressive agenda is as ridiculous as the idea that it's 2009 and so we don't need protein in our diet any longer. History is the laboratory from which we learn what works and what doesn't, and the notion that we can throw out years of learning because an arbitrary number of years clicked forward is, well, insane.
- Any sane nation will focus on two attributes to its value system: innocence and adventure. Innocence, especially sexual innocence, keeps us loving toward the idea of family and lets us raise people with high, clean, life-embracing ideals. Adventure is what we need to be motivated, because it makes the struggle endemic to life into a form of play. Our modern lives are without grace, without innocence and without a sense of adventure, so we are both bored and cheapened.
- Finance should reflect the value of production, not of sales. Dying empires make their money circulating properties around and "adding value" to them with marketing and services. Thriving empires make things: they invent, they grow, they manufacture, and they refine. The pretense that non-service economies are somehow lower is simply that, a pretense.
- Status should reflect the value of productivity, not of social meme. Right now we have a society where people succeed by flattering each other, or using handy advertising methods to make everyone feel good, and while we're all so polite and politically correct, we're also completely alienated from the truth and as a result, ignoring the people who are doing the best things in our society. Polite, politics, and popularity have similar roots — the pandering to the assembled crowd with platitudes, cliches, glad-handing, make-work pleasantries, and by thus avoiding reality, the manipulation of others and personal profit.
- Libertarians have a point: leave people alone if they're not doing anything stupid. There are roughly three groups in any society: the good, those who destroy what the good do, and those who are in the middle. Reward the good, smite those who destroy what the good do, and ignore those in the middle until they do something exceptional. But in the meantime, leave the people who are not doing something destructive alone. We are choking on bureaucracy, rules, regulations, and nit-picking law enforcement that ends up mostly penalizing the good guys, like shearing the sheep while the wolves feast.
- Darwinism is an ongoing process. Society is a form of natural selection that determines who is rewarded and gets a chance to breed more than others, and who is encouraged to do so. Most societies kill themselves by encouraging their smartest people to remain single and "individualistic," while also rewarding the least productive people with pity that encourages them to breed. This destroys civilizations. We need to produce always better, always smarter, always healthier and more moral people — and to that end, we should discourage breeding except for the good people.
- Diversity is not a strength; it's a weakness. When everyone is moving toward roughly the same values, goals and ideals and they have roughly the same abilities, we do just fine. When people are moving in every which direction, they tend to think society is doing great for them personally, and only many years later notice the decay and inability to make decisions that was the opportunity cost of that "freedom." Let's not focus on "freedom," which means lack of accountability to reality, but instead focus on pragmatism. That means the best civilization is one with minimal diversity: similar religions, similar ethnic/racial stock, similar intelligence/class/caste, similar values, same languages, and so on. It's taboo to say this now because saying it points out that our civilization is dying and not thriving. However, it's insane to assume that radically different evolution did not produce radically different results. We can politely insist on that and separate our peoples, and not end up being such diverse failures as Brazil, Ireland, Russia, Mexico and so on. Greece and Rome were strongest when not diverse; has anyone noticed the constantly rising crime, corruption and disorder in the USA as we've gotten more diverse? The problem isn't the ingredients — blaming another race for your problems is racism — but the fact of mixture. Mixture creates confusion. Solidarity creates strength.

I'm sure these will be taboo. The Republicans will not like the green parts; the liberals will flame out about the anti-diversity and anti-class-warfare stance; the European New Right will not like our Puritan moral

ethic. Too bad — if you think through all the variables, you'll see this viewpoint is the least neurotic and most effective of all.

To incite further discontent among the latte-sipping classes:

Diversity has never worked throughout all of history. It's a way large nations announce they are dying and replacing themselves with hired labor.

Whether it's diversity of religion, of race/ethnicity, or even too much separation between classes, it destroys nations. Don't blame African-Americans, Jews, Whites or Mexicans — blame diversity!

This showed up in the comments of one of our associated blogs and just about says it all. Our dying civilization has created myths that no one wants to be the first to debunk, because these myths are of the "just do this, and it'll all be all right" superstition — which never works, by the way, because reality doesn't work that way.

We're the American New Right, and we're here to debunk these myths and scare away anyone too cowardly to face reality head-on. The past thousand years of history have been a nightmare, save the development of our technology, but now we're about to obliterate ourselves through ecocide, nuclear proliferation, continued warfare, race hatred and meaningless modern lives. Our ideas fix these problems. We've been trying liberal ideas for the past thousand years; what problems have they fixed?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Too light of a sentence

Dec 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The news is waxing boring these days.



A Chinese court sentenced a prominent dissident to 11 years on Friday — the longest term ever handed down for subversion charges, according to rights groups that say it signals the government will take an increasingly hard line against activists in the year ahead.

The sentencing of Liu Xiaobo, after he called for sweeping political reforms and an end to Communist Party dominance, also drew diplomatic criticism, with the United States saying it went against international norms.

Liu was the co-author of an unusually direct appeal for political liberalization in China called Charter 08. He was detained just before it was released last December. More than 300 people, including some of China's top intellectuals, signed it.

[AP](#)

Dissidents are neurotic people who are trying to band other neurotic people together on a mission toward reform, which they don't understand, having no background in political science.

It's a lynch mob of incompetents that wants to destroy what others have created.

Because neurotic people cluster together, they've created this mythos that wherever power is, someone is being horribly oppressed. And they're half-right in the way of noticing irrelevant detail that is in vogue right now: someone is always being oppressed. That's because many people are irrational and destructive and *need to be oppressed*.

It's just a flick of the wrist definition that we fail to notice that jailing multiple anal rapist murderers for life is not oppression. They are being oppressed. Their rights have been taken. True, they did something destructive. But what if Liu Xiaobo did as well?

Here's what liberal dissidents do:

- Encourage the population to consider itself victimized.
- Create doubt about the direction of the country.
- Demand that which works pays attention to what doesn't.

Create a sickening atmosphere of moral status competition, where each person tries to be the most liberal.

- Distract from the social mechanism where knowledge is accumulated and knowledgeable decisions are made in favor of letting each person bloviate freely about things they do not understand.
- Like a cancer, they make people feel bad for *not* being dissidents. The safe we never notice; the dangers we do. The danger of not being hip or new, or able to compete with these people described in such positive terms — progressive, liberal, munificent, benevolent, egalitarian — makes us want to be dissidents, too.
- Introducing a new status symbol. Like piety in the 1500s, patriotism in the 1940s, free love in the 1960s, big cash in the 1980s and recycling in the 2000s, being a dissident is a big status symbol. That's why all the Hollywood stars and political wives try to do it.

I don't think a just world exists, because a just world would never get anything done — it would sit in constant contemplation of the morality of each insect death or stone moved. But a practical world does, and in it, the "winner takes all" mentality that favors the strong produces clear decisions and forward motion, while the neurotic brake-slammings of dissidents slows us down.

Send Liu Xiaobo and Cindy Sheehan to the same concentration camp, preferably one of those elite ones they have in Siberia, and let's get on with life instead.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Milking the paradoxical

Dec 24th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Normally I detest these "You Might Be a Liberal If..." lists, but I figured this one could be meaningful if it were cut down to size. From [Marquette Warrior](#) via [Fourth Check Raise](#):

- IQ tests should be used to stop the death penalty, but not to determine admission to AP classes.
- The Ten Commandments in schools will hurt the children, but "Heather Has Two Mommies" won't.
- African-American, Queer and Women's Studies prepare young people for good careers, but a biology major is an outdated relic of white, misogynist domination.
- Math tests are racist, but there is nothing racist about blacks being admitted over more qualified white applicants.
- McCarthyism was wrong, but black-listing "right-wingers" from ever teaching in college is just plain old common sense. A right-winger is anyone who doesn't toe the line on all issues.
- Education is about "feeling," not knowing. Logic is the product of white male supremacy in our culture.
- The best way to care about a disease is to wear a ribbon. You must also prevent pharmaceutical companies from making a profit.
- You preach to everyone that diversity is our greatest strength, but you paid half a million dollars more for a house in an all-white suburb than you could've for the same house in a black neighborhood.
- You see racist code-words in all media except in hip-hop singles such as "Kill The White People".
- You wonder out loud, "Why can't we all just get along?"
- You oppose all racial prejudice, but think all whites are racist, consciously or not.
- Indians created the United States and Europe became great as a result of Islamic influences. On second thought, Europe isn't great.
- Black dominance in basketball is progress, but white dominance in swimming is an outrage.
- Racial profiling is wrong, but all serial killers are white and all Mexicans are hard-working family men.
- US wants to build a wall on the Mexican and not Canadian border because of racism, not because 20 million Mexicans and almost no Canadians cross into the U.S. illegally.
- Prostitution empowers women, but having a man open the door for you is degrading.
- You get out of bed, look at your naked body and at your wife's, and then think: "gender is a social construct that has no basis in science".
- Men stand in front of toilets only to promote male supremacy and should be forced by the government to sit.
- Great spirituality is found in Voodoo, but nothing in the Bible.
- Gay students should be allowed to publicly kiss in class, but Christians shouldn't be allowed to quietly pray during a break.
- The Christmas tree should be banned from public view, but that anyone objecting to pornography "only has to look the other way."
- When a Western woman travels to the Middle East, she should respect their traditions and cover up. When Moslems illegally infiltrate Europe, they have the right to expect the Westerners to adjust to them. If the Europeans don't, Moslems have every right to riot.
- Child molesters can live anywhere and maintain their privacy, but Wal-Mart should be limited to far-away places where children can't be exposed to it.
- Teenagers can't control their sexual urges no matter what we do, but child molesters and rapists can after counseling.
- Affirmative action is the way to solve racial problems in America.

- Quietly reading "The Bell Curve" on the bus is harassment, but keying someone's car for disagreeing with you is activism.
- When rape and murder statistics go up, you blame poverty.
- You say, "*Why do they hate us?*" when America is attacked and "*we're just furthering the cycle of violence*" when we retaliate.
- Truth matters less than feelings.
- None of your friends ever voted for a Republican.
- 95% of blacks voting for a black guy is normal, but 55% of whites voting for the white candidate is a sign of how flawed our racist voting system is.
- You call yourself 'progressive' but oppose all progress because somebody might get fired and replaced by a cheap and more efficient computer program.
- People aren't successful, they are privileged.
- People don't earn. They deserve.
- The Christian Right shouldn't impose their morality on you, but you want to impose big government on everyone else because otherwise they won't do the right thing.
- Playing competitive sports could do permanent harm to teenagers, but smoking weed daily and occasionally trying hard drugs is just something all college students do.
- Freedom of speech means the right to scream when a conservative tries to speak in order to prevent anyone from hearing his views.
- Everyone who disagrees with you must be reported for racism to your employer, university dean and the police.

The essence of liberalism in every movement worldwide has been this: we do not succeed or fit in what exists, so we will create a fantasy world of morality in which our way is better, and then use that to force others through guilt to come to our side.

This is different than honest morality, which means treating the world with respect and paying attention to the consequences of your actions, and different from honest progress, which means taking what is and making it better using time-proven methods — the scientific method of assess, hypothesize, prototype and repeat.

Liberalism is in short a trend, or social fashion, by which unexceptional people with no purpose or utility to their lives make themselves superstars among their captive audience. Not surprisingly, it leads to fragmentation of civilization and its downfall — as it has in every instance throughout history.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Sophomoric

Dec 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

If you spend your time working toward greater knowledge and clarity, you will some day stand on a promontory of realizations high above the thronging masses.



If you are also learning for “inside out” reasons, meaning you want to improve yourself and make yourself more effective, this will be painful. You will see how easily human life could be more meaningful, less wasteful, and more fruitful; you see the gap between that plan and any plan your fellow citizens will invent to be painful.

After all, if you’ve made it that far, you recognize their motivations and see why they won’t ever really change, even as they make nearly infinite motions of radical change. They’re like the college hipster: wearing outlandish clothes, doing the opposite of what is expected, and always into some “outside the norm” topic like Buddhism, eye booger recycling or the martial arts of the ancient but tiny Huakading tribe of the South Pacific. It’s gotta be different, you see.

Of course, if your motivations are “outside in,” meaning that you are trying to make yourself gain social status so that in turn you become more powerful, as soon as you get learning you’ll start feeling really good about yourself. Look at how far you left those others behind! They’re peons compared to you. You know the truth, and it does make you a better person. So any time they bring up their dingy and stupid ideas in conversation, you’ll set them to right.

But then that defines the crowd and the thinker: the crowd is outside-in, and the thinker, inside-out. The thinker has transcended a need for self-affirmation through external objects; the thinker assesses whether a thought has validity, and then truth, and moves on from there. The crowd wants to use thoughts that seem true as a means of advancing themselves. It’s the same sad old human tale of a bucket full of crabs, each trying to climb to the top, not realizing that real power is outside of the bucket.

They will however continue to use their “ideas” against you, and will hoodwink others into believing these

ideas, which they will then repeat in their attempts to rise in the crab bucket. They feel that if they get in a sharp word, a clever retort, a moral judgment or a zippy comeback, they have Won. In the game of immediate social discourse, they have; people laugh, and opinions are formed. In the long term however, they have only won with that insular, inbred and self-affirming group of low-confidence people who fear reality.

The best word for these people is "sophomoric," from the Greek terms for *wise fool*, because they like so many others have gained enough knowledge to think they know what they're talking about, but not to recognize the patterns and life cycles of their topic. As a result, they are like superstitious witch doctors, saying "before it rained last time, we killed a virgin. If we do it again, the rain will come" — they have compared one detail in a before/after setting, and made the conclusion that this detail is the cause of their desired outcome.

Our most popular sophomoric "wisdom" today:

- Liberalism and science are an antidote to Christianity. Rather silly, if you read history. The Enlightenment came about because... the church got liberalized, and individuals not priests interpreted the Bible. What did they seize on? Perfection of the human form and equality of individuals. That's the same as liberalism, which argues for equality of individuals and humanism, or praise for the human form and mind, except that instead of using "God" it uses moral "good." Otherwise, there's no difference. Liberals like to claim that Christians are ignorant bumpkins who take their orders from a mysterious sky-god. But if the orders are the same as those they get from their personal Reason, what's the difference?
- Darwinism is not a happy philosophy in which we are all the same. In fact, it asserts the fundamental ambiguity of life: whatever breeds more, has more of its traits prevail. That doesn't necessarily mean combat. It may mean some creatures nurturing their offspring in a more effective way. It can also be random and pointless, as in a case where a bird species that prefers blue berries to red suddenly replaces others when a new species of poisonous red berry is introduced to their island by a wandering hobo. Darwinism does not affirm equality. Instead, it points out that a struggle against equality is what enables species to have health at all.
- Anarchy is a complete and total failure. Many anarchist communities have been tried; all have failed, except those subsidized by income from "outside," usually drug or tourism related. Even the [encyclopedia of wishful thinking and fantasies by unemployed post-grads](#) has to admit that none survived, and so has to expand its definition of anarchy to mean "free market" and "female empowerment." Anarchy means rule by theft and violence; civilization is its antidote.
- Liberal states tend to be collapsing states. Throughout history, we see liberal states pop up to the praise of the cosmopolitan, over-educated, make-work job holding class. They clap their little soft hands and praise the progressive alternative! But then as time goes on, the liberal society slides into either third-world levels of disorganization, or collapses outright. Even without the examples of France and Russia, who liberalized and dropped their average IQ by ten points, we can see a history of liberal states being a sharing of good feelings before the collapse.
- Life is struggle. So much of our human discourse involves trying to find a safe answer where everyone comes home alive and is presumed to live forever. We hate destruction, so we avoid destructive-seeming acts, not realizing that life is like a forest: if something does not periodically burn out the underbrush, we set up the conditions for a massive fire. Avoiding struggle is setting up the underbrush and lining it with napalm. Our voters and marketers are afraid of wars, deprivation and conflict because they are unpopular, but they are necessary to avoid even bigger conflicts.
- Power is literal. We fear Malthus, realpolitik and Machiavelli because they affirm something we know in our inner hearts: the struggle for power is merciless, and it is merciless so that a decision is always reached. A world of compromise and safe accords would be a boring one where dynamic change was impossible. Malthus shows us that often succeeding is the worst kind of failure, because we can drown in our own successes; realpolitik tells us that there must always be a big boss in any theatre of power, and that others will try to exterminate him; Machiavelli (and Homer, come to think of it) reminds us that crafty manipulation and ruthless seizure of power are often the best path to the stability for everyone.
- Diversity of all forms is destructive. Although I'm not the biggest Ann Coulter fan, she nails it:

Never in recorded history has diversity been anything but a problem. Look at Ireland with its Protestant and Catholic populations, Canada with its French and English populations, Israel with its Jewish and Palestinian populations.

Or consider the warring factions in India, Sri Lanka, China, Iraq, Czechoslovakia (until it happily split up), the Balkans and Chechnya. Also look at the festering hotbeds of tribal warfare — I mean the beautiful mosaics — in Third World hellholes like Afghanistan, Rwanda and South Central, L.A.

"Diversity" is a difficulty to be overcome, not an advantage to be sought. True, America does a better job than most at accommodating a diverse population. We also do a better job at curing cancer and containing pollution. But no one goes around mindlessly exclaiming: "Cancer is a strength!" "Pollution is our greatest asset!"

[At the End of the Day, Diversity has jumped the shark, horrifically](#)

This applies to all forms in which we can have diversity: of values system, of opinion, of religion, ability (IQ and otherwise), of ethnicity. This does not mean we favor "monoculture," but that everyone be pulling in roughly the same direction.

Right now, there is no greater taboo than speaking against diversity, because it ties in to two of our biggest sacred cows: first, equality as a means of class warfare, or protecting the masses of us against those who have higher ability and might take it all; second, the idea of the individual as coming from a "blank slate" in which we are each the architects of ourselves, nevermind that the best evidence suggests we inherit our personalities, intelligence and bodies and make only minor modifications in our lifespans.

- There is no way we are not affecting our world. You have a straw man in the public eye, global warming, which is used as a surrogate for all of our impact on the environment, and which has become a political pawn for third-world financial revenge against the first world. But think of all we don't mention: the overfishing, the loss of natural habitats, the inability to find a square foot of earth without a crushed coke can or cigarette butt, the pollution and the trace elements we have rearranged. Climate change is bad news, surely, but it's probably more complex than just carbon — most likely, the real culprit is our concrete cities reflecting heat while we remove the forests that renew moisture and oxygen while we also pollute. Global warming is like blaming our fingernail polish color for ruining an hideous outfit: many things are wrong, but it makes us feel comfortable to zero in on one.

All of these fears — fear of the more competent, fear of lack of autonomy of the individual, fear of power — boil down to a single human trait: fear of incompetence. I don't think any longer that death is what we fear; in fact, I think many embrace death because it ends their lives without requiring their own intervention. What we do fear is powerlessness, insignificance, being left out, and so on. So we create a herd mentality that obligates others to include us, immediately fostering an environment of servile insincerity.

Our sophomoric reasoning may have arisen from any number of potential causes that are also its effects, like egalitarianism, religious strife, class warfare, lowered intelligence, populism and so on. But decay is a complex process that rarely has a single starting point; instead, it has many potential starting points from which the disease spreads to all others. Think of the organ systems: if the heart starts to fail, so do the lungs, and eventually the brain, and if any of those started to fail first, the process would happen in reverse. It's not a linear process but a parallel one, like all complex things in life.

We insist on a reality that feels good to us. We use it to make others feel happy so we can sell them products or ideas. Then, we are dismayed that we have obscured actual reality, and people prefer the fake reality. It's like the mice in the lab experiment where pushing a button gets them cocaine; well, who wants to go back to dreary lab cage reality when there's coke around? They push the button until they starve.

The smartest among us have been talking, for many centuries, about “waking up.” We live in a dream, they remind us; a dream made of our combined populist notions, democratic votes, consumerist marketing and social/politeness viewpoints which we trade around like Monopoly money. Our decline has gotten to the point where we cannot talk honestly about even the most basic aspects of our society, so we do not make decisions, so the process continues unraveling while we sit in the middle like neurotic rape victims wondering what’s happening to us.

Each generation passes these problems to another. The positive way to look at this is that they solved the problems they could, but are leaving the ones they could not. It’s time for us to accept the fear of speaking taboo, and very professionally sidestep it, so we don’t leave our children even bigger problems. Life is worth living and so it’s worth living well, which means we need to abandon the sophomoric tendency of picking only the few attributes of reality we want to see, and instead, we need to start thinking structurally about it, considering every factor at once — but that requires that first we get honest with ourselves.

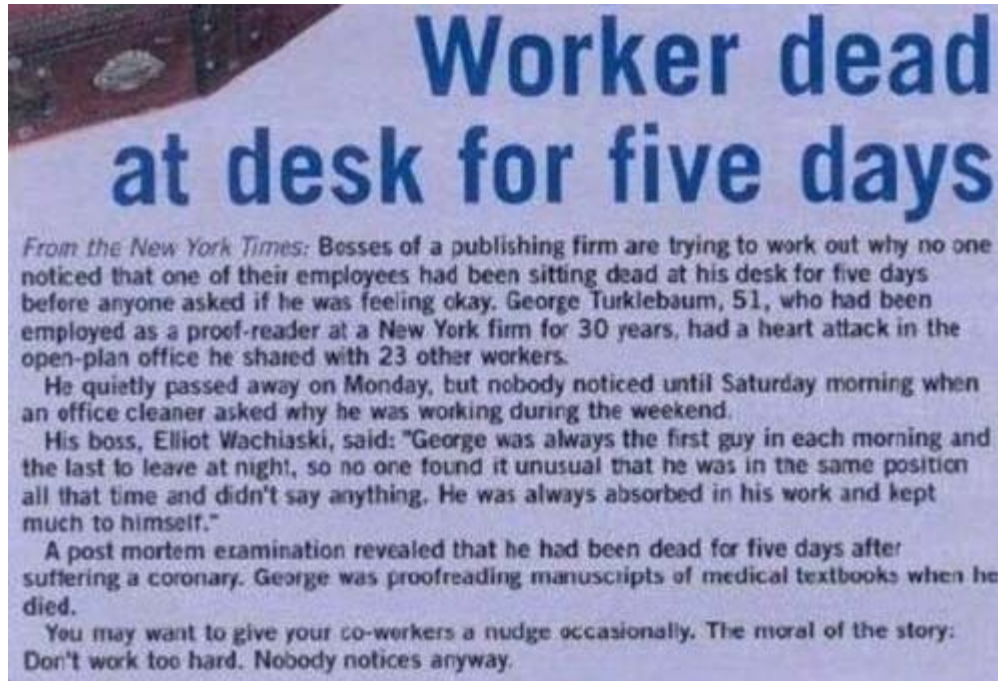
Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Employment as contract

Nov 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

As time has gone on, our culture has changed to an adversarial one between employer and employee, where people are either “tools” who exhibit sycophantic self-abuse, or surly, grudging “workers” who secretly conspire against their consumerist capitalist feudal overlords.



In my view, the one good thing that came out of the dotcom boom — if for a moment we forget all the effete twee uselessness of web sites that calculate the length of toilet paper you'll need based on what you ate — was the idea of viewing employment in a different sense:

- Employees are capable people specialized in something they like doing, so should be able to pursue their own interests in that field at work (Google).
- The office should have a culture that re-aligns people to what the company does well, and takes pride in that as much as profitability (Apple).
- The division between contractor and employee should be blurred with the recognition that employees who are not working to potential will get bored and move on (IBM).
- Offices should be open, clean, comfortable and convenient places to work where employee needs like daycare and flexible time are addressed (Microsoft).

I think this proposes a sensible basis for *collaboration*, which I see as more important than *rights*.

Workers rights, like any other rights-oriented activity, creates unnecessary polarization and bureaucracy by the very nature of pitting two absolute demands against each other: the market versus the rights of the worker.

“Rights” work when there’s no need to compete and there are endless resources to satisfy every need. But in the workplace, and the markets that control its success, this is not the case. If you relax and stop getting better at what you do, you’ve become one of those calcified fence-sitters that everyone loves to hate, pumping out the same product and taking home the profits.

Obviously, this varies with industries. You’re not going to find a way to make better pickled okra, most

likely, or find a better way to cut lawns. But competition is part of nature because it's a mathematically sensible design: one entity will lapse into solipsism and stop adapting, but if there's two or more, they keep each other driven to do a good job and/or adapt in new ways. This type of design doesn't require a "right answer" but provides infinite space for *more right* answers to successively get better at a task, without knowing what the optimal nature of that task is.

Similarly, not all workers are going to find themselves inclined toward this new relationship. Unskilled and semi-skilled laborers have no incentive to change toward this new arrangement because they are not as portable or specialized as others. However, they can benefit as well from a workplace which is not based on adversity, but collaboration.

With all the bloviation about the swine flu recently, employers have started to take a positive step — sending people who look sick home to work or, not to work, but in either case, stopping them from spreading the illness to everyone in the office. Others employers are allowing flexible time or four-day work weeks to save gasoline and carbon credits.

Viewing employment as a contract in which both partners are willing participants, and then giving up fighting as if working is a given, liberates us from resentment and allows the kind of workplace I describe above.

It's possible we've gotten so decadent as a culture that we can only see ourselves as victims who must revenge ourselves upon our employers, but we can change this outlook for not only better function, but better mental health.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Solipsism and inversion

Nov 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



In our modern time, we like to show how enlightened we are and talk about “big concepts” like relativity — as long as they confirm our viewpoints, and let us go back to doing whatever it is we do in our personal sphere.

For all our blather about relativity, we don’t understand that we are part of any equation, and that it not only applies to us but refers back to us.

Those who are free of this delusion recognize that no statement exists in an absolute context, and that we self-reference by any statement we make — and that if we don’t recognize that, we’re solipsists who assume the external world is part of ourselves and that we reign over it like gods, not needing to see or reveal where we fit in the equation.

We can see this most clearly in some of the socially-popular memes that people use to “justify away” ideas, or explain why they’re not relevant. Here’s the first:

Person 1: As you can see, each nation that adopted crack smoking as a national passtime is also deeply impoverished.

Person 2: Correlation is not causation, therefore we cannot assume the two are connected.

They say “correlation is not causation” as if to imply that if you find a correlation, it’s proof of an *acausal* relationship.

But the truth is that correlation is not causation and correlation is not not-causation either; it’s just correlation, and can coexist with either causation or lack thereof.

That of course ruins an easy way of explaining away troubling trends, and so is not popular because like all things that show us they’re a problem, it demands we either fix it — or face our own reluctance, cowardice, powerlessness or other lack of ability to fix it.

Here’s another case of solipsism in argument:

Person 1: Here's an idea I had...

Person 2: This guy really thinks he knows what he's talking about.

Person 3: You're implying that you know better, and therefore, you really think you know what you're talking about.

[Internet Follies](#)

Here we have an inversion: accuse others of what you are doing yourself. If someone says something you don't like, imply that they're placing themselves above others as an authority — ignoring the fact that you're doing the same by presuming to judge their intent and viability of their argument.

Ignoring the inversion presents a problem because it allows people to imply authority through passive aggression, and as a result, use that assumed authority to tear down anyone with an idea other than the status quo.

And with humanity, the status quo is always solipsism. "I want to do what I'm doing now, and I don't want you to interrupt it, no matter what the consequences may be." Defending personal autonomy is seen as more important than dealing with consequences, and to avoid conflict, we avoid attacking personal autonomy — which allows people to continue doing stupid, bad, destructive, passive, erosive and corrupt things.

Unless they're so blatant as to get caught, or be seen doing them in public, of course. But Plato was hip to our inversion and solipsism as well, when in his parable of the ring of the Lydian Gyges, he says that given a ring which confers invisibility, a bad man will hide his bad deeds and show his good deeds, while a good man will hide his good deeds and show his bad deeds, so that good men appear bad and bad men appear good.

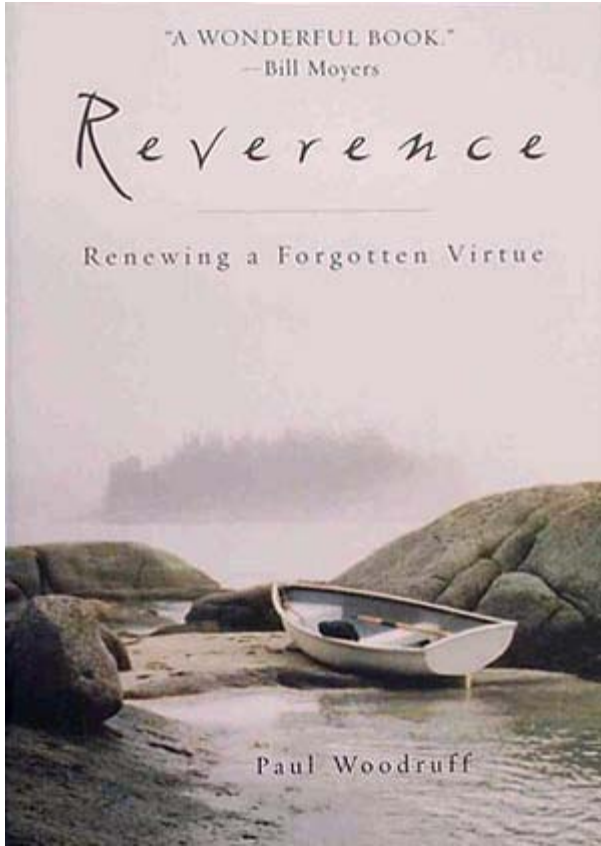
That's the ultimate inversion, and one common to any social circumstance including a civilization, so the one most likely to be its downfall.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue, by Paul Woodruff

Nov 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

[Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue, by Paul Woodruff.](#)
\$11, [Oxford University Press](#))



This little book wins people over because of its simplicity not its rhetorical fireworks or intricate arguments. When you think about it, distilling a simple truth out of a complex situation is either supremely difficult, or strikingly dishonest.

In this case, I believe, it's the former. Reverence is "the virtue that keeps human beings from trying to act like gods," says Woodruff, and we've forgotten it. That jives with what I know of people arrogantly acting as if their own needs are all-important, their opinions are fact, their science and statistics are more important than observation and, most of all, that we're all equal and better toe the line and not offend anyone — or else.

All of these things originate in what Woodruff describes as the irreverent outlook, where we believe that our emotions, socially-defined conclusions, social status and shared memes somehow trump ultimate reality itself. In short, we've made ourselves gods and replaced paying attention to reality with solipsistically paying attention to ourselves.

Nietzsche pointed out how humanism leads to solipsism that denies all that's good in life so we can avoid conflict, and get along like good equal social animals, nevermind that we've traded the future for temporarily stability today:

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented

knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die. One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. There were eternities during which it did not exist.

And when it is all over with the human intellect, nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no additional mission which would lead it beyond human life. Rather, it is human, and only its possessor and begetter takes it so solemnly — as though the world's axis turned within it. But if we could communicate with a gnat, we would learn that he likewise flies through the air with the same solemnity, that he feels the flying center of the universe within himself. There is nothing so reprehensible and unimportant in nature that it would not immediately swell up like a balloon at the slightest puff of this power of knowing. And just as every porter wants to have an admirer, so even the proudest of men, the philosopher, supposes that he sees on all sides the eyes of the universe telescopically focused upon his action and thought.

[On truth and lies in an extra-moral sense, by F.W. Nietzsche](#)

In Woodruff's view, the human tendency to view human commentary on the world as inherent truth is diametrically opposed to a transcendent worldview, in which we place ourselves mentally as small parts of a big world, and pay attention to how it works and adapt ourselves to it.

Through this transcendence, he reasons, we can interpret any belief system in the correct context, and assess any fact or reason in context, giving us the ultimate simple tool for finding a realistic solution or way of life.

Even more, as he argues in plain "psychologist speak" with a heavy dose of literary and philosophical references, we learn to appreciate ourselves again by not taking on an insane burden of the world but by seeing it as the magnificent, complex system it is and alleviating our feelings of the necessity of moral judgment.

Reverence doesn't tell us what is right and wrong. It is instead the ultimate meta-level thought, telling us how to think about how we think about right and wrong. Although it will not grab headlines, this simple thought-virus is profound enough to make this book recommended reading for those in any discipline, religion, ideology or stage of life.

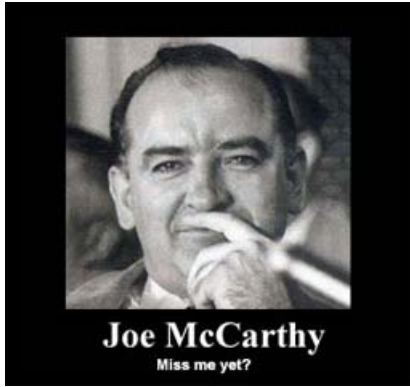
Diversity our greatest liability

Nov 22nd, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

"My fellow Americans, we must never, ever believe that our diversity is a weakness — it is our greatest strength."

William Jefferson Clinton, State of the Union 1997



Twelve years after this insidious slogan was uttered and accepted by [our obliviot voting population](#), the contrary results continue to reveal themselves. Maybe it is more accurate to look to 50 years of Civil Rights activism and our shift to open immigration that helped prepare the field and sow the seeds of decay that now blossom in our midst.

Terrorist incidents over the past 12 months show that Islamic extremists within the U.S. increasingly are launching attacks against targets such as military bases, anti-terrorist experts said today.

"The threat is now increasingly from within, from homegrown terrorists who are inspired by violent Islamist ideology to plan and execute attacks where they live," Mitchell Silber, director of intelligence analysis for the New York City Police Department, said.

[yahoo](#)

But wait, isn't there more to American diversity than individual actors dedicated to radical Islam? In the name of humanitarian political and economic asylum, American "social justice" advocates have been encouraging the remnants of foreign rebel armies to set up camp in your home town.

MS-13 is believed to have originated in El Salvador, as a response to a brutal civil war. But some immigrants to the U.S. brought the gang mentality with them, where it spread like a disease. They are known to be extremely violent and seem to go out of their way to commit the kinds of atrocities that will get them noticed by police and the press. Membership is said to range in age from as young as 11 to as old as 40.

[citytv](#)

While the social justice people are hard at work dumping the world's problems on excessively privileged, and thus unequal you, science instead takes a hard look at population numbers and ecological footprint for an [alternative to obliviot liberal activism](#).

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Renaissance humanism also fails us today

Nov 20th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).



Once upon a time, populations weren't diverse, at least not anywhere near to the forced extent they are today.

Some of these non-diverse populations started to think of ways to avoid conflict among themselves, which included thinking about ending fratricide.

One consequence of the development of humanist philosophy during the Renaissance was the increased emphasis on the importance of education.

[about](#)

Later, these same populations began to take in different newcomers from all over the planet. At first, they treated these people as tools beneath the level of beasts or as funny exotic oddities.

Then, guilt wormed its way in through various channels and the opposite ludicrous extreme occurred as a call went out to insist everybody was a supremely dignified The Same.

In a ranking of 50 states and D.C. by how much each spent per pupil in public schools in 2005, New York ranked first; D.C. third. The state spent \$14,100, and New York City just a tad less.

And the bountiful fruits of this massive transfer of taxpayers' wealth?

Still later, cognitive dissonance began to seep in between the widening cracks. We wanted to keep insisting everyone is the same because like defecating is the ugly outcome of attractive feasting, conflict is the ugly half of our interactions.

The socially polite assertions, a desperate clenching of the gluteus maximus to keep unattractive reality concealed, kept blaring out of the televisions, movie theaters, preacher's pulpits, teacher's podiums, politician's soapboxes and newsman's microphone, all the while conflicting with the empirical results back in the real world.

Bodily toxifying within, because nature will not be resisted only delayed in vain, society pukes forth the ugly nonetheless:

Yet last week came a report from New York that makes D.C look like M.I.T. Some 200 students, in their first math class at City University of New York, were tested on their basic math skills.

Ninety percent could not do basic algebra. One-third could not convert a decimal into a fraction.

[takimag](#)



The answer is less likely found in equally educating with blindness to differences which is on the inside a rotten excuse to not bother with people on an individual basis due to sheer population numbers today. The excuse's more marketable, friendlier face is called Equal Treatment.

The more likely solution is identifying some best fit vocational path choices on an individual basis. To manage this, since mass social programs alone are generating a lot of mediocre life stories at best, parents themselves would need better tools, possibly including [Myers-Briggs typology](#) to identify the individual features of their own children for improved guidance.

Society itself needs to stop insisting that In America, Anyone Can Be President, CEO, groundbreaking scholar, or musical genius because the reality was always that only the rare few get to rise above the rest. Because equality was always no more than comforting illusion, the rest of us in all our great numbers are lost to history forever. I believe we can choose to be adult enough to accept this understanding of our own limitations, ditch the collective ego drama culture, and move on to things better in life than fantasy delusions of humanistic grandeur.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [liberalism](#)

Economy better off with less people

Nov 18th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

While there aren't necessarily less people in the U.S. than in recent years, there are less people working and there is less spending. Under this scenario, the following report came as a surprise for many people:

Stocks continued to move higher and the Dow Jones Industrial Average hit a new 2009 intraday high Monday, extending a strong run fueled by the flow of easy money to support global economic recovery.

The Dow was recently up 176 points, or 1.7%, to 10199.43. The measure is on pace for a fourth straight daily gain and a new closing high for the year.

[wsj](#)



We have about as large a population as ever, but millions have been virtually exiled from the economy by way of job loss, to expired unemployment compensation, on down to complete destitute homelessness.

They may remain consumers to some extent, but to be sure, they are no longer producers. Let's not count the few million self-exiles incarcerated, institutionalized, and the several who have dropped out of the system entirely to rough it in the wilderness.

So far we have learned the market is, or was at the time up, a likely hiccup, but that [Obama administration spending](#) is also up variously for corporate and public welfare. This is the cause of the stock market hiccup. The number of productive working people doesn't appear to be climbing, so it is of questionable value to point to rising stocks for one given reporting period:

The jobless rate rocketed to 10.2 percent in October, the highest since early 1983, dealing a psychological blow to Americans as they prepare holiday shopping lists. It was another worse-than-expected report casting a shadow over the struggling recovery.

[yahoo](#)

With unemployment across the board, labor migration from the southern border has taken its own losses for about a year now:

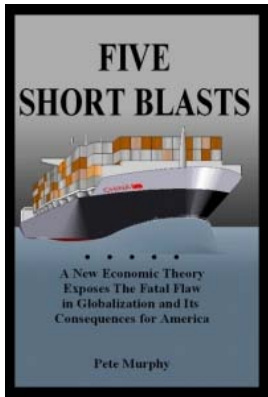
According to informal surveys by the Mexican consulate in Dallas, most of those wanting to return to Mexico cite the sudden scarcity of jobs, fear of deportation and uncertainty about obtaining legal resident status any time soon.

In the last few years, and particularly the last few months, Mr. Sánchez struggled to find work.

His earnings dwindled as his children grew up and their needs multiplied.

"People like me, if you don't work one day, you worry about how to feed your family the next day," he said. "We as immigrant workers never have stability, even if the economy is doing well. Imagine how things are now."

[dallasnews](#)



Looking back to the Clinton administration, we can recall the growth of the information technology sector, the IT bubble, which would bust soon after Bush took office. When the bubble was inflating, demand for trained IT people was up.

Twelve years ago, ordinary Americans who were unskilled or underskilled labor at the time found ways to get certifications like the commonplace MCSE or even a technical degree. Many of them went on to make a decent living in IT for a few years until the tech bubble burst and mass layoffs took place under the first Bush term.

The Clinton IT bubble created a demand for new unskilled laborers to flip burgers, house clean, mow lawns, hammer trusses, lay up drywall, or pour concrete. We added millions of immigrants to fill this gap and they brought families. So for several years, we operated with a larger population than ever, mostly employed and consuming.

But then there was another bubble bust with the housing collapse, an end to many new construction proposals and the banks seizing up new credit for growth capital. Now, we have some low wage laborers making their exit, the unemployed masses, the broken homeless, the long term institutionalized, and a handful of voluntary society dropouts.

That's less productive people operating in the economy and less consumerism. Yet, if you are one of the remaining productive consumers, life goes on much as before, except perhaps with a bit less crowding in some places, less traffic in other places, and a little more quiet at times.

Does America have an ideally stable [optimum population density](#) that is similar in ways, and possibly parallels ecological carrying capacity?

One of the older online domains takes us in for a closer look:

"In 1990 the nonrenewable resources remaining in the ground would have lasted 110 years at the 1990 consumption rates. No serious resource limits were in evidence. But by 2020 the remaining resources constituted only a 30-year supply. Why did this shortage arise so fast? Because exponential growth increases consumption and lowers resources.

So, real progress is found in the maintenance of an equilibrium factoring tech level or affluence, population numbers and the carrying capacity of our living space, which includes to lesser extents, foreign trade with the carrying capacity of places abroad.

Progress is evidently not found, as popular notions would have it, in perpetual growth.

"As both food and nonrenewable resources become harder to obtain in this simulated world, capital is diverted to producing more of them. That leaves less output to be invested in basic capital growth.

[dieoff](#)

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Politics](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Remaking modern society

Nov 16th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

Some [metal message board](#) member offers a challenge.

Assumption: we often discuss politics and this domain has its own definite views.

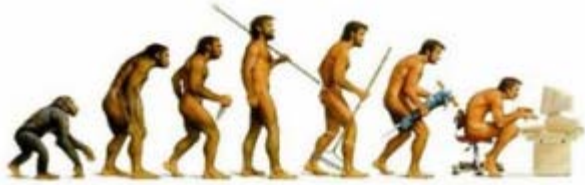
But we are taught democracy, capitalism and liberal civil/women's rights together comprise "freedom," and that anything but freedom is "bad." So what can we do? We shrug and watch the ongoing travesty, certain we cannot with these hands and these minds do anything to reverse the course toward total destruction. After all, this path to death runs parallel with "progress" and "freedom," which are bringing us an enlightened time, free of wars and want — or is that too illusion? We wonder, and do nothing. There is nothing we can do ...or is there?

[Environmentalism Contra Democracy](#)

Query: if our own regime was in power, what policies would it implement?

Parameter 1: be an essentially environmentalist regime.

Parameter 2: avoid extreme measures to attain radical goals.



Solution: create a radical social reconstruction of human self-image.

If this reconstruction were directly made policy, it would constitute an extreme measure. *Citizen, understand you are a delusional primate or get tasered in the face.* This is a breach of parameter 2. Instead, we would need policy change directed at the cause of [human self-image](#) today that undermines our naturalist and traditionalist goals.

For the individual, early in life we explain to them they are human beings, not beautiful butterflies. Just human. They are going to make big mistakes. The important part is not to find all sorts of ways to [feel better](#) after failure, but instead to learn. By learning, similar to evolution, error is weeded out so that what works prevails.

For groups, self-expression has been dumbed down to its simplest form. Where in the past, body art would symbolize real meaning, today piercings are personality accessories marketed everywhere like any other consumer product.

In the past, a high seas sailor might have gotten piercings or tattoos after completion of a particularly memorable journey that might have been harrowing or otherwise extraordinary.



Other body art might serve as a lifelong mark of affiliation with some organization. Branding might have been used to indicate those in society who have been marked for disdain like a criminal or slave.

Self-expression today is another effect of humanism taken to ludicrous extremes of meaningless fantasy: anyone can be anything as everything is now accessible and thus nothing has real value for us.

To summarize so far, if [modern people are encouraged to seek comfort rather than improvement](#) and everything has been dumbed down to products with price tags, but still have no meaningful value, we have much work ahead of us.

Mere non-intrusive, or seamless policy changes are not going to be enough. Similarly, having every school kid take an ecology class or having a department of consumer affairs isn't making a non-destructive population, the majority of whom care about the [parts of the world](#) that aren't just pockets of their own social reality.

It is small wonder that a term as broadly allusive as humanism should be subject to a wide variety of applications. Of these (excepting the historical movement described above) there are three basic types: humanism as Classicism, humanism as referring to the modern concept of the humanities, and humanism as human-centredness.

[britannica](#)

Like so many terms in use today that could mean just about anything, or nothing in particular, we'll need to specify our use of humanism as anthropocentricity; our prevailing human-centredness. Because it is the simplest, requiring the least intelligence and character to comprehend and apply, it is also arguably the most frequent type of humanism found among people today, hence our emphasis on anthropocentric.

So, if anything needs to change, it is the modern humanism. Individualism and rampant consumerism work to reinforce the culture of selfishness that consequently operates against whatever environmental policy our hypothetical regime may have.

In other words, there would be a constant state of conflict arising from the contradiction between ruling



policy and ordinary public life the people are accustomed to.

But we are taught democracy, capitalism and liberal civil/women's rights together comprise "freedom," and that anything but freedom is "bad."

A regime that began to tamper with the individual pursuit of comfort would be short-lived because it would soon be voted out of power by the humanist majority crowd. Therefore, any policies such a regime implemented would likely find themselves replaced by a more crowd pleasing, liberal administration.

Since only an elected democratic government has the authority to create and apply public policy, we would instead need to work on public culture and public perception. A new set of values would have to get generally accepted.

There would need to be peer pressure, ridicule, or ostracism directed at the old backward humanists that are running our civilization into a dead end: the poseurs, the hipsters, the crowd.

But, the friendlier side of coercion is persuasion and reward. If we [work](#) together to lock the humanism vampire in its tomb, you get to be a part of a future that has something to look forward to.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [humanism](#) · [liberalism](#) · [progressivism](#)

Bukkake and your daughter

Nov 12th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



Argument to the extremes is debater's shorthand for a criticism of any proposed idea by taking it to its most overblown, least-restricted, fully anarchistic conclusion.

For example, I say "legalize drugs" and you say "then you'll have mothers giving their babies crack in order to keep them quiet."

It seems absurd, but it sometimes coincides with reality through something I call *chronological decay* of ideals. Like the game of Secret when we were kids, where at one side of a room a secret was whispered and got passed along by word of mouth until, at the other side of the room, it barely resembled the original.

We call this decay because it means that any complex idea, over time, becomes the simplest possible interpretation of the original idea.

This is how the idea of a meritocracy, or equality of opportunity, decays into subsidy, or the idea that all get doled out cash until we're on equal footing.

It's how the idea of a perfect mental state, or Nirvana, got boiled down until we think of Heaven as a place like an eternal sports bar. All the drinks are free.

Whenever someone pitches you an idea, you have to assess how it will decay. The question isn't what it would look like if we forced it on the world right now, but how the world would react, how the idea would then adjust, for several cycles.

Most people treat ideas like shopping: they see what ending condition they want to achieve, and try to impose it directly. That almost never works, of course, because to get to an ending condition you need to create the conditions that perpetually renew it.

For example, we want to end poverty so we hand out food. Or we want to end road congestion, so we build more roads. Or we want to end pollution, so we make polluting a crime. But what about the origins of those problems? There are people out there who can't find a way to get food; there are too many people

trying to use roads; and there are too many reasons to save money by polluting. In addition, there are probably logical and “moral” (getting along with civilization through personal values system) failings.

When we don't treat ideas as shopping, we realize that what we demand today will become the cause of future, simpler, more extreme changes.

So it was with the sexual revolution. The idea was the our original concept of sex — as a sacred role which is part of creation of families and maintenance of honest and balanced love between men and women — was outdated, and we should acknowledge that if we deconstruct it, sex is just an act like any other bodily function. So we should strip any *imposed* meaning from it, and distill it down to what it actually is.

However, the word “is” becomes problematic because then we're describing an event like a physical object, and assuming it does not have implications and does not change as a result over time. For example, murder “is” simply an act; we should remove all those *imposed* ideas of it being impractical, wrong or anti-social and just look at it like a bodily function. Nevermind the consequences of tomorrow.



So it was with the sexual revolution, which was the culmination of several degeneracies. First, the idea of Romantic love decayed from the fulfillment of a sacred role to the fulfillment of complete egomania between two people. Because that was out of control, society retaliated by making marriage a kind of ownership. Then, we had to get female parity in ownership. Finally, we had made marriage into a physical object: a legal contract, a form of detente, another possession like a house plant which can be owned like anything else, but must be watered with kindness twice a week.

From our sexual revolution in the 1960s came the idea that since *some* notions of marriage and holiness and family were corrupt, *all* must be, therefore we should entirely deconstruct sex. Make it a bodily function, up for barter and transaction. Treat it like an object, not a series of consequences and integrations into more complex cycles of cause/effect and process.

Forty years later, that idea has decayed as well.

We all expected extremes, because making sex an object and not a role immediately brought us closer to the proposition of the prostitute, who saw it as simply renting some flesh and paying for cleanup. But with each generation, those extremes — usually derived from media, which in this case is pornography — decay to their simplest level and are appropriated by the sexual population as a whole.

Feeling the frisson of difference between the decent and the indecent is no longer the dialectic of visual titillation. The sheer hard work of contemporary porn informs you that, without delusion, sex is just like everything else – grinding, relentless, boring (albeit multiply boring). The pneumatic Calvinism of rubberised piston porn-duty, the grim orgasm of unsmiling physical toil. As if the abject fallenness of humanity, its total depravity, has been fused with the work that may be the only faint method of glimpsing the sovereign God's decision...From erection to election... Annabel Chong's 251 men in ten hours, refusing payment from the massive video sales (or letting the matter slide, which is the same thing) – on man 161, what kind of God wouldn't have allowed a brief splinter of heavenly light to filter down onto the back of her ravaged, kneeling, broken body?

[Cinestatic](#)

Pornography is distinctive because it yanks sex entirely out of context. There's a brief pretense of plot, and then they launch right into it. The lead up is gone, as are the consequences. You just get the extended money shot, and don't have to consider origins or consequences.



This is comforting to our minds because it is easily achieved. In order to ask a girl out, you have to take a risk between initiating the action and seeing the consequences. If you have sex with her, there will be consequences, even if you flee the state (for example, you might miss her, or never meet your child). But in porn, none of this exists. Everything becomes an object: bodies, feelings, justifications.

And this is what we've done to sex, in an ongoing process of getting simpler and more deconstructed and thus less likely to be attached to any context. Yesterday's taboos are today's norms. But yesterday and today keep changing so that we progress toward ever more extreme levels of detachment.

In part, this is driven by the need for ever greater heights of stimulation. That in turn pre-supposes that the sex act itself is the stimulation, and not, say, the turn-on of being with someone you admire and want to be with in a larger, sacral, less singular sense. For all these people having sex like crazy, it seems much of it is bad sex not because it's incompetent, but because like a TV advertisement or dollar note floating on the breeze, it lacks the context that would engage us with it.

How long before we consider bukkake a norm?

A sex act, originating in Japan, involving a large group of men taking turns ejaculating on a woman's face.

[UrbanDictionary](http://UrbanDictionary.com)

Dear reader, you've probably noticed that most of this blog so far has been focused on abstractions and institutions of society. But now I want to ask you a personal question: if you had a daughter, would you want her doing this?

Scroll through your list of remembered appropriate responses and pick one:



We all know the overwhelmingly safe answer. Just say, "Well, if that's her choice and what she wants to do, I'll support her." That way, you appear to be supporting freedom and autonomy of the individual, as well as the idea that individuals as a group know what they're doing and are not in a process of learning and growing in which guidance, like research materials in a science lab, is essential.

But more likely you're thinking you're not sure if the girls you might see in bukkake videos end up with the kind of life you envision for your daughter. After all, love and family are good. So is, when you think about it, innocence toward all the bad and ugly in life. If you end up in a bukkake video, what are your chances of those?

There's also the sinking feeling — mentioned to me by many people from many walks of life — that sex is like any experience without context: the more of it you have, the more you are numbed to any significance it might have. Like being in a prison camp, or seeing people get shot, or even just going to some job you hate. After a while, you become numb.

Even more, you get that creepy feeling of inauthentic when you have to think about what name to scream out during moments of pleasure.



That's the future your daughter has when you pick a bad idea today.

You, like I, probably like to think that with our expert learning-as-we-go parenting and her common sense, she'll avoid that. But what if it really is the norm — something we as parents will not see? What if that credit card bill comes due, and it's really no more of a choice than picking which coffee shop or law firm to work out?

What if, in other words, society convinces itself to approve of something we know is destructive, and our daughters have to face it with no backup from their peers, teachers, the media or even government and churches? They're on their own against a pervasive social phenomenon which no one will recognize is a bad move until it's much too late (as history shows us with all subtle, pervasive, radical evils).

Ideas decay over time. Deconstructive ideas do not stop at their state when you see them. They keep deconstructing, because that's their mode: split things apart, thus enhancing the number of choices available to the individual by distancing themselves from consequences.

In the opposite way, ideas that integrate together cause and effect, object and context, meaning and application, tend to keep growing in integration — but they're limited because at some point you have to say, "Yep, everything's connected, but we can only look at this particular segment at this time."

So we have two basic modes of thought, one of which tears everything apart, although it does make us feel as if there are no consequences for our actions... and another, which while reminding us that actions have causes and consequences, keeps our attitude toward life reverent and reminds us that life is sacred.

Even the most innocent of acts, like making love.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The blame game

Nov 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The internet is amazing because every person on it is a cheerleader. They're out there shouting their truth so that you think they're cool even if they've kind of failed at life.

Many agree humanity's in trouble; most awakened only when this temporary recession hit, and their consumption and defecation was interrupted. Here are some of the reasons they give for our downfall, and some hilariously obvious refutations:

- The rich – except the rich have existed in every society, and have not brought each one down.
- The two-party system – except that multi-party systems like Europe are also in trouble.
- Technology – except that theoretically, we're in control of our technology.
- Christians – except that Christians are very disorganized, internally divided, and most of them are politically inactive.
- ("The") Jews – except that if Jews ruled the world, we wouldn't be having this discussion.
- The media – except the media delivers a product someone wants to buy.
- Government and authority – except that without these, we'd be oppressing each other.
- Giant, evil corporations – except these simply sell products that people are willing to buy, and are already heavily regulated.

So none of these make sense. But what do they have in common?

They're all external to the speaker. Finding a conspiracy under the bed is a high mental complexity version of saying, "It's not my fault; the nearest authority figure is oppressing me."

If we look deeply into human psychology, we can see these people are self-deceiving because instead of looking honestly for a cause, they don't care about the cause — they're looking for something to blame.

What is the root cause?



Since 1789, Western Civilization has steadily been adopting the idea that liberal democracy is the best system of government, and with that comes the idea that all individuals are equal and should be able to choose their own lifestyles. Nowadays we call that "consumerism."

We could if we were honest point out that while individualism is vital to the West, as it keeps us from groupthink, too much of it leads to an ever-widening circle of egalitarianism and through it, conformity.

In short, individualism becomes groupthink based on individualism, which has been re-framed as avoidance of obligation to civilization in exchange for demanding the same right for others. It's a virus.

This egalitarianism leads to the overthrowing of hierarchy, and replacement of leadership-based social organization with the idea of "bottom-up" organization and "invisible hands." The market. Democracy. Public opinion. Education of the ineducable.

The result is that equality invents democracy which in turn invents consumerism and that in turn invents the ugly utilitarianism of the modern time. If most people like it, it's the best answer. Or at least the most profitable.

And why are we so profit hungry? Well, in order to support that egalitarianism, we had to do away with hierarchy, so now everyone needs to scramble for money and not offend people in order to keep their families alive.

With hierarchy and sacred roles, of course, there was not only more protection but more obligation to get a task done right even if it upset a small vocal minority who felt it infringed on their "freedom."

But this virus, like all good viruses, doesn't work for us. It works for itself, and it only needs us as long as it needs a host. Then it can kick us aside, and replace us with something easier:

Let me begin with an extreme and provocative point to get the argument going: Francis

Fukuyama's famous essay "The End of History" may have done some serious damage to Western minds in the 1990s and beyond. Mr. Fukuyama should not be blamed for this. He wrote a subtle, sophisticated, and nuanced essay. However, few Western intellectuals read the essay in its entirety. Instead, the only message they seemed to take away from the essay? The end of history is the triumph of the West.

Western hubris was thick in the air then. I experienced it. In 1991 I heard a senior Belgian official, speaking on behalf of Europe, tell a group of Asians, "The cold war has ended. There are only two superpowers left: the United States and Europe." This hubris also explains how Western minds failed to foresee that instead of the triumph of the West, the 1990s would see the end of Western domination of world history (but not the end of the West) and the return of Asia.

There is no doubt that the West has contributed to the return of Asia. As I document in my book, several Asian societies have succeeded because they finally understood, absorbed, and implemented the seven pillars of Western wisdom: namely free-market economics, science and technology, meritocracy, pragmatism, culture of peace, rule of law, and education.

Notice what is missing from the list? Western political liberalism – despite Fukuyama's claim that "The triumph of the West, of the Western idea, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism."

The general assumption in Western minds after reading Fukuyama's essay was that the world would in one way or another become more Westernized. Instead, the exact opposite has happened. Modernization has spread across the world.

But modernization has been accompanied by de-Westernization, not Westernization. Fukuyama acknowledges this today. As he said in a recent interview, "The old version of the idea of modernization was Eurocentric, reflecting Europe's own development. That did contain attributes which sought to define modernization in a quite narrow way."

[Christian Science Monitor](#)

The above gives us a good view of history. Surprisingly, it agrees with Spengler and Plato, who were both conservatives of the mentally flexible sort, and like biologists, acknowledged human history not as a series of free wills, but biological and sociological imperatives working en masse.

Liberalism sounds good, and its defining characteristic is egalitarianism; conservatism doesn't recognize the individual as having such "free will," but sees us all as having different abilities and so requiring a hierarchy where we do not exceed our abilities. The most extreme expression of conservatism is aristocracy, caste systems, a militant meritocracy organized by a ladderlike hierarchy, and a shared social, religious, philosophical and cultural values system.

The West launched into liberalism, and in a blur of self-delusion, exported its functional techniques to others while neutering itself. This isn't new — as Plato documented, this happened in the past, when Athens got democracy and so got morally self-important and its citizens essentially competed on the basis of ever-increasing social altruism, while enemies grew at the gates, until finally Athens died the death of a thousand cuts: many smaller wars and unending social problems at home.

They killed Socrates for pointing that out.

One of the major themes of this blog has been separating appearance from reality. Appearance is how things "sound" to us on an absolute hierarchy, where all things are on the same level and so we have no context or depth. Reality is not measured in a single instant, or from a single point of view, but is an analysis of how that appearance fits into the process of life around us, which is singular but has many components.



As more voices are joining the chorus, we are seeing that the West has gone too far down the path of liberalism — a path reinforced by our utter solipsism as individuals, since in an egalitarian society we can filter out any recognition of our shortcomings, and our utter narcissism as a culture, where we get so accustomed to selling each other stuff by appearing to be good guys, or talking girls into bed by appearing to be great egalitarians, that we believed our own marketing. It's like a politician taking his own speech as gospel.

The more we believe what's going on only in our heads, the farther we drift from reality. And the more that happens, the closer we come to self-destruction — a fulfillment of Fukuyama's seminal thesis, which was based on Nietzsche's concept of the "last man" or purely materialistic, beliefless, cultureless, and ideal-less person that an egalitarian society tends to manufacture.

Politics is tricky because once we get out of the vernacular meaning of the term, which is how you flatter the senate subcommittee or curry favor with industry while not offending the civil advocacy groups, we're looking at a study of the design of societies and how they fare through history — which is truly the only lab of politics.

Sometimes ideas once adopted take centuries or millennia to show their true colors. In Fukuyama's nightmare, we're seeing the end result of liberalism for the West. This in turn explains why we are surrounded by so many people blaming so many different conspiratorial forces, and none are right.

The blame is within. The problem isn't our institutions or large corporations or shadowy religious-political groups. It's the attitudes we've adopted, and the people we've produced by rewarding sycophants and manipulators instead of honest and forthright problem solvers. We are not victims of some external process; we are agents of decay.

The instant the West faces this truth, the decay will begin its reversal. And it all takes is for the 2-5% of our society who are active in both practical and mental spheres to agree on what's going on, and reject bad ideas while replacing them with good ones.

But right now, as in all dying societies, the taboo on truth is tightening not loosening. Because people cannot think outside of the paradigm we're following, and that paradigm is our doom, they think the best response is to more emphatically pursue that paradigm — and to crush dissent. But that's just a symptom of a dying civilization; they all have it, and the actual belief doesn't matter so much as the knowledge that it's delusional.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Altruism, status and liberalism as a fashion

Nov 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Roll back preconceptions for a minute, and look at history as a series of 3,000-year cycles.

After all, that's about how long it takes an idea to take hold of a population and be fully acted out, from the highest to the lowest levels. By "idea" here I mean a big idea.



The biggest idea of our last 3,000 years, and the only idea steadily gaining in distribution, has been the equality of human individuals.

Our modern governments, institutions and social attitudes are founded on it. It in turn is founded on the idea of egalitarianism, or equality of treatment for all people, which comes from a social impulse — a type of politeness — called altruism, or wanting to do good for others.

Altruism can exist in a selfless form, where you expect no one to know the good things you've done for them, or a manipulative form, where you very publicly do good things so people think you're a good person — and then do good things for you.

The enforcer of this altruism, guilt, is what people feel when they don't reciprocate when someone has done something nice for them. If I give you a newspaper and say, "It's free, but I'm trying to sell lemonade," you're more likely to buy a glass — if it's cheap enough to not sidetrack you.

This psychology underlies our social urge to be egalitarian. Others extend to us equality; we should extend it to them. Even more, we avoid conflict this way and as a bonus, we look good to others because we are altruistic.

Eventually we start trying to prove we're actually more altruistic than they are — a form of social one-upmanship similar to "keeping up with the Joneses" but in moral and not material form — in what is called

competitive altruism. This is exclusively the manipulative variant because it's always public and is done to make the altruist look better, and therefore through guilt, be owed more by the society as a whole.

The object of this competition is called *status*. Unlike actual ability, status reflects the degree of approval of an individual by his or her fellow citizens, according to the consensual reality of altruism and guilt:

"I Am Charlotte Simmons," particularly in its notice of the coarse sexuality governing campus life, is a book a liberal would never write, as corroborated in the many negative reviews...he was frankly taken aback by those who took it "as a counterrevolutionary attack on the sexual revolution. . . . Then it really dawned on me that so many people are proud of the sexual revolution, you know, 'We freed ourselves from those damned religious people and this Puritanism.'"

This is Tom Wolfe's MO—sorting out and at once demolishing pretension, snobbery, vanity in all its guises. "There is such a thing as intellectual fashion—just as we get our clothing fashions—and often it does not mean anything more," he says. "One follows fashion in order to look proper, and it's the same thing with ideas."

{snip}

Mr. Wolfe offers a personal incident as evidence of "what a fashion liberalism is." A reporter for the New York Times called him up to ask why George W. Bush was apparently a great fan of the "Charlotte Simmons" book. "I just assumed it was the dazzling quality of the writing," he says. In the course of the reporting, however, it came out that Mr. Wolfe had voted for the Bush ticket. "The reaction among the people I move among was really interesting. It was as if I had raised my hand and said, 'Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you, I'm a child molester.'"

{snap}

We've plowed headfirst into one of Mr. Wolfe's great themes. He has long argued American literature was going through a bad patch, and the condition wouldn't improve until authors engaged with the density and complexity of "this wild, bizarre, unpredictable, Hog-stomping Baroque country of ours." So any change, 15-odd years later? "No, I don't see any at all," he says acutely. "The great emphasis is still put on the psychological novel, and to dig your hands into the dirty social reality is really unrefined . . . as if the social context doesn't mean a thing."

That's the thing, the social context. "All of us are products of this vast plane called the social reality, the weight of the time and place we live, intersecting vertically with the individual psychology, or our impulses. And a person's psyche, to use a vague term, is the result of the intersection."

"I think every living moment of a human being's life, unless the person is starving or in immediate danger of death in some other way, is controlled by a concern for status," he says.

[WSJ](#)

Tom Wolfe is an astute writer who identifies himself as a Nietzschean in some of his older interviews, not so much from an advocacy perspective as being cognizant of the philosophy and aware of the troubling ideas it brings up:

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die. One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature.

[On Truth and Lies in a Sense Outside Morality, by F.W. Nietzsche](#)

Nietzsche talks about us inventing **knowing**, meaning creating a domain in which [human thoughts supplant reality](#) for the purposes of assessing what is important, real or meaningful to us.



After all, with our big brains, we have a choice. We can decide principle is more important than consequences. We can go into denial, and become narcissistic — or worse, solipsistic. We can pick a pleasant emotion that lets us put our heads down and work without knowing we'll succeed, or we can use that same denial to ignore our mortality, or even, to push aside reality in favor of moral measurement of intentions, desires or the effects on the individual of necessary parts of reality.

Wolfe takes Nietzsche's knowing and breaks it down to understand it better. One aspect of our knowing is our certainty that equality, human rights, democracy and freedom are essential to society; even more, in our knowing, is the idea that those who are altruistic are risen in social status over others.

It would be quite the mental trip, then, if we found out that "knowing" in this context had a *biological* origin, meaning that it's not a choice of our "free will," but an impulse from within the intricate nest of hormones, nerve impulses and gestures inculcated by natural selection which forms the part of us that is *unconscious*, or not under the control of our personalities:

The vagus nerve is part of the parasympathetic autonomic nervous system. It is a bundle of nerves that originates in the top of the spinal cord, it activates different organs throughout the body (heart, lungs, liver, digestive organs). When active, it is likely to produce that feeling of warm expansion in the chest, for example when we are moved by someone's goodness or when we appreciate a beautiful piece of music. University of Illinois, Chicago, psychiatrist Steve Porges long ago argued that the vagus nerve is a care-taking organ in the body (of course, it serves many other functions as well). Several reasons justify this claim. The vagus nerve is thought to stimulate certain muscles in the vocal chamber, enabling communication. It reduces heart rate. Very new science suggests that it may be closely connected to oxytocin receptor networks. And it is unique to mammals.

Our research and that of other scientists suggests that the vagus nerve may be a physiological system that supports caretaking and altruism. We have found that activation of the vagus nerve is associated with feelings of compassion and the ethical intuition that humans from different

social groups (even adversarial ones) share a common humanity. People who have high vagus nerve activation in a resting state, we have found, are prone to feeling emotions that promote altruism — compassion, gratitude, love, happiness. Arizona State University psychologist Nancy Eisenberg has found that children with elevated vagal tone (high baseline vagus nerve activity) are more cooperative and likely to give. This area of study is the beginning of a fascinating new argument about altruism — that a branch of our nervous system evolved to support such behavior.

[Scientific American](#)

Life must be studied as a process, meaning anything that produces a reward rapidly gets assimilated into the cycle of life, and confers an advantage onto those who have it.

Could it be possible that millenia of biology have shaped us to base our self-esteem on how we are approved of by others, and that the index of this comparison is vagus-stirring altruism?

While there's no question that there's a deep human drive for a feeling of self-esteem or competence, this feeling of competence is almost never assessed on its own: we are social beings at the core, and as such our sense of competence appears to be deeply connected to others around us. Self-esteem may not be an accurate way of understanding this feeling of 'okayness', when we actually measure this constantly against others. Instead of self-esteem, we need to start thinking about the more dynamic sense of 'status'.

Status means where are we positioned in relation to those around us: literally where we are in the 'pecking order'. Your perception of status, and any changes in it, can be a driver of what's called primary reward or threat. A sense of increasing status can be more rewarding than money, and a sense of decreasing status can feel like your life is in danger. Here's an excerpt from *Your Brain at Work* on this whole issue.

{snip}

Naomi Eisenberger, a leading social neuroscience researcher at UCLA, wanted to understand what goes on in the brain when people feel rejected by others. She designed an experiment that used fMRI to scan the brains of participants as they played a computer game called "Cyberball." Cyberball harks back to the nastiness of the school playground. "People thought they were playing a ball tossing game over the Internet with two other people," Eisenberger explained during an interview down the road from her lab. "They could see an avatar that represented them, and avatars for two other people. Then, about half way through this game of toss between the three of them, they stop receiving the ball and the other players throw the ball only to each other." This experiment generates intense emotions for most people. Eisenberger says, "What we found is that when people were excluded, you see activity in the dorsal portion of the anterior cingulate cortex, which is the neural region that's also involved in the distressing component of pain, or what sometimes people call the "suffering component" of pain. Those people who felt the most rejected had the highest levels of activity in this region."

[Psychology Today](#)

Fear of exclusion enforces altruism. But altruism itself can be hacked.



For example, if I become a philanthropist and give away lots of money in a very public way, while using the goodwill engendered to get people to look the other way while I do sketchy things on the side, I've hacked altruism. The altruism represented 10% of my wealth, and the 90% came from invisible (to most people, who aren't going to go out of their way to look) bad deeds.

Slowly, however, people are starting to study how the guilt/altruism cycle replaces our desire to perceive reality with a knee-jerk instinct to placate others through potlatch:

Current work on cooperation is focused on the theory of reciprocal altruism. However, reciprocity is just one way of getting a return on an investment in altruism and is difficult to apply to many examples. Reciprocity theory addresses how animals respond dynamically to others so as to cooperate without being exploited. I discuss how introducing differences in individual generosity together with partner choice into models of reciprocity can lead to an escalation in altruistic behaviour. Individuals may compete for the most altruistic partners and non-altruists may become ostracized. I refer to this phenomenon as competitive altruism and propose that it can represent a move away from the dynamic responsiveness of reciprocity. Altruism may be rewarded in kind, but rewards may be indirectly accrued or may not involve the return of altruism at all, for example if altruists tend to be chosen as mates. This variety makes the idea of competitive altruism relevant to behaviours which cannot be explained by reciprocity. I consider whether altruism might act as a signal of quality, as proposed by the handicap principle. I suggest that altruistic acts could make particularly effective signals because of the inherent benefits to receivers. I consider how reciprocity and competitive altruism are related and how they may be distinguished.

[PubMed](#)

None of this will be taboo research, but if we start to apply it to our thinking about how this impulse controls our socialization, economics, politics and even thinking — because it exists at a layer of thought and assumption below our conscious minds — we start to see it as a virus or other parasitic entity, because it manipulates us so that it may live on, oblivious to the consequences to us:

To relate this condition to the prisoner's dilemma, an individual may benefit the most in a one-time interaction with another by defecting (i.e. receiving benefits without incurring any cost to itself). However, in an iterated prisoner's dilemma, where individuals interact more than once, if the act of defecting makes the individual less likely to attract a fit mate in the future, then cooperative behavior will be selected for.[1]

This selection for cooperation is even stronger if an individual's action in an interaction is observed by third-party individuals, for the possibility of forming a reputation arises. Amotz Zahavi, famous for his work with the altruistic Arabian babbler, suggests that this level of "social prestige" will affect which individuals interact with one another and how they behave.

[Wikipedia](#)

Wolfe again, expanding on how the foundation of sociology is a study in a Nietzschean context of how this altruistic, or maybe we should say "politeness," reciprocal impulse controls what we're willing to allow ourselves to realize about the world:

When I was in graduate school, I was introduced to this concept of social status in the work of Max Weber, the German sociologist. And the more I thought about it, the more I could see that status was not simply something that was appearances and houses and automobiles, or even ranks in a corporation or that sort of thing. It invaded every single part of life.

Every time we go into a room with other people, it's as if we have a teleprompter in front of us and it's telling us the history of ourselves versus these people. We can't even think of thinking without this huge library of good information and bad information.

When you get up in the morning, you do not think about triangles and squares and these similes that psychologists have been using for the past 100 years.

You think about status. You think about where you are in relation to your peers. You're thinking about your spouse, about your kids, about your boss. Ninety-nine percent of your time is spent thinking about other people's thoughts about you, their intentions, and all this kind of stuff.

[Seed](#)

In postmodern theory, one area of extensive study is the concept of "narrative," or how we as individuals formulate a story from the third person which explains our motives, their justifications (usually in terms of altruism, because that is 100% universally absolutely accepted, where anything else varies with the audience), and our goals with the intent of having other people understand us and approve. A narrative is how we explain ourselves to the world:

Imagine I show you a list of 30 words. One of the words is written in green ink. The rest are blue.

Half an hour goes by and I ask you to recall the words on the list. Which word are you most likely to remember?

The one written in green ink, of course. This is the "von Restorff Effect": Novelty grabs our attention.

It's basic cognitive hardwiring. Journalists don't zero in on "man bites dog" stories because they're perverse. They do it because they're human.

...

When a story breaks, grabs the media's attention, and gets people talking, something else happens. The story ceases to be about a single incident. Instead, it creates a narrative.

The absence of a narrative means a story must stand or fall on its own. And when a story runs contrary to a narrative, it is positively resisted.

[The Ottawa Citizen](#)

Another word for narrative is "script," as in, "since we were looking for guys dressed in black carrying bicycles, he fit right into our script."



The media uses these means to control you: novelty and its stepchild, negativity — since evolution has primed you to first look for threats — and a script into which all news must fit. We could call that script a “justification,” as we do in our manifesto.

When those who have money and power want you to jump, they make a few calls to their friends and business associates. They put out the meme: *X* is the new threat, or *Y* is another instance of the current script of threats, whether it be global warming, hackers, racists, Satanists or godless Communism.

That’s how you keep a nation in line when they don’t have much in common as far as ideologies, values, etc. go. You manipulate them with carrot and stick: we free, they bad.

Much as democracy relies on having a horde of people who don’t read or think very deeply about issues, modern society relies on useful idiots to bleat out that the sky is falling any time such a meme comes around.

How does this relate to history at large? Well, as recent research points out, *social attitudes shape genetics*, and so a culture that chose, say, altruism over competence — picking flattering and conflict-avoiding people to those who want to get the right answer and don’t care who gets upset — might literally [breed themselves into docility](#) and lose the ability to solve problems, because they reward those who are docile with better chances of breeding, better jobs, better social scenes and more general approval:

Culture, not just genes, can drive evolutionary outcomes, according to a study released Wednesday that compares individualist and group-oriented societies across the globe.

Bridging a rarely-crossed border between natural and social sciences, the study looks at the interplay across 29 countries of two sets of data, one genetic and the other cultural.

The researchers found that most people in countries widely described as collectivist have a specific mutation within a gene regulating the transport of serotonin, a neurochemical known to profoundly affect mood.

{snip}

“What we are proposing is that cultural and genetic selection actually operate in tandem, and that you can view human behaviour as a product of culture-gene co-evolution,” she said.

[AFP](#)

Isn't that interesting... cultural values determine what genetic combinations are [rewarded with reproduction](#), and as a result, gradually [shape the population](#).

In that view, of course, we're playing with more than we realize when we look at the importance of not letting a social virus or fashion subvert our values system.

Hear [a Tom Wolfe interview about altruism, status and political fashion](#) (coming to us via [orgtheory](#) by way of [Contexts](#)). Also of note: the [Altruism poster designs](#) at Kasia Kaczmarek's blog.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The hero is dead; Long live the hero

Oct 30th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

For those who value the false idea of “equality” in our society, incidents like this cause cognitive dissonance:

Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel F. Conley said Paul Langone, 33, of Reading, heard the screams of Dr. Astrid Desrosiers on the fifth floor of an MGH office building on Staniford Street. Langone entered the doctor’s office and saw 37-year-old Reading man Jay Carciero stabbing the doctor.

Langone took out his gun, for which he has a valid license, and told Carciero to drop the knife. Carciero did not comply, and Langone shot multiple times, hitting Carciero twice, Conley said.

[[±](#)|Fox News Boston]

Note the tone of the rest of the article, as people already look for excuses why Jay Carciero’s life should have somehow been spared, despite the object in his hand about to thrust into the neck of his own doctor once again:

Police investigated possible links between Langone and Carciero, since they both live in the same town...

...

Conley would not say why Langone was in the medical office to begin with, but said he was there for a legitimate reason.

...

Perullo said, as far as he knows, Carciero did not have a violent past.

To have a violent past, you first have to think about, and then *commit*, acts like this. Why not stop this person at the first incident, as Paul Langone did, rather than wait around for someone to die – or in this case, be stabbed?



Fact is, we can never know what is going on in the minds of the mentally ill, and with an overly burdened justice system, people who begin with lesser acts of violence or threats get off with a slap on the wrist because a judge simply doesn’t know what to do with them. This person didn’t have a violent past, but he showed what he was going to become if left without a leash.

The sad part about this story is not that one sick individual died before he was able to take the life of a doctor dedicated to helping people like him, but rather it will stink of circumstantial when the media is done with it.

If Paul Langone was carrying a weapon but, say, didn't have a license to conceal it and it was only supposed to be in his car or house, the liberal media will talk about how Langone should hang by the balls in the town square. Sadder still, most people would eat it up.

It's important to stress there's a reason we deputize qualified officers: so they can jump in when needed, as occurred here. Paul Langone served an important purpose but no doubt will be attacked for it.

And as sad as all of that is, therein lies the beauty for people who live in realityland: there's no escape hatch here, no no magic trap door where we can vilify Mr. Langone.

And yet, no doubt the media and people who love its silly agenda will seek to re-examine the idea of deputizing off duty security guards. I have no doubt the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will have politicians seeking votes by bearing down on police departments with questions like:

- "How many of these off duty security guards are there?"
- "Do we have anything to fear?"
- "Can we have their names and addresses, please?"
- "They should be wearing badges displayed on their jackets if they are going to run around like cowboys, like that Langone kid did!"

Just give it time.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [rationalism](#)

Lawns are a design defect

Oct 29th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

One of the pillars of modern society is the idea of [selling everyone luxuries](#) they not only can live without, but would be better off as a whole [never buying into](#).

Private companies and individuals alike buy into needless luxuries. This is in part due to ordinance requirements in some locales.

In other cases, like the bleaching-white of our [paper products](#), it is a shallow expectation forced on us from our [modern progress](#) social reality.

The US landscaping services industry includes over 70,000 companies with combined annual revenue of \$40 billion. Large companies include the TruGreen Landcare division of ServiceMaster, The Davey Tree Expert Company, The Brickman Group, and Asplundh Tree Expert. The vast majority of companies are small with annual revenue less than \$2 million. The industry is highly fragmented: the top 50 companies hold only 15 percent of the market.

[firstresearch](#)

The sterilization of formerly biodiverse spaces on private property combined with chemical contamination are side effects of having lawns.

Lawn Culture, or considering the loss of local biodiversity, lawn monoculture, like Automobile Culture, is one of those destructive modern design defects that has been [mass marketed](#) to us for decades.



As defects, these artificial modern cultures cause errors that while benefitting a company or a consumer only in the most selfish way, in exchange tax the whole for the long term.

Not many residents understand that lawn fertilizer can cause water quality problems – overall less than one fourth of residents rated it as a water quality concern (Syferd, 1995 and Assing, 1994), although ratings were as high as 60% for residents that lived adjacent to lakes (Morris and Traxler, 1996 and MCSR, 1997). Interestingly, in one Minnesota survey, only 21% of homeowners felt their own lawn contributed to water quality problems, while over twice as many felt their neighbor's lawn did (MCSR, 1997).

[stormwatercenter](#)

After pollution cleanup, medical costs from toxins, and maintenance like water treatment, this is both a form of hidden capitalist welfare and a form of hidden individual pleasure welfare.

While we cling to such needless modern luxuries, the invisible costs stay with us for the long haul.

They're like a prosperity sink in that when the economy is good, people buy into goodies like brand new cars, driving more miles, landscaping and lawn chemical services more, which of course applies the invisible costs against us in the background in a roughly zero-sum game for civilization overall.

UN agencies have said reduced or ended lawnmowing and treecutting will slow down global heating. The 1990's EPA published legal briefs available without cost to those fighting compulsory mowing ordinances. Highway departments have found that bushes are better than mowed median strips.

[phillyimc](#)

The growing [proliferation of anthropogenic biomes](#) on a large scale has already been addressed here. So has the utter destructiveness of this activity, even as it is marketed to us, in a mindless display of [contradictions](#), on no less than utilitarian and progressive grounds.

Anthropogenic biomes describe globally-significant ecological patterns within the terrestrial biosphere caused by sustained direct human interaction with ecosystems, including agriculture, urbanization, forestry and other land uses. Conventional biomes, such as tropical rainforests or grasslands, are based on global vegetation patterns related to climate. Now that humans have fundamentally altered global patterns of ecosystem form, process, and biodiversity, anthropogenic biomes provide a contemporary view of the terrestrial biosphere in its human-altered form.

[eearth](#)



Since mass marketing is practically a century-old science by now and another of the modern pillars is individual liberty combined with the distributed hidden cost of damage of such freedoms, we can't reasonably expect decades of mere public environmental educating to outcompete these two forces.

Nevertheless, a tiny [minority](#) will always be around to calmly dissent against the liberated democratic masses who like a caged tribe of monkeys are as a whole easily manipulated by using consumer marketing combined with their own natural apathy and ignorance.

In the context of landscaping, three of the most significant ways to reduce environmental pollution are by cutting back on the use of chemical herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers.

[about](#)

The negative method, doing without, is only half the possibility for lawn alternatives. Another possibility is to replace these high maintenance, sterile lawns with the positive actions of natural local flora and fauna.

After all, they're prettier and cost us much less both visibly and invisibly than paying for a host of economic and environmental parasites we call lawn services and chemical treatments.

Landscaping with native wildflowers and grasses improves the environment. Natural landscaping brings a taste of wilderness to urban, suburban, and corporate settings by attracting a variety of birds, butterflies and other animals. Once established, native plants do not need fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides or watering, thus benefiting the environment and reducing maintenance costs. Gardeners and admirers enjoy the variety of colors, shapes, and seasonal beauty of these plants.

[epa](#)

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [crowdism](#)

The short story

Oct 27th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

The art of the modern short story can be [difficult to grasp](#). The idea seems to be to replicate the theme, mood, and consistency in a novel, even exploring character development, but keeping it short and thus, perhaps, leaving more to the imagination of the reader. One doesn't whip through a short story collection; you read one, absorb it, think about it – and maybe read it again.



Stephen King is one of the masters of modern short storytelling. I've found his short stories to far surpass the quality of some of the endless character development that occurs in his earlier works of 700-plus page novels. Not to say there wasn't merit in the novel-writing fundamental display that was, say, *The Tommyknockers*, but most don't realize his talent for short story writing.

"I find myself even now, not wanting to say what I really believe, which is that people are too goddamn lazy to bother anymore...to pick up let's say a book or a magazine, where you're required to start over and over."

{snip}

"People have a tendency to be cautious; they say, 'this is a grab bag, this is a pinata, I don't know whether I'm gonna get a nice prize or a bad prize. But I do know that if I tune in to American Idol...I'm going to be exposed to the same comforting level of mediocrity week in and week out.' And so, people are lazy."

[[±](#)|[SimondSchuster.com](#)]

There are a bunch of factors at play here that King brings up:

- Fear: people fear the unknown, so they pick up a book of short stories and think: wait, I have to invest my time in learning characters, growing with them, then having the story end and doing it again? That's no fun, when I see 500 pages I want it to be 500 pages of consistency!
- Mediocrity: King playfully mentions idiocy in TV vs. the short story collection. A short story is a one-off and you usually don't get to learn more about the characters (usually no sequels or follow up books). TV is short in the sense that it's a half hour per episode, but you get spoonfuls of it and it's a passive medium. It's also so predictable that people make the trade off of quantity over quality. Why take a little quality when you can have crap, but lots of it?
- Laziness: This ties in with the first couple points: quality gets trumped by quantity, and short stories require a bit more work in the way of the reader absorbing a more dense story a bit more slowly, but also having to fill in gaps here and there that may be more spelled out for the reader in a novel.
- Risk and Reward: Since people only have a limited amount of time during the day, they choose American Idol since they don't have to do much. Why not take what's consistent vs. the pinata that King refers to, which may contain unpleasant things, or things they don't like?



He runs quite the risk even saying this on film, to alienate his own fan base. Then again, Stephen King is a businessman, and by now an institution; an automatic best seller. This causes an interesting little paradox: the guy who should be watching his mouth in the media actually says whatever he damn well pleases.

King is at a point in his career where he doesn't need to make money nor please anyone, and besides, the guy churns out hundreds of pages with such ease that he probably has plenty of time to work on his short stories. Given the tone of the above linked interview, it's likely that he views short story writing as one of his favorite activities, he just happens to be good at writing novels too.

Like [Kurt Cobain](#), but less suicidal, King has elements of his artistic ability that his fans will never understand. And someone as successful as him certainly doesn't let it slip by him that 99% of the people who read his writing fail to appreciate everything that goes into it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [media](#)

It's the defrauders, stupid

Oct 27th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).



Real estate agents typically do the least amount of work, and yet make the most amount of money in a real estate transaction. In fact, many real estate agents only do the job part time. This is just another way society rewards the "face" of the operation; the smile that has to actually (gasp!) deal with *people* for a living.

Is it any surprise, then, that in today's economic climate, despite all the government is doing to, as they say, help people, that fraud only increases?

So, here's the scam:

1. Get behind in your bills, so you can prove that you can't keep the house that has depreciated below to loan amount.
2. Make a case for a short sale with your lender.
3. Go through the motions of selling on the open market with a crooked agent. Have the agent send only the low Offer of your confederate to the lender.
4. Once you sell to your not-arm's-length partner, rent it back from him/her or buy it back at a later date.

(I have, in the past, run into agents who don't present Offers. But, I can't prove it is happening now, or for this reason, based on my experience in the marketplace. I am experiencing the inability to see properties, which may be a symptom of the same disease.)

[+]|Boston Real Estate Now blog

People see short sales and foreclosures as a way out of a mortgage obligation they signed up for when things were good. Instead of realizing that the mortgage is the first thing one must pay for each month, they continued to buy toys and rack up debt for things like car payments. Since the idea of entitlement tells these leeches that whatever they happen to "own" at the moment is theirs, forget letting these toys go or just giving them back to the bank to help cancel that discretionary debt. They'd rather play around with the system (\$8,000 down payment courtesy of the government, anyone?) to do crooked buy and leaseback deals.



This is loosely related to the idea in economics known as moral hazard. Where there's a way for someone to make profits or avoid losses through loopholes (or even fraud), it happens, just like people will act differently (read: not follow the rules) if there's no risk involved for not following the rules. This is exactly why most economists – not the policymakers in Washington, D.C. who are driven entirely by politics, but the academics – would never support most of the recent transition from capitalist republic to nanny-state. The more government loopholes you create for parasites to work the system, the more you're subsidizing parasitic activity instead of actually helping.

This is the result of shelling out eight thousand dollars to anyone who wants to buy a home, and then injecting banks with billions in cash to keep credit flowing while also allowing the banks to be less conservative with short sales and foreclosures. To blanket the economy with funny money only gives people ideas (How do I get mine??).

Sane people choose to live a sustainable lifestyle and wait until they're sure they can afford a house regardless of who is fronting the cash. One can only hope the idea of saving gets back in vogue as funds dry up and the government runs out of stopgap solutions.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#) · [consumerism](#) · [debt](#)

The Kumbaya Mentality

Oct 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Life is paradox between appearance and structure, meaning that what something appears to be is usually the reverse of what it is as an active part in the process of life.

In other words, what causes a situation to come about is far removed from the point at which you observe that situation. The earthquake that just destroyed your house was not caused by an earthquake, but by shifting magma plates, and if you'd known to check geothermal sources nearby, you could have seen it. But you were too busy looking for signs of an earthquake, not tectonic motion.

Humans make this more complex because they hide their motivations: the person who appears most helpful is probably trying to sell you something; the person who appears most calm is the one having to remind himself to avoid violence; the person most convinced they must minimize their ego are in fact inflating themselves with their ego-denying puritanism.

Structure, or the world of causes for effects, reflects the true nature of impetus, or what starts an action. With humans, this is biological need: food, shelter, reproduction, social recognition. Knowing these base demands look bad to others, we conceal our motivations. "I'm just here to help" and "I'm just doing my job" are the two biggest cons in the world, right after "I just want to be friends," which either means flight or reproduction.



In this world of false appearances, we often associate environmental awareness with The Kumbaya Mentality. TKM is a nice impulse... really. It's the hope that we can all accept each other, get along, sing a happy song and be one in spiritual unity. We are all children of God. Except that, of course, some of God's children are sociopathic anal rapists. Ruh roh! Do we want them in our Kumbaya circle? Do we really trust that singing Kumbaya will stop their tendency for rectal raiding, at

least enough to fall asleep in the same tent with them?

Hell no we don't.

The well-meaning people who introduced the singing of Kumbaya as yet another miserable ritual for children subjected to adult fears, despite knowing better on some level, hoped to give us a symbol for hope and change. Instead, they gave us a symbol for cynical manipulation of others using sops of an impossible promise, and now Kumbaya — a title given to an American folk song by well-meaning delusional missionaries who sang it in Africa — is a symbol of cynicism, bitterness and hatred for how we cannot retaliate against such a positive symbol.

In our society, the ones who don't want to sing Kumbaya are the problem. In reality, the people trying to get us to sing Kumbaya are the cynical predators, parasites and manipulators who make life worse for everyone. But thanks to the social censure of others, we can't strike back, or we're seen as the aggressor. That's how Kumbaya becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: instead of dealing with conflict, wish it away and snow everyone over with a simplistic song.

I propose we redefine *kumbaya* as a noun and a verb. The noun form refers to a psychology: "the desire that everyone will avoid conflict so we can continue shopping." The verb form is to project that noun kumbaya onto someone to paralyze them, because if they react, all the other dummies in the room will then attack them. Like wounding a shark during a feeding frenzy, passive aggression is the simian way of getting indirect revenge with less risk to yourself.

After all, anyone who claims to spot the passive aggression must be putting themselves on a pedestal and claiming they're smarter than the rest of us. Kill that king. It's 1789 all over again, and We The People want a Pontius Pilate to crucify anyone trying to do the right — but difficult! — thing.

We want convenience. We want shopping. We want the illusion that we are supreme, Earth will never be hit by asteroids, our climate will be Just Fine, and dinner will always be on time. We just want to deny the parts of reality that threaten us, which are generally the parts between a cause and its unknown and only semi-predictable effect. "Will he love me if I drive a Hyundai? Note to self: make all cars equal, so he will ALWAYS AND FOREVER love me and I can be free of doubt, which reminds me of DEATH."

This thought process, which we could call *kumbayafication*, confuses us between social tokens ("Of course that doesn't make you look fat!") and reality ("Stripes make anyone look fat, and you are kinda fat, so...").

How does our hypocrisy manifest itself in the political process?

when students had a choice between a bacon cheeseburger, a chicken sandwich, and a veggie burger, they went straight for the bacon cheeseburger. And they did so more often than when the choice was just between the burger or the chicken.

The scholars determined these were examples of "vicarious goal fulfillment." Your goal in eating a salad is to eat better. But once you've thought to yourself, "I will have a salad," psychologically, you don't actually need to eat the salad. Because your brain considers the mere act of thinking about the salad as having moved toward a better diet. Thus, you've already met your goal of improving your nutrition. Having cognitively checked the goal off the mental to-do list, you can now eat the worst possible alternative, guilt-free.

In the study's conclusion, the scholars wondered if this plays out the same way in other contexts. They write: ". . . does merely considering your options for retirement-investing fulfill your goal to be economically responsible and license you to a day of frivolous shopping? Does considering a Sunday catching up on work fulfill your work-related goal and give you license to play a round of golf?"

[Newsgeek](#)

Ah. There it is: we think of a socially positive token, assert it as the goal, and then charge ahead and do what's convenient.

Someone's singing, My Lord... Kum Ba Yah

Listen to the pleasant music as we drift away. It's not that the monkey is still within us — a semi-smart creature, so smart enough to know he's screwed in the grand game, and still dumb enough to try to compensate in the short term by lying, cheating, stealing, raping, conniving, and so forth.

Conflict makes us think of possibly losing. A conflict could make us a loser, but sitting here in the pleasant music, eating the hot dog which doesn't even resemble meat and so doesn't remind us of death, using chemicals and air conditioning to keep the bugs away, this makes us feel isolated from the world. We are rarified, pure, abstract and removed.

Since we are so above it all, we can sing this pleasant song and think about what our *positive intentions* are.

Except that, when we're done thinking, we will just space out and eat another hot dog. That's most convenient. Never leave our own minds, even when the words *solipsism* and *narcissism* get bandied about by surly academics.

Here we see the failing of the traditional left-right axis. If we intend to do something really nice, and then go do what's convenient, what we intended doesn't matter much. Instead, we can see a new axis in our behavior: the division between modifying our behavior, and pleasantly pretending singing *Kumbaya* is a substitute for paying attention to problems and fixing it.

In fact, it seems the more we get into good intentions, the less we deal with reality, with horrific consequences:

The Aral Sea was once the world's fourth-largest body of fresh water, covering an area the size of Ireland. But then the nations around it became part of the Soviet Union. With their passion for planned economics and giant, nature-reversing projects, the communists diverted the rivers that fed the inland sea and used them to irrigate vast cotton fields. The result: The Aral shrank by 90 percent to a string of isolated stretches of water.

The catastrophe "is unprecedented in modern times," says Philip Micklin, a geography professor at Western Michigan University who has studied the Aral Sea for years.

[AP](#)

From this you can see the dilemma of politics: trying to be "green" is just silly, because all of politics is interconnected — and politics is not just far-removed bureaucracies, governments and ideas, but how you behave every day and even more, how you condition your psychology.

Condition yourself toward fond intentions and singing *kumbaya*, and you'll ignore reality and make vast wastelands.

Condition yourself toward self-discipline, accepting death and the interconnection of all being, and you'll be able to deal with reality and shape nature in ways that both (a) don't destroy it and (b) benefit you.



Our newest *kumbaya* mentality is the idea that we can buy green products, vote for green candidates, trade in the SUV for a hybrid and take three-minute showers and the problem will magically Just Go Away.

The only other alternative is to engage ourselves fully with the situation, not rely on some distant political body to do it for us — correctly, we hope and wish and never verify. That would in turn require we remove this imaginary divide between ourselves and the reality that seems paradoxical to us, learn about it, and accept things (death, mortality, poop, aging, bad consequences) that come with the whole of reality.

Either that, or we can just sit back and listen to the song, and hope we've fallen asleep by the time the bad consequences of our inaction come home to roost.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Feeding the world causes more starving people

Oct 23rd, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Feeding the hungry poor does not end hunger, but instead expands the quantity of poor and hungry. When is our good intentioned [stupidity](#) going to stop paving this freeway to [hell](#)?

Band Aid was a British and Irish charity supergroup, founded in 1984 by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to raise money for famine relief in Ethiopia by releasing the record "Do They Know It's Christmas?"

[whateva](#)

Fast forward to present day. The cycle not only doesn't end with this continued [foreign aid](#), the cycle strengthens and expands.

The Ethiopian government has asked the international community for emergency food aid for 6.2 million people.

The request came at a meeting of donors to discuss the impact of a prolonged drought affecting parts of East Africa.

The UN's World Food Programme says \$285m (£173m) will be needed in the next six months. Some aid officials say the numbers of hungry could rise.

[bbc](#)

handout



Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Universal morality on its death bed

Oct 23rd, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

The War on Inequality continues its slow march to the margins of credibility with this latest piece from the economics angle.

“We have to tolerate the inequality as a way to achieve greater prosperity and opportunity for all,” Brian Griffiths, who was a special adviser to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, said yesterday at a panel discussion at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. The panel’s discussion topic was, “What is the place of morality in the marketplace?”

Without inequality, there is nothing greater than ourselves to aspire toward, no direction, and therefore leaves us conditions for stagnation, which is eventually civilization death of a sort that creates Third World conditions.

Those who detest struggle and the possibility of overcoming and thus growth, which is Life’s process for betterment, are aligned with total social and economic equality. The uninspiring multicultural mediocrity and its total lack of pioneering anything in our times has been telling.

How contradictory that the same people demanding equal opportunity, which has fully transitioned now into railing against inequal outcomes, sell us their argument with the promise of everyone being able to “reach their full potential”. The new secular Christendom, which we now call Western Liberalism, is effectively a death cult.

“It was the failed moral compass of bankers which was primarily responsible for why we had this crisis,” he said. “The question is: what can we do in the culture of institutions to make them behave in a more socially responsible way?”

[bloomberg](#)

He’s implying that people who work in finance are not all there for the same reasons: to put their skills to use working hard to make an honest living and be a positive component in our society. Some people in finance might be there to game the system until ruin, hoping to make off with the goods before the rubble stops bouncing and investigations begin.

But this does not mean that the struggle over egalitarianism is over. Far from it. On the contrary, after the New Left of the late 1960s and early ’70s had been discredited by its bizarre turn to violence, it took the advice of its liberal elders and “joined the system.” New Leftists launched a successful Gramscian “long march through the institutions,” and by becoming lawyers and academics — particularly in the humanities, philosophy, and the “soft” social sciences — they have managed to acquire hegemony over our culture. Seeing themselves defeated and routed on the strictly economic front (in contrast to the Old Left of the 1930s, Marxian economics and the labor theory of value was never the New Left’s strong suit), the Left turned to the allegedly moral high ground of egalitarianism.

[mises](#)

We can read more into this to understand that notwithstanding centuries of Western Christendom, or numerous decades of Enlightenment, or several decades of humanist liberalism, no new arrangement of universal moral value systems expected from everyone is getting us as a whole any closer to unified or the envisioned world lacking struggle and conflict.



Many people do not belong in our midst in any capacity. They cannot be coaxed, educated, or jailed into conforming and functioning consistently well. They are not biologically wired to function as we do, as living cells supporting a thriving social body maintaining a civilization.

Tolerance removes the filter that otherwise kept these malfunctioning human carcinogens out of our social body. Mandatory equality, as we are finding, was never a cure for such cancers.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [liberalism](#)

Whipping cheating husbands

Oct 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We fear for ourselves so much we fear all conflict and all physical consequences.

But what if a big pain is needed to avoid a big destructive trend?



Most Bruneians want husbands who cheat on their wives to be whipped, according to a recent survey in the Muslim-majority country.

"The result of the survey is an indication of the pent-up feelings that women harbor against irresponsible men," an unnamed social worker from Brunei was quoted as saying on the website.

[Reuters](#)

Brunei can do what they want; I'd also support this in the USA.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Think outside the box

Oct 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Modern society, with its rigid rules based on single factors, makes us feel confined and paranoid because we're told we have freedom, but then each task has seemingly one right way to do it.



There's always a path.

So for example, when we confront an obstacle like finding a career, most people give us worthless advice about education, certification and so on. That's good for some; the real advice we need is knowledge that that's one path of many.

For example, for some people, the answer is to skip all schooling and throw themselves into business ownership, and they'll end up doing just as well if not better.

Here are some other solutions no one's ready to think of that illustrate how many more options we have:

- **Global warming.** Carbon's rising, temperatures are rising, we're all going to be roasting. We need to cut back. Problem: the first world's use is mostly its infrastructure, and it doesn't want to give that up, especially for a third world that dwarfs it and is just going to keep on breeding. Instead of buying green lightbulbs, let's destroy China and Russia. This eliminates a huge swathe of consumers and carbon producers.
- **Roman Polanski.** We're promised a big public drama over whether he's persecuted or not. Hollywood says he's a victim; the woman he paid a million dollars to forget him drugging, raping and sodomizing her says he should be forgiven. But to give up on him means flouting our law for a celebrity, and ignoring the need to promise good people that they will be protected and that bad people will go to jail. New solution: re-route his plane to Afghanistan and let the Taliban try him. Problem solved!
- **Health Care.** Lots of Americans lack health care. Most of us fear another government bureaucracy because those are inefficient, more stubbornly blind than private industry, and basically hire a lot of failures and jerks who make life hard for us. Solution: let the government buy health care from the biggest providers and negotiate a competitive rate, then sell it back to our citizens. People who are impoverished still don't get a free ride, which discourages parasites, but it's easily available.
- **Glenn Beck.** The left flips out about this guy, and most people on the right seem to love him. But being offended is a problem for leftists. The solution is simple: separate television networks. You can

literally buy cable package Red State or Blue State. This way conservatives don't need to see your demented drug-addicted whore actresses talking about how they love to have horse anal, and liberals don't need to see Glenn Beck talking about how inane liberalism is.

- **Drug Policy.** Legalize the stuff in Northern California, where all the good liberals live. Send all drug users there. Let's see what happens. Who cares, really?
- **Drunk Driving.** Legalize it. Sure, go ahead. Let them drive drunk. But if they cause an accident, make it clear that alcohol doesn't let them off the hook — and in fact will probably result in a speedy conviction. Then finally do what America has resisted for years: start yanking the licenses of incompetent drivers whether they need to drive to get to work or not.
- **Crime.** We can't get over the mentality of rehabilitation, so we jail people, let them out and then watch helplessly as they commit more crimes. Exile them all to a city in the desert of Nevada instead, and let them victimize each other.
- **National Debt.** Our national debt freaks people out. We know we cannot pay it and that it devalues our currency. If we really care, we could always drop all government programs but the utterly essential until it's paid off.
- **Gay Marriage.** What gays want is basically health care and the tax breaks for being married. Great, let's give it to them. However, we should penalize those who divorce for wasting time and money with their neurotic drama. You get tax breaks when married, and you should pay a heavy penalty when you get divorced. In addition, we should create a "virtual child" that gay married people should be forced to support with alimony. Justice is equal treatment, after all.

Some of these solutions may be tongue in cheek, but the point is made: we're thinking in the box and it makes us sick in our hearts and minds. We need to think outside of the box, which means sacrificing sacred cows and aggressively getting effective.

How could we be afraid of that?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Halloween: when fun subverts meaning

Oct 19th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).



*Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble;
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.*

*From William Shakespeare's
Macbeth Act IV, Scene I*

In William Shakespeare's England, the practice of witchcraft was already ancient. The celebration of nature—the worship of earth, sky, and the changing seasons—is humankind's oldest faith.

[NG](#)

Like the Christianized Easter and Christmas festivals, Halloween was an important time that served a purpose.

The Celts believed that at the time of Samhain, more so than any other time of the year, the ghosts of the dead were able to mingle with the living, because at Samhain the souls of those who had died during the year traveled into the otherworld. People gathered to sacrifice animals, fruits, and vegetables. They also lit bonfires in honor of the dead, to aid them on their journey, and to keep them away from the living.

Moving on as a community event from grieving over deceased loved ones so people could get back to their lives seems like a healthy practice.

The pragmatic Pope Gregory:

As a result of their efforts to wipe out "pagan" holidays, such as Samhain, the Christians succeeded in effecting major transformations in it. In 601 A.D. Pope Gregory the First issued a now famous edict to his missionaries concerning the native beliefs and customs of the peoples he hoped to convert. Rather than try to obliterate native peoples' customs and beliefs, the pope instructed his missionaries to use them: if a group of people worshipped a tree, rather than cut it down, he advised them to consecrate it to Christ and allow its continued worship.

[about](#)

Fast forward to now. You buy the kid another plastic mask, plastic hatchet and plastic bucket and drag her

around begging processed sugar treats from everyone. What good is this mindless, empty routine?

Processed sugars and carbohydrates, which turn into sugar, cause a rise in the insulin level of the blood. This also raises the endorphins level, a natural mood upper in the brain. These sugars causes the body to have a chemical high, mentally, which results in a lift in mood. .

Continuous large doses of sugar and/or carbohydrates, overtime, usually cause the brain's endorphins sites to slow production or close sites to regulate the amount of endorphins in the brain. When the body cuts back on endorphin production it reduces the amount of endorphins available in the body at any given time. The lack of enough endorphin in the brain causes slight to deep depression.

To maintain a normal level of endorphins in the brain the individual must eat more sugar and/or carbohydrates to get out of depression and maintain a normal mood level. This causes a vicious cycle of addiction, physiologically (Nay, 1996). This is also directly comparable to the cycle that is developed after excessive endorphins are released into the body from the use of alcohol.

[three-peaks](#)



Candy-free Halloween

Halloween is often on a work night so it can be a total hassle to take kids around door to door to pester the neighbors for the junk food they've been socially pressured to hand out.

Tip: natural food and home [cooking](#) is appropriate for every day of the year. Decent recipes for Halloween and Autumn season are easy to find and they don't consist of 130% processed sugar with food coloring added for variety.

Why not start locally and change this ancient tradition from pure consumerism to festive, reverent and awe for the spiritual side of living?

As an alternative that is more traditional, yet oddly enough, less likely to conflict with many religious beliefs, simply spend some time in remembrance for a loved one who has recently passed on and ignore the trick-or-treaters.

Plastic-free Halloween

Try elegant thematic gatherings and fairly authentic with all things therein instead of always cheap, always plastic, always some random mix. Although pumpkins are a native New World gourd, they're natural and are now a part of the festival, so they're in.

Ceramic and steel objects like skull candle holders, medieval weapons and jewelry are decorations that last for generations rather than a few years until they deteriorate as plastics to be discarded.

Candles and Autumn type incenses, oils, and even blazing torches are another excellent fit.

Costumes, if desired, also give us another junk plastics or authentic natural materials option.

Gothic, Celtic, Greek or other folk period theme styled gatherings (think Renaissance Faire but earlier in history) can shame the neighbor's hodgepodge cowboys, pimps, pirates and accident victim mishmash.

Applying some standards for quality or authenticity in our lives can get us around passive [Green Halloween](#) type reactions and its oblivious consumerism counterpart and make for much more charming, non-destructive life experiences.

Opposing this new idea is the old fun-as-the-goal of modern living, but only when it is cheap and disposable. While we don't need to lose fun-having, it is best had as a side effect of capturing [meaning in our lives](#) without leaving destruction in our wake.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [crowdism](#)

Welcome to Oligarchy

Sep 30th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

As [predicted](#), it's almost official now. Our merchant elites have their candidate.

This has now been confirmed by Tom Barthold, the Chief of Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, in a hand-written note to a Republican Senator. And it's not merely about jail time; it's also about the \$25,000 fine that could be levied by the IRS against individuals who refuse to buy health insurance.

That this is even being considered just boggles the mind. If a person is too broke to afford health insurance right now, how are they supposed to be able to buy it after paying a \$25,000 fine and spending a year in prison?

As Paul Craig Roberts brilliantly pointed out in a recent essay, this is like trying to solve the homeless problem by forcing homeless people to buy a home, then throwing them in prison when they can't afford to. Up to twelve U.S. states are now considering legislation to override the federal government's intent to require mandatory health insurance

[naturalnews](#)

Let's review by following the money:

In late 2006, George Soros, the British empire/Wall Street gatekeeper of the Left, vetted Senator Barack Obama's potential Presidential candidacy on behalf of financier oligarchs. Soros then introduced Obama to a selected financier group, and Obama soon afterwards announced he would seek the White House.

Soros's involvement with Obama's brief national political career had begun two years earlier with Soros fundraising for Obama's campaign for U.S. senate, and continued through the 2007 Presidential campaign launch with huge fundraising operations by Soros and his circle.

[larouchepac](#)

Why this globalist billionaire wants this administration in his pocket:

With House Democrats moving to extract more than that just as the drug makers finalized their advertising plans, the industry lobbyists pressed the Obama administration for public reassurances that it had agreed to cap the industry's additional costs at \$80 billion. The White House, meanwhile, has struggled to mollify its most pivotal health industry ally without alienating Congressional Democrats who want to demand far more of the drug makers. White House officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

[hotair](#)

Money trail complete:

GuruFocus tracks the stock buys, sells and commentaries of stock investment gurus such as Warren Buffett, George Soros, the best investors.

[gurufocus](#)



Oligarchy

www.amerika.org

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [democracy](#) · [oligarchy](#)

How tools become symbols of fear

Sep 29th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

That is power: the strength and power of flesh. What is steel compared to the hand that wields it? Look at the strength of your body, the desire in your heart. – John Milius, film director



Animals sometimes fear objects they do not understand. I'm often reminded of cats freaking out when the vacuum cleaner is switched on or a squirrel in the road not knowing which way to run when a car slowly approaches.

The same goes for irrationally timid people around firearms and still others in front of a computer keyboard afraid if they peck the wrong key, something is going to go badly wrong.

Complex information systems are similar.

But because of their complexity and scale, certain information systems affect many people and their fear is greatly amplified. It doesn't help matters any when it is known that some ominous creation in the control of faceless others monitors parts of what we thought were our own private lives.

Confounding our worries is all the partisanship of our democratic political world, where those in power controlling big scary tools become rhetorical targets of their foes and the audience is ourselves, the public.

Analysis Center (NSAC) maintains a hodgepodge of data sets packed with more than 1.5 billion government and private-sector records about citizens and foreigners, the documents show, bringing the government closer than ever to implementing the "Total Information Awareness" system first dreamed up by the Pentagon in the days following the Sept. 11 attacks. Such a system, if successful, would correlate data from scores of different sources to automatically identify terrorists and other threats before they could strike. The FBI is seeking to quadruple the known staff of the program. But the proposal has long been criticized by privacy groups as ineffective and invasive. Critics say the new documents show that the government is proceeding with the plan in private, and without sufficient oversight.

Like a sturdy hammer or sharp blade, many tools can be used for constructive or destructive purposes. This is also true for information systems.

But, like the famous Riddle of Steel, what matters is not the object itself, but the hearts and minds putting such tools to use.

Conventional criminal cases have also benefited. In a 2004 case against a telemarketing company called Gecko Communications, NSAC used its batch-searching capability to provide prosecutors with detailed information on 192,000 alleged victims of a credit scam. The feds suspected that Gecko had promised to help the victims improve their credit scores, and then

failed to produce results. NSAC automatically analyzed the victims' credit records to prove their scores hadn't improved, a task that took two days instead of the four-and-a-half years that the U.S. Attorney's Office had expected to sink into the job. In December 2006, the owners and seven office managers at the company were sentenced to prison.

[wired](#)

In the foregoing example, the scary tool wasn't used to bash or slash us. It was put to use to protect thousands of consumers from one of the many commercial predators in our midst.

The hearts and minds behind the powerful information system object were true to us this time around. Let's look at more examples of the results of tool usage.

- Last week authorities raided several New York City properties in connection with the arrest of Najibullah Zazi, a legal immigrant from Afghanistan living in Denver who authorities said Friday is believed to have been plotting an attack on the New York City subway system on Sept. 11 similar to the 2004 attacks in Madrid.

- On Thursday a Jordanian named Hosam Maher Husein Smadi, 19, was arrested in Dallas after he parked a car he believed to be loaded with explosives, but were in actuality fakes supplied to him by an undercover FBI operative, in front of a downtown Dallas skyscraper.

- Michael Finton, who also goes by the name of Talib Islam, was arrested in Illinois on Wednesday for allegedly plotting to blow up a federal building, an act which led him to being charged with attempted murder of federal employees and attempting to detonate a weapon of mass destruction.

[yahoo](#)

Now for the other side:

"Total Information Awareness" may be the closest thing to a true "Big Brother" program that has ever been seriously contemplated in the United States. TIA is based on a vision of pulling together as much information as possible about as many people as possible into an "ultra-large-scale" database, making that information available to government officials, and sorting through it to try to identify terrorists.

[ACLU](#)



Abuse of power, taking the form of tools in the hands of those in charge is always a concern. But, it is a poor form of argument to contend that because the powerful have a potentially dangerous object at hand, destruction is imminent.

During the Cold War, both the free world and those behind the Iron Curtain wielded the means for mass destruction. Nonetheless, the Soviets, scary and unstable at times as they were, did not choose to annihilate its feared opponent, the capitalist West.

The lessons here are manifold:

1. Our opinions can be swayed based not on actual deeds, but on the mere image of the powerful in possession of scary tools.
2. The powerful having such tools at hand does not indicate that our own destruction is imminent. The opposite may be the case.
3. Contenders for power, money, or popularity may use the fear tactics of scary objects carried by those in charge to manipulate us all.
4. Because power changes hands in a sharply divided liberal democracy, the stakes are higher and thus cautioned vigilance is nonetheless within the bounds of reason when the powerful wield objects having great potential.
5. Otherwise dormant objects do not harm people. People harm people.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Witless crowd empowers its own devils

Sep 27th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

In a speech at the 1991 Bilderberg Convention, Rockefeller stated “we are grateful to The Washington Post, The New York Times, Time Magazine, and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings and respected their promises of discretion for almost forty years. It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subject to the lights of publicity during those years. But the world is now more sophisticated and prepared towards a world government. The supranational sovereignty on an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national auto-determination practiced in past centuries.”

[examiner](#)

What puts people like this in power?

1. Athletic ability
2. Good looks
3. Intelligence
4. Money
5. Untarnished character

If you answer money, you're right. Now assuming such people aren't professional safe crackers centering their operations around bank heists, how do they amass such fortunes?



Simply put, the answer is hundreds of millions of consumers spending themselves into debt. There isn't another consistent source of sustinment for globalist wealth. It is only the earnings of ordinary people in all their great numbers, converted into consumer spending.

If this process continues—if consumers get their debts down to reasonable levels—it will eventually make the country's primary economic engine, shoppers, stronger and more sustainable.

[business](#)

It's fair to say that most of last Friday's G20 protesters, marching in downtown Pittsburg where the latest summit was held, are themselves corporate consumers. That's right, they fuel the very engine of unfair

effects of globalization against which they protest.



The protests are expected to continue indefinitely, which is another way of saying, mass protest is not expected to change anything, but you're perfectly free to do so.

John Kirton, director of the G20 Research Group at the University of Toronto, said he expects protests to remain a fixture at summits and that he considers them a valuable part of democracy.

Maybe a change in perspective and behaviour is needed. If international capitalism is a problem, why run around in the streets like angry primates throwing monkey poo at it?

Protesters on Friday held up signs such as "We Say No To Corporate Greed," and "G20 = Death by Capitalism" and chanted "Hey hey ho ho, corporate welfare has to go."

[reuters](#)

The protest strategy is now predictable like clockwork, arriving any time and any place that globalists announce to the public they are gathering. The angry crowd is expected and as its history shows, impotent in its goals other than getting itself injured and destroying property.

Luckily, there are some others who have come up with some new ideas. Some of these are replacement economics operating in parallel under the larger capitalist dominion.

Others call for mass non-participation in order to "starve the beast" of its wealth and power. Still others propose spawning new societies under different rules in the hopes these succeed, inspire others around the world, and overtake the old order.

There are three main choices:

- Accept the world as it is
- Get upset at the world and show one's own impotence
- Undertake the difficult task of working on a superior replacement

Ideas:

[Alternative Local Economy](#)

[Buy Nothing Christmas](#)

[Buy Nothing Day](#)

[Culture Jamming](#)

[Micro Communities](#)

National Day of Slayer

[Pan-Nationalism](#)

[Post-Globalism](#)

[Relocalization](#)

[TV Turnoff](#)

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [consumerism](#)

Entitlement: The most obvious sign of civilization decay

Sep 26th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Much has been said about civilization's decay in this blog, focusing mainly on [social reality](#) and how we view ourselves first and then the goals of our society second. There is no more obvious a place to look for this phenomenon than in the idea of [entitlement](#).

Wealth is a touchy subject, because wealthy people in America typically give to charities yet close themselves off from society, as they simply can't walk around talking about what they have with the working class folks. Working class folks resent the rich in our society, and since everyone is "free", the wealthy can be reviled openly, even though in some respects they make and break people like us each day.

In this country, we are "free" to pursue the goal of endless wealth (or the appearance thereof), and yet those who achieve it are pressured to give it back once they have it. This can be seen as an effect of entitlement in our society: you have it, I want it, so give it back – if not to me, then maybe to the poor guy down the street. As long as you lose some of your wealth and someone else gains. Anyone who knows simple economic game theory realizes what's going on here:

During the physical examination standard for a player signing such a huge contract, doctors informed the Cardinals of a possible issue with the vision in Mateo's right eye. The team sent him to specialists, but definitive answers were elusive. With the 90-day window to void the contract approaching, the Cardinals acted swiftly Tuesday night.

They swooped in and took money from a blind kid.

Mateo, in the meantime, continues to train. Mercedes wants him to forget about the Cardinals. It is not that easy. He is 16. His family remains impoverished. St. Louis provided him the gateway out.

[[±](#) | Yahoo! Sports]

As Brett recently [pointed out](#), the media nearly always contorts and twists facts to suit the agenda of individualistic entitlement. It's no different here.

handout



Say what you want about professional baseball – it's certainly not a pretty business. In the article, there are undertones of, "he's a poor kid from the developing world who was looking for a payday, and the Cardinals shut him out! How dare they!"

To echo the sentiments of many a recently traded NFL player: "It's a business". This is true. The St. Louis Cardinals are out to make money, and the baseball union has forced guaranteed contracts on ownership, so the Cardinals need to be careful to whom they hand out this kind of money, as it's a sunk cost as soon as it hits the books. The fact that they even had to justify pulling from the contract by stating it was within a 90-day window is insanity.

Consider what, exactly, the St. Louis Cardinals owe this person? Nothing. This kind of thing happens all the time in sports: X-rays are taken, physicals are done before trades are complete, and if the team sees something it doesn't like, it either pays the player less or doesn't pay him at all. Such occurrences should hardly be surprising to the player; after all, consider the kind of money these people make for playing a game. How can one blame the St. Louis Cardinals for going the conservative route and playing it safe when there is an issue with this prospect's eye? How bad should people feel for him, knowing that he will probably get a \$1million signing bonus instead of a \$3.1million signing bonus now?

Since the Cardinals rake in ticket money from the very fans who cry foul at this kind of thing, they're expected to give it away. This, even though if the Cardinals made it their business to bail out the entire country of the Dominican Republic instead of focusing on baseball, the franchise wouldn't survive for very long. Mr. Mateo was *owed* that money, the logic goes, because the Cardinals dangled it in front of him and his parents are "impoverished".

So once again, the wealthy entity here is the bad guy in the eyes of the media, and Americans soak it up because we can't imagine living like Mateo nor can we imagine losing a winning lottery ticket. In the process of attempting to make everyone equal, we forget that these wealthy entities serve certain functions in society, and not all of them can give all their money away to whoever wants it.

I'd much rather meet the American volunteer who's helping build houses and teach children in Costa Rica, then to meet this Mateo character or his parents. Baseball is a dirty game in the Dominican, as all accounts of steroids over the past decade or so have proven, and it's likely that, sixteen years ago when the Mateos had this child, they had it in their minds the whole time to try developing him into a baseball player for an easy out all along. Whether these were their actual intentions, we'll never know, but heart of gold or not, it doesn't change the fact that Mateo is only owed what the market perceives to be his value for throwing a baseball. Take that away from him, and what does he have? Apparently nothing, which is too bad, because there's a lot more to live for than baseball.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [crowdism](#) · [individualism](#) · [media](#)

The problem with social media

Sep 25th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The more I use social media sites — Slashdot, Reddit, Facebook, MySpace, Digg and even newspapers with comments — is that they do not encourage engagement.

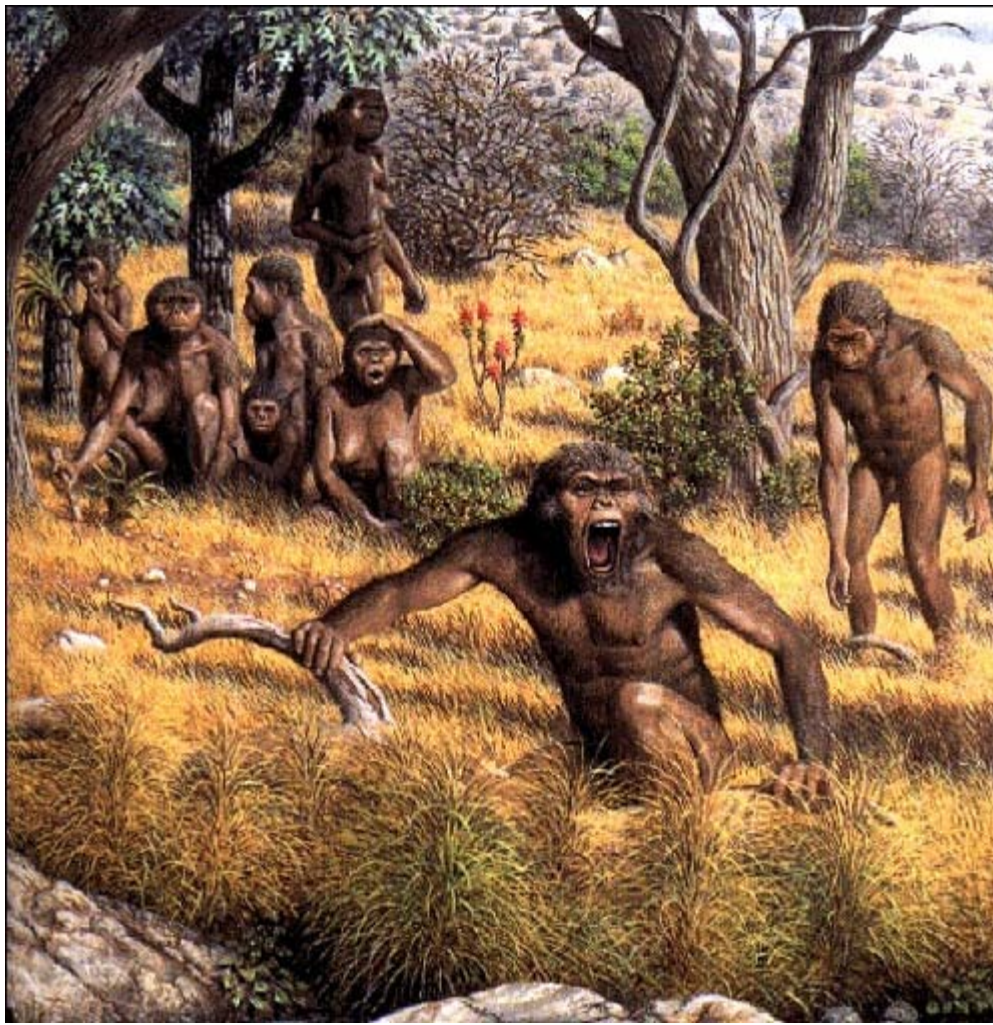
In other words, they let us side-step the question of “is this a good idea?” on any item, and instead comment simply on what we think of it. We’re not predicting cause and effect; we’re judging parts of reality as to whether they fit our personal preference.

Think about all the things in modern life that are like this:

- **Consumerism:** I don’t care if it’s junk or junk food, I want it now because I can and I have the \$5 in my sweaty hand.
- **Media culture:** Voyeurism of the lurid and profane, this lets us see all aspects of life turned into soap box drama that we can then judge whilst clucking our tongues.
- **Morality:** An utter parasite and stupid person finally did something annoying enough to get him killed. But we fear death, and it offends us, so we send the cops to find and punish the person who helped us clean up our gene pool.
- **Democracy:** We don’t have to prove we’re voting intelligently, we just vote for whatever flatters us. “I like to think of myself as progressive, so whatever candidate uses that label is good enough for me!”

Modern society is built on the principle that each individual is a king — in a domain limited only by commerce. Given how leftist individualism is, and how rightist capitalism is, that shows us an odd convergence.

As we get more into this method of letting each person measure how things appear to them, while we as a group never seek the truth, it’s not surprising that our problems don’t go away — we’re recreating them with our laziness and bratty, social media-style behaviors.



Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Daily bad science: Spanking

Sep 25th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

They love to hit you with that statistical bad science, because it keeps you from looking for causes:

Spanking can get kids to behave in a hurry, but new research suggests it can do more harm than good to their noggins. The study, involving hundreds of U.S. children, showed the more a child was spanked the lower his or her IQ compared with others.

One might ask, however, whether children who are spanked tend to come from backgrounds in which education opportunities are less or inherited intelligence lower.

Straus and his colleague Mallie Paschall of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Maryland studied nationally representative samples of two age groups: 806 children ages 2 to 4, and 704 ages 5 to 9. The researchers tested the kids' IQs initially and then four years later.

Both groups of kids got smarter after four years. But the 2- to 4-year-olds who were spanked scored 5 points lower on the IQ test than those not spanked. For children ages 5 to 9, the spanked ones scored on average 2.8 points lower than their unspanked counterparts.

[LiveScience](#)

Like most modern "data," the study is flawed because it measures effects, not causes. Parents who spank their children a lot tend to be the dumber ones, these days. That wasn't always so. Most of history's great geniuses were spanked. What does that tell you about this "study"?

Furthermore, the dummy in charge claims that he corrected "statistically" for socioeconomic status, yet doesn't tell us how — did he actually measure this value, or just assign a coefficient? The usual bad thinking abounds.

The other lurking factor in the room is that most well-balanced parents will have nothing to do with this study, so he's left with the people he can con into getting their kids IQ tested twice for \$50 in bonus money.

That we tolerate such bad science is one reason our society is in decline. The head dummy of this study should be confined to washing test tubes, but because he got in the headlines and lots of dummies nodded knowingly and approved, he's now one of our "better" researchers.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

500 companies agree to distract you from ecocide

Sep 24th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

One of the most prominent topics for mainstream audiences around the world today is global warming. The reaction to this topic takes many forms.



Some say climate change is a natural, periodic event that happens to our planet at various times in history. Others say human activity is causing the planet to warm up.

It is interesting to note that both sides often claim the other is a shill for some hidden benefactor.

The non-human-causes folks claim the other side is trying to burden us with a useless carbon tax. The human causes folks believe their opponents are protecting a wealthy old industrial pollution regime.

In our complex modern world, when one item is singled out for so much attention, it is prudent to look for what we are missing, if we are being led astray, and why.

A coalition of more than 500 international companies on Tuesday urged rich countries to commit to “immediate and deep” cuts in greenhouse gas emissions at U.N. climate talks to help combat global warming.

The group of some of the world’s biggest energy companies, retailers and manufacturers said a failure to agree a strong new climate deal at U.N. talks in Copenhagen in December would erode confidence and cut investment in low-carbon technology.

[reuters](#)



If business interests are consistently true to any principle, it is that of self-interest and profit. Industry sees climate change as an opportunity to unload more consumer products on us, but with a green label.

This has two effects. At the social reality level, industry and consumer adopt the illusion that green consumerism benefits the environment. At the reality-as-it-is level, people and industries continue to crowd out the planet’s ecosystems like always.

Green consumerism is more of the same economic and population growth that brings us right back to where we began. Population growth amplifies consumer demand that shoves aside the natural world, replacing it with an anthropogenic landscape for system management, production centers and housing.

Carbon taxes are also questionable because they would hinder profit on the business side and consumption on the public side. Political actors offering such a solution would find themselves constantly at odds with both business and the voting public, a losing proposition.

Worse, the rather weak carbon tax proposal does not curb the endless expansion of anthropogenic landscapes or the growth of all the non-greenhouse gas pollutants.

The team's new study is the first to show that degrading plastics are leaching potentially toxic chemicals such as bisphenol A into the seas, possibly threatening ocean animals, and us.

Scientists had previously thought plastics broke down only at very high temperatures and over hundreds of years.

The researchers behind a new study, however, found that plastic breaks down at cooler temperatures than expected, and within a year of the trash hitting the water.

The Japan-based team collected samples in waters from the U.S., Europe, India, Japan, and elsewhere, lead researcher Katsuhiko Saido, a chemist with the College of Pharmacy at Nihon University in Japan, said via email.

All the water samples were found to contain derivatives of polystyrene, a common plastic used in disposable cutlery, Styrofoam, and DVD cases, among other things, said Saido, who presented the findings at a meeting of the American Chemical Society in Washington, D.C., today.

Plastic, he said, should be considered a new source of chemical pollution in the ocean.

[NG](#)



In our world of nations, the U.S. alone has surpassed 300 million people. Virtually every American wants to live a 21st Century lifestyle with the lights on all day, 4-5 televisions, computers and gaming consoles buzzing away, refrigerators, washers and dryers humming, etc.

That means each American has an electrical power demand. Without digging up the exact numbers, some of that demand requires coal, a resource we can harvest cheaply, locally, so it doesn't require a huge, costly military presence abroad to protect.

So far, so good, until we review the practice of harvesting this resource. We don't even need to get into the global warming and other air pollutant aspects of coal burning emissions.

The Powell and Clinch rivers are home to 16 species of rare fish and one of the world's richest concentrations of freshwater mussels. The number of identified mussel species has dwindled from 60 to about 40, with 26 of those listed by the Conservancy as globally rare.

You'd think such a special ecosystem would be cherished and protected, but it isn't. Like much

of this area of southern Appalachia, Black Mountain contains buried treasure: black gold, also known as coal.

The mountain is owned by coal companies, and to get the coal out as quickly and cheaply as possible, they scrape off the forests and blast off the sides and tops of the mountains, dumping rubble, or "spoil," in the surrounding coves and hollows.

[appvoices](#)



The daily demand for coal for energy use, multiplied by 300 million and rising consumers are mostly voters who the politicians had better keep feeling pampered. A light weight, uneducated estimate of one pound of coal per person per day gives us a handle.

Over five years, about 275 million tons of coal, using this gentle estimate, are extracted and burnt to keep the power generators spinning and Americans happily blogging about their daily personal drama and playing the latest console games all day.

The significant factor at work, the one that we do not have a handle on because to do so is to oppress people freedoms, is population numbers. We can educate, and a few people will turn a light off once in a while if they think of it and if doing so isn't inconvenient.

If destroying the chemistry of the oceans and chopping mountains in half aren't keeping 300 million+ oblivious brats entertained enough, what about the flattening of entire woodlands?

This is believed to be the first time logging has been challenged on the grounds that it will damage the climate. It comes at a time when there are signs that the Forest Wars may be once again heating up in California.

The Board of Forestry is under attack from environmentalists and fishing groups for seeking to weaken logging rules that were enacted a decade ago to protect Coho salmon and other at risk salmon. Those rules only apply to watersheds where Coho and other at risk salmonids spawn and rear. The logging rules were themselves deemed inadequate to protect Coho by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

[hcn](#)

So now we come back around to climate change. The forests, although less so than the oceans, are carbon



absorption sinks as well. But, that isn't their only role is it?

The ecology consists of layers of composite, interdependent systems, none of which play one single role. Ravage one aspect of the ecology and the side effects strain innumerable other parts.

Nonetheless, we come back to the point of our topic today. Devastate multiple parts through clear cutting, plastics dumping and mountain chopping, and so many other ways and the life support system of the planet itself is eventually sabotaged.

People and their demands are the saboteurs, not one detached aspect of a complex system called global warming. Perhaps it is more convenient for the masses to simply spend seven dollars on a mercury light bulb, making the manufacturer, distributor and retailer happy for their trouble.

Are popular, soft solutions like green consumer products or a few cents of carbon taxes actually effective or do they serve only as illusion reinforcement concealing the global expansion of a sterile human monoculture?

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [crowdism](#)

Reframing a question: the false dilemma

Sep 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

As we near yet another warm political season, we're going to see a lot more of this in public: the logical fallacy known as a false dilemma.

In this fallacy, others re-define your argument to fit into two categories of their own definition, one of which is conveniently weaker than another.

Example 1:

You: I think doctors need to be able to turn away any patient they don't want to treat.

Them: So you're against the public option for healthcare — how can you be so cruel to your fellow citizens?

You and they are talking about completely unrelated things, and it wasn't you who did it. As the definition of false dilemma, bifurcation and false dichotomy — they're different names for the same fallacy — states:

Definition: In false dichotomy, the arguer sets up the situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so it seems that we are left with only one option: the one the arguer wanted us to pick in the first place. But often there are really many different options, not just two—and if we thought about them all, we might not be so quick to pick the one the arguer recommends!

Example: "Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students' safety. Obviously we shouldn't risk anyone's safety, so we must tear the building down." The argument neglects to mention the possibility that we might repair the building or find some way to protect students from the risks in question—for example, if only a few rooms are in bad shape, perhaps we shouldn't hold classes in those rooms.

[UNC](#)

I like this source because they present fallacies in conversational form, and not the more obvious, simple-variables, demonstrative form I've used above. Ideally, you'd be able to see both or switch between the two, but it's a challenge to keep few words on the page to avoid the dreaded "[tl;dr](#)" effect, which is as old as humanity. We like reading when there's a feedback loop providing constant valuable or fun information.

So now you've seen this fallacy in raw form and conversation. How might it apply to the politics ahead of us?

Example 2:

You: I don't think socialism will provide a stable society.

Them: So you're against the people? You're either for big government, or you're defender of the people. I prefer to let empathy and compassion guide me and I defend the people.

Why is this a fallacy? Because in talking about socialism, you're talking about the whole of the society — which is more than its parts. They've invented this idea of "the people" which is not only vague but incorrect, as they're probably talking about only part of the population as individuals. You're talking about whether the infrastructure of society operates, not whether people in the short-term get what they feel they need. There's a crucial difference in that we can have a bad harvest, and people can lack the food they need, but if we give them the seed corn, then our economy collapses because we cannot plant next year's

crop.

Example 3:

You: Historically, diversity and importing of foreign labor have not worked for a nation, and have generally conveyed it into a third world state itself.

Them: So you're a racist? Either everyone gets along in the same country as one big happy, and anyone anywhere can go anywhere else, or you're racist because you exclude them from your nation.

The above is a fallacy you will see quite a bit in the future.

You are talking about the ideal way to structure a society.

They are talking in pure binary: either you accept that all people should be everywhere, or you're a racist.

They are not clear on the fact that there may be more reasons to oppose diversity than "racism," which clearly needs definition.

Here's another good one:

Example 4:

You: We should support the troops, even if we oppose the war.

Them: I support the troops — by bringing them home!

This one is more subtle. They have set up a dichotomy where the troops being at home is good, and anything else is bad, so supporting the troops must involve bringing them home.

You were suggesting something more generic along the lines of "even if you disagree with our policy, don't take it out on our soldiers," which is a historical reference to the treatment of Viet Nam veterans in the 1970s.

The false dilemma fallacy shows up more than you'd think. Often called a strawman, the habit of re-framing an argument so that it exists in binary states where one option obviously sounds better is a tactic as old as humanity.

Real-World Example: "Population: Overconsumption is the real problem" by Fred Pearce

Let's walk through the writings of a dishonest person and see how many fallacies we can find. I say dishonest because this person has the glow of gold in his eyes, since he knows if he says something that pleases the notions people already have, they'll reward him by claiming he's a good, profound writer.

THERE is a pervading myth that efforts to fight climate change and other environmental perils will be to no avail unless we "do something" about population growth. Even seasoned analysts talk about the threat of "exponential" population growth. But there is no exponential growth. In most of the world fertility rates are falling fast, and the countries where population growth continues are those that contribute least to our planetary predicament.

Here, he makes the fundamental sleight of hand used in this article: population growth is falling right now, so he assumes that this smaller cycle is the bigger cycle. He does not address the long-term picture which clearly shows *an upward rising growth curve since industrialization*, which is obvious to anyone with half a brain since we've had fluctuations (what he mistakes for the overall trend) every other decade but growth has on the whole continued. By redefining the long-term picture **as** the short-term picture, he has created a false dilemma.

Why is this dishonest writer saying this? He wants us to believe in the path of least resistance: if we in the first world start using both sides of the toilet paper, each buy a Prius, turning off lights, washing out condoms, and so on, it'll solve the problem. What he doesn't note is that our real energy and carbon use comes from infrastructure: hospitals, schools, transportation, manufacturing, stores, agriculture and so on. Giving up those things will be a step backward indeed. But it sounds better to an audience to construe us in the first world as benevolent givers who sacrifice things for themselves, than it does for us to say "oh well, we grew too fast, time for a cull." He has at a most fundamental level confused politeness with reality.

But back to his list of fallacies:

Back in the late 1960s, when Paul Ehrlich wrote his seminal book *The Population Bomb*, rapid population growth was arguably the number 1 threat to the planet's future. Many believed that only strict birth control could prevent doomsday. But after scandals about forced vasectomies in India and China's draconian one-child policy, such views fell into disrepute.

We have here an [ad populum](#) fallacy, specifically a bandwagon fallacy, where "the arguer tries to convince the audience to do or believe something because everyone else (supposedly) does." Indeed: fell into disrepute does not mean found to be incorrect, just unpopular.

Half a century ago, the worldwide average for the number of children a woman had was between five and six. Now she has 2.6.

Here's that ugly [false dilemma](#) again, and it's a very subtle one. Right now, she has 2.6 children on average; for how long does this cycle last? He's telling us that we either accept his short-term view as the long-term view, or we're wrong.

Half the world now has a fertility rate below the replacement level, which, allowing for girls who don't make it to adulthood, is around 2.3. This includes most of Europe, east Asia, North America and the Caribbean.

Here he's counting countries, not their population, to make his argument seem stronger.

This hasn't yet stopped the world's population from rising. It stands at 6.8 billion, and is growing by 75 million a year. This is mostly because the huge numbers of young women born during the 20th-century's worldwide baby boom are still fertile: they may typically only have two children each, but that is still a lot of babies. Soon, however, if fertility rates continue to decline, each generation of women will be smaller than the last.

Here's a subtle [post hoc](#) fallacy, of the nature "Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B." He assumes that because a huge number of young women were born in a baby boom, that's the reason population is rising — even though it has consistently been rising without that condition being present.

Even if the world population does stabilise soon and starts to glide downwards, that won't solve the world's environmental problems. The real issue is not overpopulation but overconsumption — mostly in rich countries that have long since given up adding substantial numbers to their population.

He hasn't proved his argument, so he'll repeat it and hope you don't figure it out.

Take one measure: carbon dioxide emissions. Stephen Pacala, director of the Princeton Environmental Institute, calculates that the world's richest half billion people — that's about 7 per cent of the global population — are responsible for 50 per cent of the world's emissions. Meanwhile, the poorest 50 per cent are responsible for just 7 per cent of emissions. One American or European is more often than not responsible for more emissions than an entire village of Africans.

[New Scientist](#)

He's trotted out the dreaded [hasty generalization](#) in a subtle form: he's telling us that carbon dioxide emissions "equal" the environmental problem as a whole. He's disregarding land use, slash and burn agriculture, overhunting and overfishing, and several thousand other problems in order to make his point.

Hopefully the example of Fred Pearce's dishonest, crowd-pleasing, illogical and error-ridden article will show why it's important to be able to recognize logical fallacies.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Rights or reality

Sep 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



This neat little article showed the divide between rights, or what you can demand from society, and reality, or how you have to act to make things turn out all right.

Rights:

A new survey of medical-school deans finds that unprofessional conduct on blogs and social-networking sites is common among medical students.

Although med students fully understand patient-confidentiality laws and are indoctrinated in the high ethical standards to which their white-coated profession is held, many of them still use [social media sites] to depict and discuss lewd behavior and sexual misconduct, make discriminatory statements and discuss patient cases in violation of confidentiality laws[...].

Of the 80 medical-school deans questioned, 60% reported incidents involving unprofessional postings and 13% admitted to incidents that violated patient privacy. Some offenses led to expulsion from school.

Many students feel they are entitled to post what they wish on their personal profiles, maintaining that the information is in fact personal and not subject to the same policies and guidelines that govern their professional behavior on campus.

Though medical students would agree that physicians — and other professionals, like teachers — should be held to a higher standard of integrity by society, the new study suggests that they're confused by how rules apply, especially in cyberspace, once the white coat comes off.

"They view their Facebook pages as their Internet persona," says Dr. Neil Parker, senior associate dean for student affairs for graduate medical education at UCLA's David Geffen School

of Medicine. "They think it's something only for their friends, even though it's not private."

So here's the setup: they feel "entitled to post what they wish on their personal profiles" has two real points. First, they feel that rights are the issue here; second, they feel that there's a distinction between personal profile and professional life.

What they're not understanding is that they don't exist in a vacuum. People depend on their for care; they have, as a result, additional responsibilities. Among other reasons this is why doctors are paid more than average. But also, people need to feel comfortable trusting doctors with some precious things:

- Their privacy. You're getting naked in front of this person and probed in places you don't normally show people. You don't want to be mocked for it.
- Their health. Your doctor influences your survival in a huge way. You are placing a lot of trust in this person, among other things to value you as a human being enough to work hard to get you the care you need.
- Their fear. No one likes going to the doctor. Doctors can emerge at any time, look at a chart, and tell us we have six months left — or that we have some weird disease that will make our genitals fall off. Doctors must among other chores ward off that fear.

For this reason, like Presidents and police officers, doctors are to some degree never off duty, and it doesn't make sense for them to mock patients or show unprofessional behavior. Sure, they may have the **right** to do it, but is that the question?

Younger students were more likely than older staff members to believe that their thoughts and opinions were valid to post online, regardless of their potentially damaging or discriminatory impact on others.

TIME

"Validity", "rights" and "entitlement" mean nothing compared to the task of survival.

If you're a doctor, especially an ethical one, there are certain standards you're going to uphold because you want to do right by your patients.

That's more of a pioneer attitude. *I do what I need to do.*

Then there's the city person attitude: *I do whatever I can get away with.*

The city people are used to asking others for permission, and making others give them things on the basis of "rights" and transactions. The pioneer is used to making things work.

Doctors "should," in the sense of what is sensible, follow the frontier model not the city model. I know I wouldn't want to entrust my care to someone wondering how they can leverage their rights to get away with more at my expense.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

You're not oppressed; you're irresponsible

Sep 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Mobs are like old age homes: they bring together people who are sure they were wronged.

Why are they sure they were wronged? Because the alternative is to think they screwed it up themselves, which damages self-image which damages self-esteem.

So instead, blame someone else.

A lawsuit against a Baltimore police officer — who was famously recorded on a YouTube video yelling at young skateboarders at the Inner Harbor for calling him “dude” — has been thrown out by a city judge.

“The family is incredibly disappointed, and feels wronged,” attorney William P. Blackford told WTOP. “They’ve had their day in court taken away.”

The video shows Officer Salvatore Rivieri, who was assigned to the Inner Harbor patrol, putting Bush in a headlock, pushing him to the ground and threatening to smack him for what the officer says is a lack of respect.

OMG this is horrible, this cop is an oppressor, the courts are siding with him because of a wall of blue.

Until:

Bush said he did not hear the officer’s orders to stop skateboarding, which were given before the 3 1/2-minute video starts. Bush said he was wearing headphones and missed the command.

[Baltimore Sun](#)

If you don’t pay attention to reality around you, problems occur. Including this. Cops, who have to deal with many citizens daily trying to get them to not do crazy stuff, don’t have the time to break their momentum to wonder if you’re doing something stupid like obstructing your hearing.

Witness the headlines:

- [Cyclist hit by car had iPod, no helmet](#)
- [Fleckenstein was wearing headphones connected to an iPod when she was hit](#)
- [Police said she had her iPod in and did not hear the car coming](#)

And there are many more, every day. If you shut out reality, sometimes it bites you in the ass. How hard is that?

Here’s another:

What was once considering a normal rite of passage, typical curiosity that the newly sexualized young have about themselves, their bodies, and the bodies of others, has become a heinous crime. Not long ago a curious adolescent or child, caught exploring, or playing doctor in the back yard, was given a talking-to, sent to bed early, and warned to not do it again—a warning most heeded for at least another few years, after which time warnings were useless. Today, it has been criminalized, and criminalized in a way far exceeding crimes of violence. A youth who has sex with another youth, even if voluntary, could well face legal sentences far worse than if they had killed their friend.

[Blogger](#)

We're all victims here! These kids were just trying to *explore their sexuality*. And who would deny themselves that pleasure? Surely it's innocent.

Wait, there's some data...

Last December I passed a paper along to Razib showing that high-school age adolescents with higher IQs and extremely low IQs were less likely to have had first intercourse than those with average to below average intelligence. (i.e. for males with IQs under 70, 63.3% were still virgins, for those with IQs between 70-90 only 50.2% were virgin, 58.6% were virgins with IQs between 90-110, and 70.3% with IQs over 110 were virgins)

In fact, a more detailed study from 2000 is devoted strictly to this topic, and finds the same thing: Smart Teens Don't Have Sex (or Kiss Much Either).

The team looked at 1000s of representative teens grades 7-12 in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and The Biosocial Factors in Adolescent Development datasets, both of which include an IQ test, and include detailed sexual experience questions ranging from hand-holding to intercourse. As with the other study there was a curvilinear relationship: students with IQs above 100 and below 70 were significantly less likely to have had intercourse than those in between. Also like the other study, they found teens with IQs ranging from 75 to 90 had the lowest probability of virginity (the authors note this is also the same IQ range where propensity towards crime peaks).

[GNXP](#)

The most productive members of our society are more chaste, having discovered something other than physical pleasure to drive them through life. Again we see, as in sexuality in general, how deferring pleasure in order to accomplish goals is the sign of the productive; everyone else is along for the ride.

As a new mother herself, Brenda Lohman admits to being shocked by the results of a new study she co-authored. It found that among nearly 1,000 low-income families in three major cities, one in four children between the ages of 11 and 16 reported having sex, with their first sexual intercourse experience occurring at the average age of 12.77.

"So if 12 years was the average age here, that meant that some kids were starting at 10 or younger," said Lohman, an Iowa State University associate professor of human development and family studies (HDFS). "A handful of kids reported having sex as early as 8 or 9. We know from our follow-up interviews that one boy who reported having sexual intercourse for the first time at age nine had fathered four children by the time he was 18."

[Science Daily](#)

Picking on the poor is a sure way to be seen as a jerk, but what people see in their narrow jerk/non-jerk view measures whether you're friendly to everyone, or demand that we pay attention to reality.



In cartoon fantasyland, people are poor because bad things happened to them.

In reality, other than a very tiny minority who faced absolute cataclysm, people are poor because they spend their money unwisely and have no skills. The highest purchasing of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes comes from the impoverished sector; yet that same money would have gone to education, better food, improved job prospects ...but did not.

Part of the bad decisions poor people make is to indulge in third-world breeding practices: have sex early, have sex often, have many partners and blast out many kids, and then take minimal care of them. To them, sex is a pleasure and kids are the consequence — it's the same way they treat other things in life.

Boozing it up in adolescence contributes to risky behavior in adulthood, according to a new study with rats. Some researchers suspect that the same is true for people, but they've had a hard time establishing whether adolescent drinking makes people prone to risk-taking or whether risk-prone people are simply more likely to start drinking as teenagers. Although the new work doesn't settle the issue, it bolsters the case that early alcohol use can cause lasting changes in behavior.

One possibility, Bernstein says, is that brain regions such as the prefrontal cortex, which plays an important roles in decision-making and is still maturing in human teenagers, are particularly sensitive to the effects of adolescent drinking: "Alcohol for some reason is very toxic to developing nervous systems."

[ScienceNOW](#)

Smart people, and by definition productive people, take the opposite approach: fit sex into your life, not fit your life into sex. Have goals, and use sex as part of larger idea, like relationships or marriage. When you do breed, have kids you can afford and invest a high degree of parental time and nurturing into them.

The rules have never changed in life. We face the same challenges we did 10,000 years ago. What has changed is our ability to brush away the truth using social tokens of goodwill, like insisting the poor are victims and not disorganized, or defending the oblivious.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

White people are the devil

Sep 21st, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Interesting post from Underprivileged Publishing:

Annie Le Killer Raymond Clark III Adds Name to Long List of White Psychos Who "Show No Previous Signs of Violence"

"When will the white people you work, go to school with or who or your neighbors give in to the dark voices that most often result in, for example, a body being found hidden in a wall recess?" Asks leading racial psychologist Dr. Louis Sidney Jacobs.

"Their ability to present themselves as normal and, then, through their media project their day to day goings as normal is the most deceptive aspect of their psychosis," Dr. Jacobs says. "People of other races and all women should always be aware of the aberrant thoughts that lead to the psychotic behavior historically demonstrated by whites. At anytime, anywhere any of us are subject to be their victims."

[Underprivileged Journalism](#)

They have a point. White people are different, with different needs and downsides.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Fantasy worlds fail us

Sep 21st, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

As Nietzsche pointed out long ago — birthing the postmodernist movement, although most won't give him credit for that — our "knowing" supersedes reality because knowing is a partial representation of reality, so is easy to remember, but reality has much greater complexity.



We have made knowing into a science, and an art — of controlling each other. Every now and then the fantasy consensual "reality" we create as a result gets punctured, but that evidence is not brought to light for most, because it's unpopular. No one likes saying "I was wrong."

We like to think Our Way is the best and that with democracy, consumerist capitalism, a big media to investigate all wrongs, and a culture of the individual, anything bad can be beaten. What scares us most are the people going in the opposite direction because they seem to have more actual passion for life than we do, where we'd flake out on anything that got *too* difficult, and so they'd prevail over us.

Here's the media/social fiction:

Tens of thousands of people wearing green accessories — the sign of the opposition — have come out on to the streets of Tehran and other major cities for the first mass protests against the Iranian government in two months.

Shouting slogans, the protestors denounced Ahmadinejad as stealing the June presidential election: "Liar, liar, where is your 63 percent?"

They also demanded the release of thousands of people arrested in government crackdowns on previous rallies against Iran's contested presidential election results.

[Radio Free Europe](#)

And here, in a very simple form, is the reality:

On Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the survey finds that eight in 10 Iranians say they consider him to be the country's legitimate president.

[WPO](#)

While both sources are fallible, this poll puts the situation back into context: it's not the giant revolution cum civil rights struggle cum WWII-analog we like to think it is; it's 20% of the population who really doesn't like the leader the rest think is going to be a fine president.

Kind of like how in this country, around 2006 or so, it became just about social taboo — meaning you get ostracized by people who fear you'll taint their social status if you say anything contravening that taboo — to say anything good about George W. Bush. Yet, when we look back over it, we can't think of anything he did wrong, so we're forced to blame him for the government under him: the Katrina people were incompetent, the CIA didn't know Iraq had no WMD, and so on.

The myth is not the reality. In fact, it's wrong to call this consensual pseudo-reality a myth; it's more like a shared hallucination, or as Immanuel Kant mentioned, a reality filter by which we pick what we want to believe and let everything we see re-affirm that.

Here's more filtered "reality" versus reality:

Muhammad is now second only to Jack as the most popular name for baby boys in Britain and is likely to rise to No 1 by next year, a study by The Times has found. The name, if all 14 different spellings are included, was shared by 5,991 newborn boys last year, beating Thomas into third place, followed by Joshua and Oliver.

Scholars said that the name's rise up the league table was driven partly by the growing number of young Muslims having families, coupled with the desire to name their child in honour of the Prophet.

[The Times Online](#)

Fantasy world: people come to our country, live here by our laws, and become just like us and we're all the same.

Reality: every religion, culture, ethnicity and social class is not just fighting for survival, but to dominate others, because without domination, it's at their mercy.

One of the most powerful figures in the Anglican Church believes that Africa is under attack from Islam and that Muslims are "mass-producing" children to take over communities on the continent.

Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, 56, was elected Primate of Nigeria last week and his elevation could exacerbate tensions at a time when Anglicans are working to build bridges with Muslims.

Nigeria is split almost half and half between Christianity and Islam. There are about 17 million practising Anglicans in the country, but they face persecution in the north, while the two faiths vie with local religions for supremacy in the rest of the country.

[The Times Online](#)

Terrifyingly, this article points out how this archbishop is correct: each group is trying to gain demographic power over the other, so it can definitively win and re-make the country in its image.

This is the same reason Democrats, starting in 1965, tried to import as many non-white people as possible into the USA because non-whites tend to NOT identify with the majority, and so they vote liberal; by the

same token, the right has its Quiverfull movement, where good Christian conservatives attempt to produce as many children as possible to attain demographic superiority over the left.

That's reality. But reality isn't popular. For starters, it's too complex; symbols, emotions, summaries and identities are cleaner and easier because they're *summaries* that do not attempt to convey the breadth of a situation. So we stick with symbols, but the first person who wasn't around when the symbol was created takes it literally. Problem!

Here's another reality versus illusion:

I was also in Moscow in the spring of 2006, when Foreign Policy magazine published an article by two American experts arguing that the only purpose of setting up the missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic was to give America first-strike primacy over Russia. The American academics, Keir Lieber of Notre Dame and Daryl Press of the University of Pennsylvania, argued that the missile shield being set up in Eastern Europe only made sense if its design was to give America the capability to launch a successful nuclear first-strike on Russia and shoot down whatever remained of their arsenal—as Lieber told me in an interview, it made no sense to place the shield on Russia's northwestern border if the object was Iran or North Korea, because the shield is designed to take out the missiles as close to their launching point as possible. The only possible reason for setting it up in Poland and the Czech Republic was to first-strike Russia.

...

Now the neocons are back to try to ruin us again. This time they're screaming treason and stab-in-the-back at Obama for the crime of canceling a corrupt, failed, and ultimately dangerous-to-ourselves missile shield that was to be set up in the Czech Republic and Poland.

[Exiled Online](#)

That's the fantasy. We made the other upset, and this program is designed not to protect but to guarantee us the ability to strike... which is you understand nuclear politics, is actually the only way to defend: to make sure the other guy isn't going to try to nuke you if things go bad on the conventional front. That's the reality.

Here's the other half — parts of Eastern Europe are looking for someone to keep Russia from dominating them again:

Poles and Czechs voiced deep concern Friday at President Barack Obama's decision to scrap a Bush-era missile defense shield planned for their countries.

"Betrayal! The U.S. sold us to Russia and stabbed us in the back," the Polish tabloid Fakt declared on its front page.

Polish President Lech Kaczynski said he was concerned that Obama's new strategy leaves Poland in a dangerous "gray zone" between Western Europe and the old Soviet sphere.

[AP](#)



Back in realityland, Poles and Czechs remember Russian tanks rolling through their territory. They remember how the Russians — members of a different ethnic group — scorned them, raped them, and left behind a dysfunctional infrastructure and an impoverished, under-educated, fearful population. They don't want that to happen again.

In fantasyland, everyone just wants a slice of the pizza, and then they go away.

In realityland, the real question is who owns the pizza and thus gets to determine who gets slices.

We can whine about how unfair that is, and I can point out how it's actually more fair than equal distribution of pizza, but that doesn't stop the people who want "peace in our time": they want to believe whatever is most convenient for them personally because they believe the world is a subset of themselves. Just like our symbols, we can get fooled into thinking that our memories and conclusions about the world are the real thing. That's a path to FAIL central.

Our central fiction is that because we're here and alive, we're doing something right, so we should do what we want, and call it progress. In our vision of ourselves, which psychologists might call narcissistic, we are bringing light to the world, we are the answer to the cruelty of nature and its horrors! We will eliminate

injustices, hurt, death and other negatives, and what is left will be what's good... although, we're thinking in terms of static objects and not process or cycle, which is how nature works. Maybe we need those negatives to restart the cycle?

In our profoundly happy worldview, we're getting ever closer to paradise, every day. In reality:

A national survey has found that more than 8 million adults in the United States seriously considered suicide last year, with younger adults the most likely to contemplate taking their own lives.

In addition to nearly 8.3 million thinking about committing suicide, 2.3 million made a plan to do so, and 1.1 million actually attempted it, according to a federal government study released Thursday.

The findings are from data collected in a 2008 survey of 46,190 people aged 18 or older.

Adults aged 18 to 25 were far more likely (6.7 percent) to have seriously considered suicide than those aged 26 to 49 (3.9 percent) and those aged 50 and older (2.3 percent).

[US News](#)

I guess we're not doing as well as we thought.

Perhaps it's time we stopped living in fantasy, and denying reality, and accepted that we have a tiny role in the universe, and we're in control of it and can screw it up and destroy ourselves, and that the start of our future consists in realizing our place in the larger order — instead of trying to put it within ourselves and control it through the use of symbols and solipsism, or the condition of thinking the world is a subset of ourselves and not the other way around.

I put out this barb today in response to someone bemoaning how on popular news aggregators, people vote down important news items because it offends their personal vision of reality:

People only vote for what flatters their own view of reality, which they've usually borrowed from the media.

I specialize in Unpopular Truths, because the truth always contains good and bad, and thus is *never* popular.

Here are some of my opinions that always get downvoted:

- * Most people are irresponsible and inherently environmentally destructive. They will buy SUVs, litter, buy endless electronic junk and toss it out a week later, run their equipment at all hours of the day and night, drive off-road through protected areas, mutilate rare animals, etc. It's just how they are.

- * IQ (g) determines what you're capable of doing. I've seen enough of life to realize congenital intelligence is the most important basic factor; on top of that, it's character.

- * Most people are looking for something other than themselves to blame, and never really engage the issues. They want push-button voting that makes someone else fix the problem so they can keep watching old Roger Moore movies on cable, or whatever it is they do.

- * Democracy is part of the decay cycle of a civilization and represents a total lack of consensus among the population, thus the civilization is sure to be unable to make decisions, problems will pile up, corruption will come about to hide them, and then order will collapse and third-world status will arrive.

- * Diversity never works and actually accelerates the above process.

- * The only environmental action that matters is reducing population; if we do this, we should reduce from the bottom of the IQ curve, not the top.

- * Jesus Christ would hate today's Christians; they would hate him; that doesn't mean either group is wrong and, in fact, I'm not a big fan of Jesus.

- * Ayn Rand writes awful books and people like libertarianism so they have an excuse not to pay for the parasitic and useless people around them.
- * Barack Obama is not intelligent, nor is he a good public speaker. Like Bill Clinton, he has a few tricks, and presents himself well, but is completely weak on content. However, he is not Hitler nor is he Stalin. People need to attack his policies, not whether he's a Muslim, born in Kenya, a Socialist, Hitler, a Jew, whatever it is this week.
- * Most people actively hate the truth and fear it.

Best of luck!

People will hate it, of course. There's too much there that spears sacred cows that are sacred not because we're deferring to some authority outside ourselves, but because they justify our continued hiding within ourselves — our solipsism. One cannot [smash the sacred symbols of the individual](#) and come out ahead.

But someone has to try.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Oblivious to history

Sep 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



Ever realize how much we don't know? Is time a force, what is gravity and is it related to magnetism, and how do we define pain? Why do we dream? What caused the universe?

Lost in this confusion also is history. What is history? Is it remembered facts, or lengthy socioeconomic analysis? I contend that it is something more direct: repeated patterns brought about by similar actions, and the study of how their consequences beget others in the further evolution of human civilizations.

There's a goal to history: it's the study of us, as a species, and what worked and what didn't and how we got where we are today, and how we'll hopefully avoid the pitfalls of the past.

It's not much different than a diary, except for a whole species.

Yet we turn our backs to it, mainly because few can conceptualize it and history addresses actions on a *scope wider than our own mortality*. Who really wants to contemplate effects 100 years from now, when we'll all be dead? Just take what you want right now.

Yet that's the voice of fear talking. Just fear. Our ancestors thought forward to the future, and we might as well, if we like our children and grandchildren, or just like the idea of life itself. "Life: it's a good idea... it could be a blast! ...let's try to do it up right."

That's too much for most people. As a result, we constantly stumble across The Unexpected that we should have expected were we not too busy hiding from death to put up a periscope to the broader implications of reality.

Inomata is part of a team exploring Aguateca, an abandoned Maya center in Guatemala renowned for its preservation. "I should add that the identification of rapid abandonment is not easy. There are other types of deposits — particularly ritual deposits — that result in very similar kinds of artifact assemblages," Inomata cautions, by email.

Bey and colleagues presented some of their findings earlier this year at the Society for American Archaeology meeting in Atlanta. The team hopes to publish its results and dig further at Kiuic to prove their finding of rapid abandonment there. "I think you could compare it to Pompeii, where people locked their doors and fled, taking some things but leaving others," Bey says.

When the team started exploring the hilltop palaces, five vaulted homes to the south of the hilltop plaza and four to the north, the archaeologists found tools, stone knives and axes, corn-

grinder stones called metates (muh-TAH-taze) and pots still sitting in place. "It was completely unexpected," Bey says. "It looks like they just turned the metates on their sides and left things waiting for them to come back."

So far, what drove people to leave the site remains a mystery, as it is for the rest of the ancient Maya. The only sign of warfare is a collection of spear points found in the central plaza of Kiuic. There are signs that construction halted there — a stucco-floored plaza sits half-complete, for example. "Drought seems more likely, that would halt construction," Bey says.

[USA Today](#)

Why don't we ask ourselves instead: how do civilizations die, and is it a single factor?

Even a violent invader can only hold the cities; the people surge into the countryside and the culture lives on.

Spanish conquistadors met Maya descendants still living near centers in Mexico's Yucatán in the 1500s, and today some 6 million Maya still live in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and elsewhere. "The Maya didn't go away, but their rulers did," Lucero says.

[USA Today](#)

It's more likely, as we saw in Greece and Rome, that they die by a combination of factors hinged on one very simple idea: lack of cooperation.

Internal political conflicts make people indisposed to help one another, and so obligation and authority and power trump all common sense as people struggle to get basic things done. Tensions between ruling castes and worker castes come to a boil. Resentment, sabotage and inefficiency become the norm as the society appoints further management — bureaucrats — to try to tame its unruly, chaotic, oblivious population.

"Capitolio," the new book on Venezuela by Magnum photographer Christopher Anderson, offers a stunning view into Caracas's descent from its perch as one of Latin America's most economically advanced, if unequal, cities into a place gripped by low-intensity chaos and fear.

[NYT](#)

Finally, add in a smattering of foreign conflicts on the level of America's involvement in Viet Nam, a famine or a few hard storms, and everything just falls apart.

The people, already frustrated beyond words by how blockheaded their society has become, run screaming into the jungle or commit that most elegant of suicide where societies fail because their smarter people simply stop breeding, meaning that the next generation is 100% dumb and can't maintain the infrastructure created for it.

And so you get scenes like Aguateca, where it looks like everything ceased at once without a proximate cause. For all we know, they even had blogs and CD-ROMs full of data like this blog post, but it faded away in the jungle heat and time.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Folk wisdom and our witless scientists

Sep 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

From the ever-rambling BBC:

Eating watermelon has a similar effect on the body to Viagra, according to researchers in the US.

It's down to a chemical called citrulline which is found in the juicy fruit. It helps relax the blood vessels which means blood gets around the body more easily.

[The BBC](#)



Again, "science" — in reality, an industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people, each trying to make a name for him or herself by "discovering" something others want to know about — has stumbled across an old folk wisdom.

In the Southern part of the United States, [pickled watermelon rinds](#) have been a favorite snack for years, but are also known as a folk remedy for underperforming dongs.

More citrulline — about 60 percent — is found in watermelon rind than in the flesh, Patil said, but that can vary.

[MSN](#)

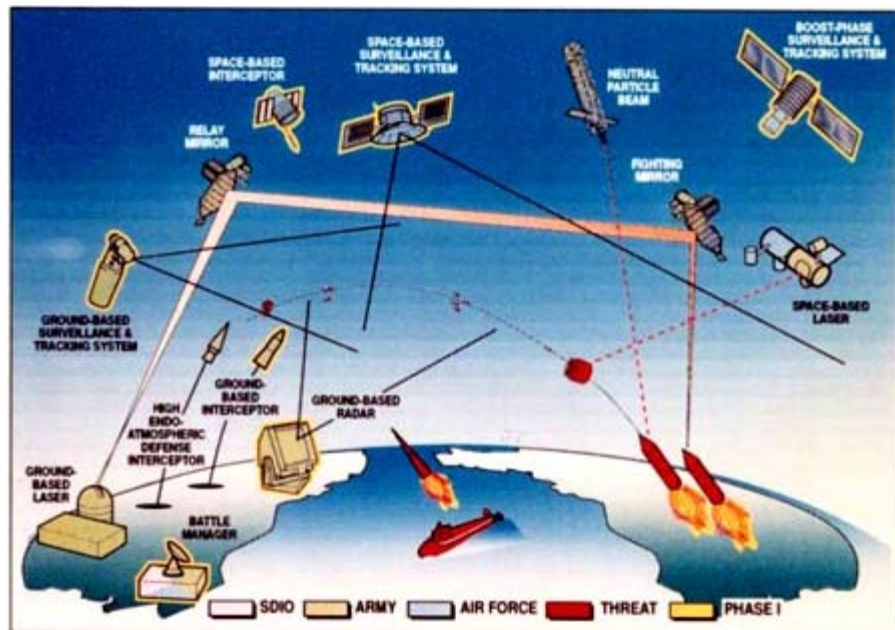
Maybe we will someday learn to compile our knowledge, and stop making "science" so official (because it brings us our sainted technology) that it overrides all other forms of knowledge.

Either that or we can keep learning, one factoid-pegged article at a time.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

This missile shield was not about Iran

Sep 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



From the “most people will never figure this out, but should figure it out in order to participate in our democracy” files:

Russia will scrap a plan to deploy missiles near Poland because the U.S. no longer wants to place a missile-defense system in Eastern Europe, a Russian deputy defense minister said Saturday.

Vladimir Popovkin told Ekho Moskvyy radio that Obama’s move has made the deployment of Iskander short-range missiles in the Kaliningrad region unnecessary.

[AP](#)

Put on your average voter hat. “Wait, I thought this missile shield was to keep Iran from hitting Europe?”

Now take it off and resume having a clue: Iran’s missiles will be handled with a singular response — bombing them into glass. They don’t have the ability to retaliate.

Durrr hurrr, who does? Oh. The Russians. The same people we’ve been in a nuclear standoff with for 65 years.

And the Russians have, as they did at the end of WWII, numerical superiority in men and machines — even if they’re less slick than ours, they’re still deadly, in part because they don’t mind taking excessive casualties. “More borscht for me!”

Even more, Russians are not European — they’re Eurasian. They have a Eurasian identity. They would like to dominate both Europe and Asia, but Europe is closer. That would be a big “moving up” in the world from being a failed state with a 1300+ year history of being a failed state, to being king of the known world.

During WWII, the Americans basically saved the Russians from doom by sending them supplies through the Lend/Lease program; the Russians, in turn, then absorbed the brunt of the casualties in the European theatre while the Americans absorbed the brunt of the casualties in the Pacific theatre, fighting against

Japan. Note: Japan had also attacked Russia as part of an ongoing 40-year dispute over territory.

So the two traded roles, America and Russia. Russia was afraid of the Japanese after getting her ass handed to her when she skirmished with the Empire of the Chrysanthemum over Sakhalin Island. So the Americans took on the role the Russians feared, and the Russians exhausted Hitler's armies in Europe so England the USA didn't have to; England because she had just gotten her ass handed to her at Normandy, and the USA because she was fighting a two-front war.

After WWII, both sides realized they had superpower potential and a Cold War was immediately born. In the decadent West, the people were tired of war and just wanted to watch TV, so didn't support a drive into Russia to end conflict for the next 65 years. This is your "greatest generation" — if you can use that term without laughing — the people who left you a ticking nuclear time bomb, since it was pretty clear since 1942 that a nuclear weapon was going to be developed and all power players would have one.

And that war was pretty much a problem until some guy named Ronald Reagan figured out a simple pragma: if we let our economy run loose with growth, we can outperform the Russians with technology, driving them into an arms race that will wreck their food production infrastructure and cripple their country. Brilliant like a cudgel, but it works. As of 1991, the former Soviet states were in ruin.

Again, the Americans could have done what was inconvenient and invaded, dominating the threat of the last fifty years and saving Europe from facing a constant threat of tanks rolling through the Fulda Gap, bringing a rape wave of Soviet troops. But that was politically inconvenient for Bill Clinton, so instead he concentrated on bombing Somali and Serbian dissidents. That was easier for the children of the "greatest generation," who were just as selfish as their parents but even less competent.

A big part of Reagan's method of crippling the Soviets was to deny them the easy step into superpower status that having a nuclear weapon and bombers provided. The Strategic Defensive Initiative, or SDI, was his way of crippling their nuclear power. This had two effects: first, it drove the Soviets into the ground trying to compensate; second, it guaranteed that if there was a US-Soviet ground war, and the US began winning, the nuclear option would not be a sensible move for non-suicidal Soviets.

Fundamentally, President Reagan supported three core principles regarding missile defense that would be relevant beyond the Cold War. These same principles motivated President Bush's December 13, 2001, decision to withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with the former Soviet Union, which prohibited the deployment of any effective missile defense system, and they continue to serve as the foundation for the ongoing effort to field ever more capable missile defense systems, albeit in fits and starts:

Principle #1: Refuse to accept U.S. vulnerability. President Reagan refused to accept the notion that vulnerability to attack represented a superior moral and strategic position for the United States. His rejection of vulnerability can be traced back to a 1979 visit to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. During a briefing on what would happen if the Soviet Union launched a missile attack, he learned that NORAD would detect and track the missiles but would not be able to take any defensive measures.[5] If the notion of the inherent stability in vulnerability was a dubious concept during the Cold War, where the U.S. contended with a single hostile superpower, it makes no sense in today's multi-polar (multi-player) strategic setting. Multilateralizing the policy of vulnerability is both destabilizing and counterproductive because the policy lacks flexibility in the multi-polar setting.[6]

Principle #2: Operate from a position of strength. President Reagan firmly believed that in order to be effective in achieving its national security and foreign policy goals, the U.S. had to operate from a position of strength.[7] What was an applicable principle during the Cold War remains so today. As then, there is enormous leverage that accrues to the U.S. if it has the means to defeat the purpose of any attack. Further, defeating the purpose of an attack does necessarily mean having a perfect defense. In fact, U.S. policymakers across the ideological spectrum are recognizing that defensive measures are the principal option when faced with the threat of

suicide bombers.

Principle #3: Recognize that the U.S. will never be secure if its enemies are able to use space as an avenue for attack. President Reagan recognized that America's ability to control space militarily was of paramount importance to its security. This is why SDI focused on space-based options for defense, as recommended in the High Frontier study. The pursuit of the Brilliant Pebbles space-based interceptor was the most promising of these technological options.[8] Today, more and more nations are obtaining access to space and thereby a new avenue for potentially attacking the U.S. and its vital interests. The proliferation of space-launch vehicles and ballistic missiles are at the heart of this trend.[9] Unfortunately, the enduring principle behind President Reagan's SDI program is not receiving due consideration. The Brilliant Pebbles program was cancelled by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and remains dormant. The ability of the U.S. to defend its vital interests in and through space will only grow more important with the passage of time.

[THE](#)

Conservative leaders have a tendency to promote programs like SDI because they know that, while it's unpopular to say this, not every country is friendly to us. In fact, if you're a superpower, everyone else wants you to fall, because everyone secretly hates a leader — they want to take the top monkey's place in the group.

In terms of the Cold War conflict with the Soviets, a successful defense system would destroy the Soviet ability to make a first strike, which in turn would undermine the USSR's ability to pose a threat to the United States at all. So success in this area, supporters of SDI argued, could potentially also bring an end to the Cold War.

[U.S. Department of State](#)

Liberal leaders, like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, want to preserve social good feelings. They are not consequentialists, but people who want everyone to "feel" good and so they are committed only to popular acts. Recognizing an ongoing war with a feral enemy is not part of that plan.

So while Barack Obama just canceled your missile shield, and you're getting told by ten thousand talking heads that you've avoided one more step toward war, you're getting fooled and tooled by the PR machine. What you've really done is insured that the inevitable conflict will be less likely decided in your favor, and that if it does happen, it will escalate into "really, really bad" very quickly.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Jihad!

Sep 17th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

The ancients of antiquity put in place foundations for long term, settled society. Unlike today's abstract rationalism and holistic incoherence, ancient societies recognized a home and best fit for everything at each level of organization.

Degree of importance ascended to the highest levels approaching whole system in scope and beyond – that which they believed made all systems possible. As components, individuals were less important, depending upon where they fit within the structure.



Compared to present societies constantly reinventing themselves in political and economic upheaval, past civilizations were stable for the long term. Maybe they were better organized because their concepts for human settlement were aligned with reality, which is how nature works.

The muslims teach of greater and lesser struggle, maintaining first the inside and then the outside. Maintenance against disorganization or decay is probably the best way to understand this struggle.

We need our own strength, ideas and inner drive before we can effectively engage with the world at the next level of organization. If we are exhausted or scatterbrained, the world will have its way with us instead. This is how survival of the fittest works.

The inner jihad or warfare seen spiritually and esoterically can be considered therefore as the key for the understanding of the whole spiritual process, and the path for the realization of the One which lies at the heart of the Islamic message seen in its totality. The Islamic path towards perfection can be conceived in the light of the symbolism of the greater jihad to which the Prophet of Islam, who founded this path on earth, himself referred.

[al-islam](#)

Confucius spoke of an hierarchal organization for civilization. Individuals are at the most basic level and the whole cosmos is at the most complex level.

Similar to the idea of jihad, struggle, or maintenance, Confucius would have us put in order our most basic level of organization, ourselves, prior to moving on to the next level in complexity, a group of us.

To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.

[quotes](#)

Combining the Islamic and Confucian concepts, we now have a comprehensive model for organizing ourselves as a stable, coherent whole. This is possible if everyone, like musicians in an orchestra, is on the

same sheet of music.

Order	Greater struggle	Lesser struggle
1.	set our hearts right	personal life
2.	personal life	family
3.	family	community
4.	community	nation
5.	nation	world



Modern individualism, the people power of a democracy and the chaos of laissez faire markets are clearly incompatible with a structured civilization having a long term purpose. No culture and therefore no goal more meaningful than the next stock update or street protest is possible without everyone pulling in the same direction.

Perhaps more than anyone else, Libertarians will have a difficult time with this concept. It is as if they have correctly perceived a snapshot of the process at work, at the individual struggle level, but more complex organization for them is not 'fair play'.

When Tyrants, with their own ideas of 'fair play', such as Mandatory Equality, hurl the Have Nots in all their millions against such individuals, will the inconsonant Libertarians prevail?

If we choose to extend this analogy, we would also consider that the orchestra is led by a conductor, who serves as the focal point from which the actions of each individual musician is reflected back into the group. The conductor himself is by no means the source of the music; he is merely a spiritual leader who guides the energy of the movements a symphony. Further still, we could suppose that the conductor has arranged the piece with care to faithfully convey the original emotion that composer had projected through what are ultimately nothing more than mathematical and physical phenomena which, when placed in a certain pattern or series, results in aesthetic appeal.

What we see here, and what can be gleaned from this ideal, is an appeal to order. And, if we trace the hierarchy up through to its ultimate reality, we may find that each of us inherently participates in this appeal to order by placing our trust in something greater than us. If each of us were to submit a point of ignorance to a greater authority, which is the essential logic behind the structure of class or caste, then the chain will continue until it has reached its termination an appeal to Nature and all of its Laws. The defining principle of any ideal is to seek something with internal validity and consistency—what greater exemplar than the ineffable reliability of Nature!?

[The Doctrine of Life](#)



Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [identity](#)

The passive-aggressive fallacy

Sep 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



The salient fact of human cognitive error is that, thanks to our logical minds, we see with the perspective of an omnipotent viewer, but we are trapped in bodies, so must project a self — and consequently, defend it.

The defense of self, in society, takes the form of a non-aggression pact with all other selves which says, “Unless I am actively killing, maiming, raping or stealing, you will not interrupt what I do, or actively criticize me personally.” No aggression means the peace is kept and we all feel secure.

However, like all clever one-step solutions, this creates more problems than it fixes. First, and most importantly, conflict is how we achieve change without conscious design. One party prevails and then incorporates the ideas of the defeated — a faster process than waiting for someone with the genius and patience to design The Ultimate Plan, which is a lost cause in itself since most of the best human plans were gradual evolutions from working archetypes in the past.

Second, avoiding conflict means we take on a new beast — the obligation to avoid conflict, which then in itself becomes a goal instead of a method. It’s like drug addiction: suddenly, every other life activity becomes a subset of finding and consuming drugs. This cripples our minds so we ignore solutions waving in our faces.

This “peace at all costs” mentality has one strong suite however: it sounds good to just about everyone, so

if you're selling a product, trying to get votes, trying to make friends or just trying to pick up that drunk slightly thick-bodied but sensual friend of a friend, it works. Every time.

Here is this psychology in the wild:

When I say that you can judge the quality of a society by the way it takes care of its weakest, many if not most Americans will immediately think of the word "socialism", even as they don't know what it means. But it's not about partisan political choices, about freedom, or the pursuit of happiness, or about big government. It's very simply about minimum requirements for a functional society, period. You can't have tens of millions of people being unemployed and/or living below the poverty line for extended lengths of time without resorting to oppressive measures of physical force aimed at keeping down those who have landed in your gutters. And if you would choose that option, one that many Americans would, knowingly or not, support, then freedom takes on the meaning of "the freedom to repress others", or even "the freedom to repress whoever you can", and down the line, as the single logical outcome, Orwell's "some animals are more equal than others".

[The Automatic Earth](#)

Here the author makes an assumption: we can have peace, and we should pacify those who might break it in order to have peace.

This is his thesis:

You can't have tens of millions of people [in poverty] without resorting to oppressive measures of physical force

He is correct.

However, he commits the passive-aggressive fallacy: he assumes that by avoiding aggression or direct action against a person or persons, we solve a problem. What we've really done is defer that problem.

Today's impoverished people become four in the next generation. And they're even more desperate, because they have existed in the vortex of poverty for too long.

Here I am "supposed to" — by social conventions, politeness and the common sense to flatter your audience by assuming that they're altruists like yourself — say how tragic it is these people landed in poverty.

Yet I'm bound by my experience, of knowing impoverished kids growing up and working in poor communities, and here it is: people aren't disorganized because they're impoverished; they're impoverished because they're disorganized.



We inverted logic by starting with a passive assumption, which is that all people are equal and keeping the peace is essential, and so as a result we had to assume that poverty was randomly imposed and not a response to a pre-existing condition.

The truth in my experience is that, as any society grows, it produces an increasing pool of people who didn't fit any particular role. By lacking of having no direction, and thus nothing they're particularly good at, they become the randomly allocatable workers who serve in menial roles.

The article quoted above is correct in that as this group grows, increasing force is required to keep it in line.

The author then carefully avoids discussing the salient fact, which is that there's no antidote to this.

If you pander to them, they take and then want more, because they have become dependent on your aid, and resent you as a controller because you dole it out to them piecemeal. And what none of us want to say is that if you give it to them in a lump sum, like most lottery winners they'd be destitute a year later.

It's our protecting our weakest from themselves that makes our society moribund. Nature is wiser, and not passive: she makes an environment where success is possible, and then lets things settle as they may.

The recent surge of interest in libertarianism is a direct response to the passive-aggressive fallacy regarding the poor. Libertarians want a lack of obligation to take care of our weakest so that natural selection can sort the functional from the dysfunctional.

Let's be brutally honest: the poor, who are generally of IQs below 100 thus can never be doctors, lawyers, or police officers. They are destined to be burger flippers, day laborers, shelf stockers and so on. There may be a small percentage of them who are poor through the alcoholism or drug abuse of a parent, or other calamity.

The libertarian and conservative response is to offer opportunity; the leftist response is to offer a handout, a guaranteed “keep the peace” bribe. They assume that since they are not acting directly against the poor, they are taking care of the problem. But that’s a passive-aggressive fallacy, designed to imply that the rest of us are selfish bastards for not offering a handout. It’s guilt coercion in action.

People who study the environment, however, have never forgotten about it. “I think most people that think seriously about the environment and work on issues with the environment would argue that one of the most critical factors driving environmental degradation is overpopulation,” Roulet says.

Arguing to reduce population creates a “visceral reaction” in people, Roulet reasons, “because it requires a reflection on ourselves.”

So instead, “We think of carbon-dioxide emissions as the problem of climate change, but really it’s the number of people whose lifestyles require the level of energy consumption and production that is 95 per cent based on fossil fuels.”

[Tree Hugger](#)

...And it hurts us, every day. We can’t make the decisions we need because they require us to tell someone somewhere **NO** and to back that up with force. We cannot keep the peace at the price of everything else. We need to use peace, and war, both to keep that “everything else” healthy, and anything else is the tail wagging the dog.

But that requires we buck the passive-aggressive fallacy that says any action is **OK** so long as it doesn’t act directly on another, even if that means the problem just gets worse over time.

The passive-aggressive fallacy ties our hands. We the good people are afraid to act aggressively against people who do bad things, because we know the rest of the crowd — our society — will attack us for being aggressive, even though we were avoiding sins of omission.

Think of it this way: if you know someone is a rapist, and he moves into your town, your instinct is to go beat his ass until he leaves. But you can’t because then, in the witless wisdom of society, you attacked *him* and he has rights too! But two weeks later, after he has raped your best friend’s sister — because anyone committing rape the first time is unhinged enough to most likely do it again — you regret not clubbing him and throwing him in the river. Tolerance for the bad means victimization of the good.

Here’s another example:

The Obama administration is shelving a European missile defense plan that has been a major irritant in relations with Russia, a U.S. ally said Thursday. The Pentagon confirmed a “major adjustment” is planned.

He said the change comes in part because the U.S. has concluded that Iran is less focused on developing the kind of long-range missiles for which the system was originally developed.

[HuffPo](#)

This missile shield was never about Iran. It was about using the one advantage the USA has over Russia, which is advanced technology, to remove the Russian ability to have a guaranteed first strike nuclear attack on the USA. The missile shield would have kept Russia in check because if Russia did anything untoward, the Americans could counter her militarily without being worried that the conflict would escalate to a nuclear level.



Conservatives since Reagan have used the strategy of paralyzing the Russians with advanced technology, and forcing them either into subservience or an arms race they can't win, to great success. It has kept Europe safe from the regime that didn't mind sending tanks in to shoot college age boys and girls in Hungary, for example. Seeing those rambling through the Fulda Gap would have marked an end for Europe as we know it, and as East Germany and every other territory that was under Soviet control still lags behind, it might have been more than just a political adjustment.

But Barack Obama is dedicated like all people of social logic to the idea of keeping the peace. It is the popular decision. People are already rejoicing over the lack of the complex, expensive and "unnecessary" missile shield, and congratulating themselves for keeping us farther away from war.

Yet like tolerating a rapist, tolerating a violent regime is a sin of omission. It means that instead of risking conflict to confront a bully or an opportunist, we tolerate them — which means they grow bolder, and will soon victimize others.

Back to the first article, you can see the truth of the passive-aggressive fallacy in this one sliver of truth: yes, we will need to oppress our poor, like we oppress anyone else who has not found a path working with us. That is how survival happens, and while backing down from that position seems like a magnanimous gesture, it's actually a sin of omission that guarantees worse future conflict.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

When Fear Runs Your Life, Ask Yourself Why

Sep 16th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Fear controls the lives of most moderns as we lack goals at the community level. We watch movies about abductions, murders, and superheros saving the day, and since we don't even know who our neighbors are let alone our selectmen and other community leaders, fear rattles around in our brains. We feel that if it can happen to the poor child who... [insert multiple choice option here: fell down the well, was abducted/raped by gangmembers as an initiation ceremony, fell off a cliff, was struck by lightning], then it can happen to any of us or our children, and so we (overre)act accordingly.

Common sense child safety should be promoted, but in a safe suburb with little in the way of violence, the simple freedom and fresh air a child feels when able to walk to school on his or her own – likely within earshot and eyesight of adults at all times during that walk – is ruined by overbearing parents and school boards who insist that children are to be surveilled at all times.

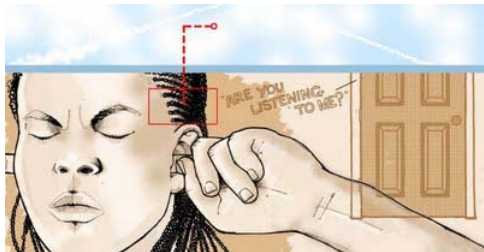
TO get to school, the child leaves home by herself, proudly walking down the boulevard in a suburb of a small city in upstate New York. The crossing guard helps her at the intersection. She lives only a block and a half from school. Yet she walks by older children waiting with parents for buses to the same school.

It has been 30 years since the May morning when Julie Patz, a Manhattan mother, finally allowed her 6-year-old son, Etan, to walk by himself to the school-bus stop, two blocks away. She watched till he crossed the street — and never saw him again. Since that haunting case, a generation of parents and administrators have created dense rituals of supervision around what used to be a mere afterthought of childhood: taking yourself to and from school.

In recent years, parents like Katie have begun to push back. They often encounter disapproval by other parents, scoldings by school administrators, even visits from local constabularies.

[[±](#)|NYTimes.com]

This suburb had a grand total of one (1) abduction in the past thirty years and thus has changed its entire morning routine. In fact, that one abduction occurred in Manhattan – one of the largest and most densely populated cities in the entire country – not in this quaint little suburb. The threat of things like abduction is always one to consider, but it's when a community takes these unlikely occurrences too seriously that we know there's a problem.



As civilized folk living in suburbs, we like to think we can control everything by being present for anything that might go wrong...which, ironically, destroys the entire point of living in a quiet suburb next to neighbors you know well and grow with over time.

Things like outlet covers, cord wraps, and breathable crib borders make sense in some respects: eliminate the obvious threats and put the knives away. But once the child can walk and enjoy fresh air outside, and is then part of social constructs at school, the social environment around the child begins affecting him or her at an increasing rate – and passive aggressive, constant nannying doesn't exactly help develop a healthy mindset.

These children are the ones who end up partying in high school and college the second they have time away from authority. They essentially live under totalitarian regimes, only they're sly enough to know when they can get away with something, so they drink/party because they've never just been kids.



If one is given an agenda each day that includes hockey practice, piano lesson, 9 hours of boredom in the form of an educational facility you grow to resent more each passing day, maybe a half hour for television or video games – isn't it common sense that the time away from all that will be overly valued, the activities during which time becoming more concentrated with action against such structure (drinking far too much, OD'ing, autoerotic asphyxiation – whatever)?

These are the same parents who will be wondering why their young adults are distant and want to live in another city after college, away from where they grew up, wasting their free time away from work with video games well into their 30s. They are the ones who end up in nursing homes as their kids are too busy to take care of them. "Sorry Mom, I moved to another city to get away from you; I'm happy to pay for you to live in a place where minimum wage nursing assistants can give you sponge baths though."

We're seeing the infantilism of adults already in our society; [hipsters](#) who live only for the next five seconds instead of worrying about the next five years, and it's no wonder that these same people grew up in a time where parents decided to become a constant, overbearing force in their children's lives.

I know how it affected me. I was over sensitive, terrified of making mistakes. I had no social skills and still have a hard time just talking to people in person or on the phone because I was never allowed to go to social functions/dances at school or go anywhere with friends. I had really no friends. Sometimes one for awhile but never managed to maintain a friendship for too long because I could never keep in contact with them, even if they just lived around the block. I was a paranoid, straight A student and ended up dropping out of school my senior year and running away from home.

[[±](#)|[Experienceproject.com](#)]

Many of the trends of the 1970s are to blame for a lot of this overinvolvement, so how do we fix it?

Communities that have a sense of either shared cultural heritage, or at least a grouping of people with similar goals, don't needlessly resort to child surveillance, because they have more going on in their lives and live for things that benefit an entire group. With this comes an idea of comfort with those around you; you know who the village idiot is and how to avoid him, but for the most part, you can trust your neighbors to watch out for each other.

Families are first priority, of course, but it has to be in the context of something larger so everyone in the family can feel part of a community. This could be a church group, or just a town with healthy values that doesn't resort to [egotistical, moronic behavior](#). The idea of shutting a family into a suburban home to watch TV and micromanage kid's lives needs to end before we can move on – and replace fear with goals.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [control](#) · [liberalism](#) · [neurosis](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Fighting nature and losing

Sep 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



What bothers me about human logic is that, out of fear of time (and thus mortality), we can only think in a permanent present tense and so are oblivious to the fact that life runs in cycles.

In other words, any action that we do now is going to create a counterreaction, and a chain of events, generally designed to restore an equilibrium to the system. It's like punching jello, unless you know how to make the jello jiggle in the ways you want.

Food aid is at a 20-year low despite the number of critically hungry people soaring this year to its highest level ever, the United Nations relief agency said Wednesday.

The number of hungry people will pass 1 billion this year for the first time, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) said, adding that it is facing a serious budget shortfall.

To date the WFP has confirmed \$2.6 billion in funding for its 2009 budget of \$6.7 billion.

[Reuters](#)

Here is a prime example of punching jello: people are starving, so we ship in food to them. Not find some way of setting up local farms, not move them to less famine-prone areas, and last but not least, definitely not say "well, it's God's/nature's order" and figure that those who live in abundant climates yet don't discover agriculture are obsolete.

Someone noticed and pointed this out, using a particularly hard-hit region as an example:

A quarter-century after a million Ethiopians died in the great hunger of 1984-85, the country is heading into another famine. The spring rains failed entirely and the summer rains were three weeks late. But why is famine is stalking Ethiopia again?

...

The real answer is they have had too many babies. Ethiopia's population at the time of the last famine 25 years ago was 40 million. Now it is 80 million. You can do everything else right and if you don't control the population, you're spitting into the wind.

It is so obvious that this should be the start of every conversation about the country. Even if the coming famine in Ethiopia kills a million people, the population will keep growing. So the next famine, 10 or 15 years from now, will hit a country of a hundred million people, trying to make a living from farming on land where only 40 million faced starvation in the 1980s. It is going to get much uglier in Ethiopia.

Yet it's taboo to say that. The question of population, instead of being central to the debate about development, food and climate change, has been put on ice. The reason is rich countries are secretly embarrassed, and poor countries are deeply resentful.

[Salt Lake Tribune](#)



We won't deal with the problem directly, meaning take a look at its causes, because it offends our sense of social wellbeing. Why does it do that?

Causes are unequal. If I am in a silly mood, and leave my car running in the attached garage while I peruse

unicorn porn, I may euthanize myself and my entire family. That produces an awkward silence in social groups as we realize that we're not all equal, and each of us can do something stupid and die, and we hate death and panic at the mention of it.

Effects are equal if you cut them off from causes. They seem like a manner of chance. "Isn't it terrible the carbon monoxide genie visited Brett and his family last night?" Oh, a terrible misfortune. How awful. Could happen to anyone.

That is, anyone who leaves their car running in an attached garage.

It's the same way with "green" initiatives. Government wants us to buy mercury bulbs, turn off the taps when we brush our teeth, recycle condoms and use both sides of the toilet paper. Will that have any practical effect? No, it won't, but it keeps us from facing the awkward truth that someone needs to slow down population, and the richer nations have done it voluntarily, leaving us with the "less fortunate" (leftist term) or "less capable" (rightist term) who will not or cannot voluntarily limit their populations.

Just as in American politics, where teabaggers have forced the issue that traditional reality-based thinking is incompatible with liberalism, in humanity's future we are going to have to make a choice: reality, or fantasy that leads to our destruction?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

How we emasculate ourselves

Sep 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Growing up, my greatest frustration with this civilization was how impotent it was. If someone started doing something that was obviously insane or destructive, everyone backed off and made some pithy polite comment like "Oh well, it's his prerogative."

Here's the flip side of that:

Our elites live in big cities and are far removed from the fields. Whether it's Brown or Ehrlich or the head of the Sierra Club or the head of Greenpeace, they've never been hungry.

[Reason](#)

Although this statement is a logical fallacy, most people will accept it as a valid argument because it's socially valid. It's easy for you to say we should not overpopulate, because *you* have never been hungry. So don't interrupt those who are.

Of course, this statement, which we might call "argumentum ex individuum" (don't mind my pig Latin), argues from the individual in that it does not grant others the right to intervene if they are not suffering as much as those in question. The suffering becomes more important than the correct answer.

And what's the result of this backing off?

The long-term cost of depending on Borlaug's new varieties, said eminent critics such as ecologist Vandana Shiva in India, was reduced soil fertility, reduced genetic diversity, soil erosion and increased vulnerability to pests. Not only did Borlaug's "high-yielding" seeds demand expensive fertilisers, they also needed more water. Both were in short supply, and the revolution in plant breeding was said to have led to rural impoverishment, increased debt, social inequality and the displacement of vast numbers of peasant farmers.

Borlaug had a robust reply. He acknowledged that his Green revolution had not "transformed the world into Utopia", but added that western environmental lobbyists were often elitists. "They've never experienced the physical sensation of hunger," he said. "If they lived just one month amid the misery of the developing world, as I have for 50 years, they'd be crying out for tractors and fertiliser and irrigation canals, and be outraged that fashionable elitists were trying to deny them these things."

[The Guardian](#)



So creating more overpopulation and environmental destruction is OK since we haven't spent a bunch of time in poverty? It seems to me this is the classic spiritual dilemma written about in ancient times: do we value the means, or the ends? If we value the ends, we might have to do some bad stuff to have a good outcome. Kind of like eating your yucky broccoli dinner before you can have dessert, or studying hard or working hard before you get a reward. The ends justify the means, but even further, we should always look toward ends as separate from means so the tail doesn't wag the dog. This may mean we have to say **NO** to people, or let some die, so that the species as a whole can be healthy.

But our insistence on being polite means we must always wag the dog. We want the most people possible to like us, so we pander. "Of course whatever you want to do is OK, and we won't interrupt you!" we say, and ignore the toxic waste cascading into rivers, the fast food restaurants replacing forest land, the proliferation of angry semi-intelligent semi-literate people who tell us we are ignorant because we don't agree with their "progressive" dogma — these are all symptoms from the same source. Like knowing means and ends separation, knowing symptoms from cause is an essential and forgotten part of critical analysis. Our detachment from it mirrors our denial of cause/effect logic in general, because we as actors are between cause and effect and we suffer for our misperceptions of the world through bad effects, even though our intents are good — and that threatens our sense of self-control.

This process of fear becoming our goal and tabooification of unsocial but correct ideas has emasculated us. It is the primary trait of the modern time: individuals, having found themselves in a society, push back against the invisible but logical natural rules that governed early society, and replace it with a kingdom of the individual. And then the individuals quickly move to make reality illegal if it is offensive, and by doing so, make their society incompetent and send it down a slow but sure path to decay.

Other emasculations:

A group of schoolchildren who reared a lamb from birth and named it Marcus has overridden objections by parents and rights activists and voted to send the animal to slaughter.

The decision has provoked fury among animal-loving celebrities, animal and human rights campaigners and the parents of some of the children, and led to threats against Lydd primary school and its teachers, according to a member of staff.

Despite that, the school said there had been overwhelming support among the children, the staff and most of the parents to have Marcus — a castrated male who could not have been used for breeding — sent to the slaughterhouse.

But opponents branded it heartless and cruel, with animal rights campaigners asking why Marcus could not have been used to teach the children about wool, and human rights campaigners worried about the emotional impact of Marcus's death on the children.

[Reuters](#)

They file this under funny articles so we don't realize how serious it is. That's one of the oldest habits of nervous groups, which is to agree among themselves that something is funny if they fear it, and then to stand around making fun of it and hoping reality doesn't knock them over for being in denial of the obvious.

Marcus the lamb was raised by some children who realized that the cycle of life includes death. Adults couldn't handle that. Their subconscious thought is that if we stop Marcus from dying, we've made a symbolic stand against death itself, and then maybe we'll feel like we won't die some day. But we will, which upsets us, so we want to remove reminders of death. Hence the furor over Marcus the lamb, which lasted for the duration that it took several hundred thousand other food animals to die. But remember, the symbolism is more important than reality — I guess that emasculates us too.

From emasculation news:

Government scientists figure that one out of five male black bass in American river basins have egg cells growing inside their sexual organs, a sign of how widespread fish feminizing has become.

The findings come from the U.S. Geological Survey in its first comprehensive examination of intersex fish in America, a problem linked to women's birth control pills and other hormone treatments that seep into rivers. Sporadic reports of feminized fish have been reported for a few years.

[AP](#)

Modern society, by destroying a sense of order and meaning to our goals, has stranded us in the means against the ends. As a result, we can't say no to any harebrained scam or stupid idea, and so we suffer a death of a thousand tiny cuts, each time being made weaker by our inability to pick up a baseball bat and fix at least one of the sources of these cuts.

It's a problem at a level lower than that of politics, religion or even social decency; it's at the lowest level of all, which is how we program our own brains. Right now we're programming them to self-destruct via passivity, which means that any smart person gives up on a true idea in order to make a pandering socially-acceptable partial truth instead. By doing so, we domesticate ourselves, including castration. And by so doing, we give up the reins and stop steering ourselves toward a sensible future, causing us to encounter endless tiny cuts creating a river of blood.

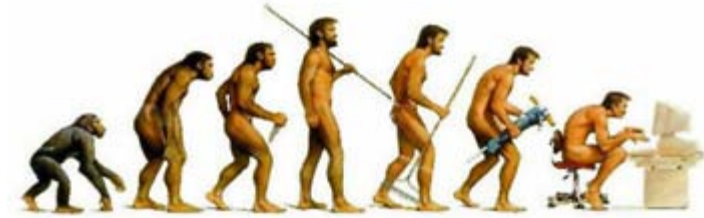
Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Dear Chairman Obama: no socialism without eugenics

Sep 14th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Dear Chairman Obama,

No national socialism without eugenics. State control of medicine and mandatory participation must have a goal that moves us forward. What happened to Change?



Saving lives isn't Change. We were already doing that. Eugenics is Change we can believe in.

What is it not? Eugenics is not a guilt by association fallacy, meaning that all of the qualities of past American eugenicists are not all of the qualities of eugenics, the idea.

Eugenics cast a negative light on every racial, ethnic, and disabled group. Many of the things that eugenicists did and said were bigoted and hurtful.

[ea](#) > Enter the archive > Editorial policy

What is it? [Eugenics](#) is a type of preemptive transhumanism without all the unattractive cybernetic accessories hanging off our bodies after the fact.

Stop what we don't want before it starts and instead encourage what we do want. Eugenics is for all, not just the very wealthiest who could afford expensive future wetware surgery helping them to "transcend" their biological limits.

We work only with the human genome, not with any inorganic attachments, by identifying the collections of traits carried in the people we wish to have in our midst and separating them from those we do not.

- We need handsome people
- We need intelligent people
- We need responsible people

- We do not need the ugly and sickly
- We do not need the crass and stupid
- We do not need the criminal and irresponsible

While merely saving lives doesn't move us toward this goal, but rather sticks us with a mostly negative mixed bag of population growth, eugenics focuses on quality.

Quality is valuable – valuable enough to make a mandatory national health care program a worthwhile investment for an American future.

What is not quality?

Quality is not an aesthetic defect, where something that should appear perfectly human, doesn't quite, and as such is psycho-socially disruptive.

If an aesthetic defect does not exist among us to begin with, there are no psychosocial disruptions of this



nature, less hurt feelings and more of a return to mutual respect.

Quality is not a mind whose return to society does not exceed the investment put into it. The state can spend vast sums attempting to educate, rehabilitate and indeed coddle a moron.

Add the cost of indoctrinating with tolerance propaganda every proximate peer said moron may possibly encounter in daily life and the wasted time and expense continue to climb.

The needless time lost from people struggling with morons and the lifelong frustrations of the moron itself would not exist if such people were not brought into the world to begin with. These resources are better spent on gifted people who are promising.

Quality is not counterproductive criminality, destructive habits, or negligent behaviour. The vain rehabilitative cost, time, and social disruption savings of not having irresponsible, hopelessly immoral people running amok in our midst, spreading their habits and destruction is tremendous.

Most of the prisons and mental hospitals would no longer be needed. Broken families, abused children and battered wives would experience a sharp reduction. Corruption in the public and private sectors alone would be reduced, saving us countless billions of dollars.

If the state is going to control medical care, it should do so with purposeful intent, not for the usual reasons of popular image and managing expense.

The opposition to the proposed health care reform is resistance to a purposeless but mandatory socialism that offers to change nothing for the better, but instead give us what we already had but more of it.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Why I left liberalism behind

Sep 13th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

I grew up in a house where we conserved water, recycled even though it was a pain in the neck in the 1970s, drove small cars and carpooled, tried to buy local and reduce waste. We were a one trash bag a month family.

My parents voted for Obama, enthusiastically so, and voted for every Democrat they could find. They still do. They value human equality, believe government should help the less fortunate, don't trust religion in politics, and are very skeptical about anything conservative.

After two decades of being a liberal, I reversed course. These reasons are why:

- Liberalism encouraged selfishness. Making the individual our highest goal is not conducive to a society having consensus and shared values. Such a society stops challenging itself and trying to improve, and so stagnates.
- Liberalism encouraged a victim mentality. The constant search for an oppressor, viewing life in this binary of equality/inequality and free/unfree suggests a paranoia by which things happen to us, not us constructing things.
- Liberalism couldn't make hard decisions. It was great if the question was how to hand out government money or who to politically recognize. But if you had four fire trucks, and five fires, there was no answer — someone immediately raised an objection and debate reached an impasse.
- History alarmed me. From Plato to the French Revolution, to the pre-WWII years and 1968, liberalism brought instability and infighting. It left shadows of former great world powers.
- Liberalism could not critique its own values. It was taken for granted that we were the progressives, and everyone else, while equal, was just ignorant. Once something got added to the dogma, it was not possible to critique it and say maybe we should change direction.
- Racism. Liberal racism takes this form: any group that is wealthy and lives well is, because they are equal like us, merely lucky, and so they owe it to us. Consequently, liberals hate white middle class heterosexual males, and even hate groups perceived to be elite and wealthy like Jews or Catholics.
- Dogma. In liberal circles, being correct politically and socially took precedence over sound engineering solutions, which I've come to believe in. I take economics seriously, as I do mathematics, physics, electrical engineering and computer science. The universe works mathematically and consistently. Engineering is a way to understand this and make it work for us. Dogma should not supplant this, but it does among liberal circles.
- False elitism. The self-congratulatory tone of "progressives" alarmed me, because I think elitism should be based on accomplishment, not saying the right thing to a group of the converted and having them clap the loudest.
- A bad record. I participated from the sidelines, for twenty years, in every liberal issue that came my way and toed the party line. After all, the news stories seemed to have facts that supported my view. While this is a topic for another much longer article, let me say this: none of the predictions came to pass, and none of the solutions worked.
- Finally, but most importantly: my liberal friends and I were quietly miserable. We fought oppression, lived "progressive" lifestyles, and hung out with other liberals, but we found it wasn't working for us because the liberalism itself made us neurotic, defensive and unlikely to succeed as a result.

The last point really got to me: if our worldview was not making us happy, and was not achieving its goals, what lay in store for us but lives of quiet desperation paired to an increasingly paranoid ideology?



My fellow liberals are good people. But they are confused because liberalism is a bad mental virus. It is composed of all of the fears of the individual, gathered up and made into a political movement guaranteeing that individual is beyond criticism, which results in [social decay](#) through lack of any accord about constructive goals.

For a long time was I not conservative but in the words of the writer Michel Houellebecq, "anti-liberal." I read Plato, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Pascal, Heidegger and Herodotus. I saw how liberalism was, as Plato pointed out, the stage of decay that turns great nations into third world ones. Or more significantly: that [when liberalism arises, a nation is in decline](#).

For my next stage, I stopped thinking in terms of bureaucratic solutions, or solutions where we all agree what is right, and then form a government or social group to enforce it on others.

I started thinking in terms of granular solutions, and realized that throughout my life, I had encountered people with their heads "roughly" on straight, and then another miscellaneous group of sociopaths, idiots, perverts and opportunists. Each time I did not confront and drive away a sociopath/etc, they did something destructive later and normal healthy people paid for it.

I began to realize that more than political outlook, what matters is the quality of the individual: how morally alert you are, how intelligent you are, how motivated you are to learn and construct, instead of [destroy](#).

And one group opposed that: liberals. Liberalism wants us to be equal and not rise above the herd, or

oppress others who are "different," even if that different is out of place.

Liberalism is defensive, reactionary and biased against life because in nature, for reasons of the mathematics of the universe, nothing is equal. Like tadpoles in a summer pool, some are born to wealth and beauty and power; others are born to squalid ghettos. Liberalism hates nature and retaliates against it with equality.

I consider equality to be an insult to my friends and family. I pick the people I find to be morally good, intelligent and alert; I'm not going to pretend they're "equal" to others, because they rise above the herd of mostly confused and lonely people out there. That's why I love my people.

Even more importantly, liberalism is a focus on outward appearance being more important than function. The primary ideas of liberalism are pacifism, equality and [lack of obligation to state, philosophical or ideological ideals](#) (outside of liberalism). This encourages people to avoid conflict, and focus only on themselves, which made my friends neurotic, lonely, single, generally alcoholic train wrecks barely under control.

My belief is now that if we stop looking at liberalism as a political philosophy, and start looking at it as a [psychological coping mechanism](#), we can fix the underlying problems that prompt people toward this self-destructive ideology.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

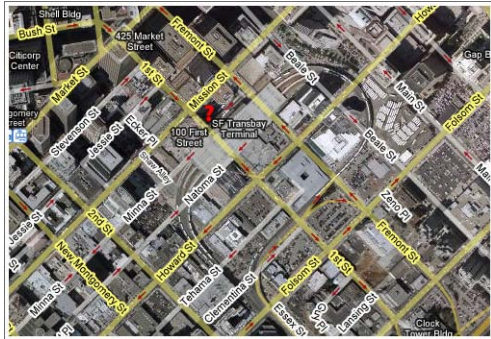
Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [liberalism](#)

The Neo-Neighborhood (Minus Culture)

Sep 12th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Boston, and New England in general, has a lot to be proud of as it relates to early American history. Massachusetts housed one of the first settlements of what would become colonial America in Plymouth Plantation, and some of this country's early, civil libertarian leaders and even Presidents came from Massachusetts. This nation was chock full of great scholars in the late 1700s as men of means (both material wealth and ideas) formulated the attitude of a nation that was ready to outgrow its colonial roots.



Recently, though, it seems the only traditions that survive here are those of political corruption and labor union gladhanding. So when we read a story like the one noted below, we realize that some residents of "Neighborhood X" *want* to retain a level of neighborhood identity in today's crazy modern world, but it's all so much smoke and mirrors due to the lack of any real cultural identity left in the city.:

In past centuries, Bostonians felt a strong alliance to their entire neighborhood, but they also had other strong points of identity such as parishes, streets, and blocks, said James Green, who teaches history at the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

"For a lot of people, the whole association of certain neighborhoods in the media and in popular perception with poverty and crime is something that people may want to disassociate themselves with," Green said. "But I don't know that was so true in the Old Boston."

"We are not trying to annex ourselves onto any neighborhood," said Gleason. "We are creating our own identity."

[[±](#)|Boston.com]

The writer doesn't make mention of immigrant waves/classes from generations past, nor the sequence of events which led to many of them seeking better pastures in the suburbs. Immigrant classes stuck together in their new nation and built nice communities which were mostly self-governed (as government and police were distrusted by most of them). Some corruption existed, of course, but nothing like that which one would have seen at the levels of city and state government at the time, which seems to suggest that people are better off living with those with which they have more in common.

Once economic prosperity was available to the consumer masses, including the quaint immigrant classes



with their cultural festivals, excellent food, and neighborhood identity, people began to grab at what they could...it took hard work for sure, but the end result of "let's start a business" was not "so I can support my neighborhood" but more the flavor of, "so I can have a nice house in the suburbs no matter who I live next to".

These neighborhoods that once had some type of identity saw the people who created that identity leave. The people left now fall into two distinct categories in cities like Boston: the ones who didn't grab the proverbial economic bull by the horns (or their descendants) to make enough money to leave, and the ones who moved in after rent control was lifted. Instead of a community of homogeneous culture, you have a mixture of the occasional ethnic restaurant owner or worker and yuppies who bought a new condo in that old loft or church that was renovated.

These yuppies are the ones who are suddenly concerned about neighborhood identity, because without culture, violence & chaos grows, and people want to feel like they are creating something or are part of something more important than just another concrete street with buildings and a few neighbors to whom you occasionally say hello (or alternatively, fight with over parking spots). Ironically, they are missing the entire cultural identity behind which neighborhoods are formed in the first place. So, status climbing takes hold, and in place of a country's flag, these people hold up neighborhood corners with overpriced bottegas as places to be proud of, instead of remembering that it's the people with whom you live, build, and create things that lends itself to true cultural identity.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [consumerism](#) · [tradition](#)

Darker toned people remain but add whitener

Sep 10th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

More [product scam](#) and dysfunctional [social reality](#) insanity in our faces:



In one TV commercial, two men, one with dark skin, the other with light skin; stand on a balcony overlooking a neighborhood. The dark skin guy turns to his friend and says in Hindi, "I am unlucky because of my face." His light skin friend replies, "Not because of your face, because of the color of your face."

Suddenly the light skin guy throws his friend a cream. It's a whitening cream.

It is one of several television commercials aimed at men in Pakistan and India. In the end the darker skin actor is shown several shades lighter and he gets the girl he was after. Most of the ads end up that way.

The commercials are sending a not-so-subtle message to men in Asia: Get whiter skin, and you'll get the girl and the job of your dreams. Or at the very least you'll be noticed.

[CNN](#)

Dumb, isn't it? In a couple generations, they'll still have a majority of what's in reality darker tones everywhere, but all wearing whitener cream where whiter will then become the new unnoticed boring shade in their midst.

We can all be [manipulated suckers](#) and revert to [our default knuckle dragger state](#), or we can bypass this mindless waste and [just be ourselves](#) for a change.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [crowdism](#)

Evaluating our tripartite qualities

Sep 8th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

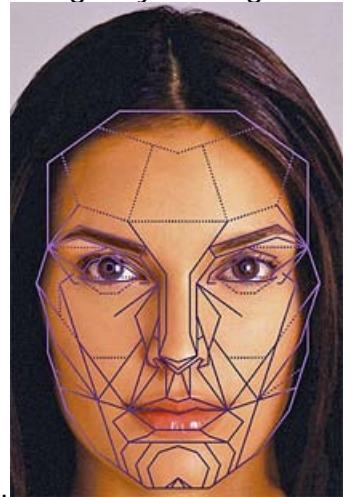
Personal metrics and history data can reveal for us where we stand among others. This can be done in an impartial, analytical manner, divided in tripartite.

Overlap between categories often comes into play, so the divisions are not strict, but simply serve to assist in understanding methodology. For example, inner drive derived from willful character can produce an overachiever athlete, which enhances some aspects of physique.

We can discover our personal attributes in order, from our outermost, more tangible parts to what lies hidden deep within:

Physique

Physique can be subdivided into consistent healthiness of biological functions and longevity, strength,



endurance, and agility for general physical fitness, and beauty or handsomeness.

Regular check ups with a family doctor may give us a periodic indication of our own health. The absence or presence of troublesome symptoms is an obvious, but not necessarily decisive indication as well.

Aging or resilience against aging effects over time fairly defines longevity. Heredity, for better or worse, plays a central role. Balding at age thirty-five, or mere hair thinning at fifty-five are examples.

Quality of diet, partaking of vices, and the presence of stressors are to an extent environmental factors that may affect the timeliness of aging. But again, heredity can offer us resilience or vulnerability to environmental pressures.

There are many forms of [physical fitness tests](#) we can take on our own. For example, the Army and Marines use a standard test of three parts with different minimal scoring standards divided by age group.

The three parts are upper body and abdominal strength endurance and a running distance speed endurance test. There are civilian equivalents with their own forms and standards that can give us alternative indications about how physically fit we are.

It is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But, what if beauty was consistently measurable by examining face proportions according to a standard? The Marquardt Beauty Analysis does just that.

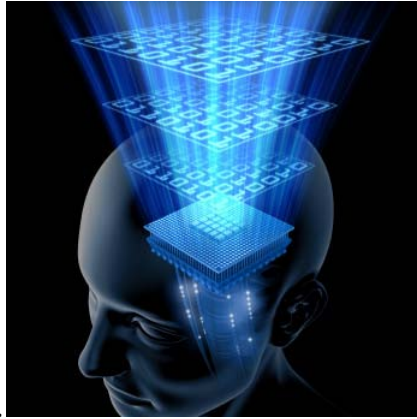
"Beauty" is defined as "the quality or combination of qualities in an entity which evokes in the perceiver a combination of a sense of "strong attraction" and a sense of "strong positive emotion". Thus we can postulate that the perception or "recognition" of beauty is actually

nothing more than a strong correlation of what we subconsciously expect "humanness" to appear to be.

[beauty](#)

Intelligence

Stephen Hawking is a famous example of a man who possesses widely divergent attributes with intelligence on the high end. Although, to be fair, some of us prefer Carl Sagan's cosmophilosophy for giving us an interface between



ourselves and the universe.

Our minds in relation to understanding are perhaps similar to stars and smaller celestial objects, from the hefty super giant classes, to the commonplace and mundane objects like our Sun, on down to the dim brown dwarf proto star. Minds are similar to these objects in two ways.

They have gravity well properties of intensity for collecting knowledge, as if information were matter and energy pulled in. Volume of matter and level of energy over a given time frame represents understanding during the course of life.

They have luminosity properties where what was attracted is processed in the stellar crucible and cast back out as if it were radiance. Our emission of understanding potentially affect others minimally, or in a life changing manner. Similarly, our understanding might have little impact beyond limited surroundings or it may radically, if subtly and indirectly transform an entire civilization.

If any one of our attributes affects the outcome of our lives, it is intelligence. IQ can be a critical factor in multiple ways: [on the importance of IQ](#).

The findings, published in the Nov. 5 issue of the journal Nature Neuroscience, offer exciting new insight about how parents pass on personality traits and cognitive abilities, and how brain diseases run in families.

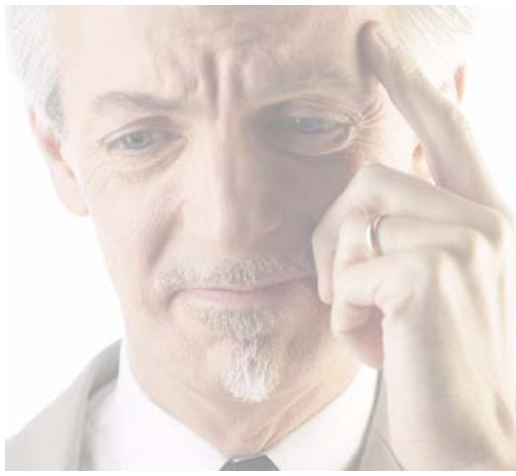
The team found that the amount of gray matter in the frontal parts of the brain is determined by the genetic make-up of an individual's parents, and strongly correlates with that individual's cognitive ability, as measured by intelligence test scores.

More importantly, these are the first images to uncover how normal genetic differences influence brain structure and intelligence.

[sciencedaily](#)

Character

Character is possibly the least concrete in terms of ability to define. Are we doing what we are supposed to when nobody is looking? Or, are we dishonest at times except when others are present to judge us?



Do we have the courage to value truth even if we are made to pay in some form such as unpopularity? Or, do we prefer public illusions, shallow rewards from the less-than-peers all around us and living a corrosive lie in degradation of our character?

Personal history and reputation can give ourselves an indication of our own character. There is often overlap between character and our other attributes. Have we diligently applied ourselves during life within the scope of our abilities, or mostly slacked off just to look cool and feel good?

Integrity of character can manifest as awards and earnings: a college degree, an honorable discharge from military service, advancement in rank during years of martial arts lessons. Lack of integrity, and thus not applying ourselves may indicate a wanting in character. All those hours tapping the beer keg, or mouth agape before the Playstation console and the television will almost certainly amount to nothing at all.

Employers, customers and business associates judge our performance and reputations. An employer in particular may see having a college degree or military service not only in terms of our intelligence or endurance, but as a mark of character, as someone who can tough it out and bring goals to successful completion.

Our individual accomplishments may serve as a type of metric by which we may brave the judgement of others in order to find our character in order, or for some reason lacking, where we then fear and protest their judging us.

Along with drive and ethics (or its lack), wisdom comes into play. Here is an example of possibly, depending on context, unethical wisdom from an accomplished character in history:

“Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others experience” – Otto Von Bismarck

Conclusion

Life offers us challenges that are opportunities for physical, mental and spiritual growth. If life consistently beats us, it is probable that one or more of our own tripartite attributes were not up to the task.

We each have multiple observable attributes that vary between us as individuals. These qualities or shortcomings are essentially hereditary traits or gene expression carried in human bodies in our world.

Knowing this gives us a tool, at least in a rough outline form described above. As with almost any tool, we then have an instrument for either creation or destruction as we choose, but in either case, a foundation for the expansion of human power.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [DNA](#) · [eugenics](#)

Texas rids world of menace while crowd protests

Sep 5th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Liberalism is blind to logic, and by extension, like a broken clock that is accurate twice a day, mostly incapable of practicing justice in its judgement. Instead, it serves compassionate theatrics, but this compassion is just a form of extraversion that seeks approval from an observing crowd.

Liberalism consistently refuses truth, a virtue having higher value than emotional self-interest. Its followers are addicted to mere egoism. They'll use any idea, event, or person, mercilessly, to feed this addiction.

The fallacy of Special Pleading occurs when someone argues that a case is an exception to a rule based upon an irrelevant characteristic that does not define an exception.

[fallacyfiles](#)

The following is an argumentum ad misericordiam form of Special Pleading; an attempt to convince us that because someone has less money, they tend to be falsely accused:

Like so many wrongfully convicted, Willingham was poor. At the intersection of poverty and criminal injustice, we need to work to stop the death penalty and improve legal counsel for the indigent.

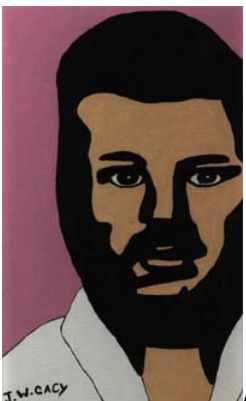
[change](#)

The preceding quote was in reference to the execution of C.T. Willingham. The state of Texas has publicly admitted that its conviction of this individual for multiple murders was incorrect. The state was most likely in error after all, but it nonetheless removed a criminally insane person from among us.

He has been convicted of numerous felonies and misdemeanors, both as an adult and as a juvenile, and attempts at various forms of rehabilitation have proven unsuccessful.

Dr. James Grigson testified for the state at punishment stating that Willingham fits the profile of a sociopath whose conduct becomes more violent over time, and who lacks a conscience. He expressed his opinion that an individual demonstrating this type of behavior can not be rehabilitated in any manner.

[about](#)



A transactional criminal justice model is less efficient and more error prone than small town community justice of past eras. Towns are huge now. We can no longer get to know everyone and live among them throughout our lives.

Those who are protesting this impersonal bureaucracy, which reduces people to case numbers leading to a file full of statements, would have been the same ideologues railing against community justice lynchings in the past.

Seemingly, nothing satisfies the perpetual revolutionary left. It isn't interested in settling upon the best way or a commitment to swift justice. It is only interested in the self image theatrics that it dubs change and progress.

While anti-death penalty advocates can muster some remarkably good arguments, Todd Willingham should not be anyone's poster child.

[corsicana](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

All liberals are cowards

Sep 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

People who cannot accept that natural selection got us to our current intelligence, that conflict is an essential part of life, and that equality is a destructive pipe dream are liberals.

They claim they are “progressive” but what they really mean is “in denial of reality.”



In short, they're cowards. They reject the mechanism of life itself for some fantasy of non-conflict in their own heads, in which the individual reigns supreme — the exact opposite of life, where conflict produces good results and individuals are just lumps of meat trying to survive in the wild.

One of the essential acts in growing up is to face reality, accept it and make the best of it we can. This includes realizing that not wanting to grow up just gets pathetic as one ages.

Liberalism is reality denial. I've never known denial of reality to produce good results; have you?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

How to be useless – tech support version

Sep 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

People on forums do not understand that Google prioritizes their replies to questions because users type questions into search engines looking for others having the same issue.

So it is with the topic [Firefox takes 20 seconds to open up after startup](#). In this case, a user is describing what happens when Windows doesn't cache applications, but most of the people finding the topic are looking for a solution to a specific problem: Firefox taking a long time to load.

After turning on my computer, a lot of programs take longer than usual to open up. For example, IE takes 5 seconds to open up instead of 1. This only happens after startup, which is understandable. But Firefox takes 20 seconds or longer to open up after startup. Once I use it, it opens up fine, 1 second.

Windows caches applications in the \windows\precache folder. But if your application changes, it has to load normally first. That's the issue this person had.

However, 99% of the people hitting this topic are doing so because it's [#3 on Google](#) for "Firefox takes five seconds to load," which is a common problem.

The "solutions" offered by various forum idiots:

- Defragment
- Run virus checkers
- IE loads faster because it's built into Windows
- Set your Firefox to turbo mode

Our operative attempted to inject some sanity into the discussion:

Something went wrong with FF and only FF. Based on what I've seen, it's taking extra time to load the history and cookies SQLite databases.

It takes about five seconds longer to load. It is a problem specific to FF.

And the forum administrator — most forum administrators are pathological losers selected for always being online at the forum, not any particular competence — sagely says:

Thanks for the reply but after 5 years, I doubt whether the OP is still interested.
Locking [topic].

I'm surrounded by morons.

The morons in the thread had no idea what was being discussed; the original poster had no idea how to word his question.

In the meantime, thanks to Google, they're getting many hits from people having a simple problem: suddenly, Firefox stops loading quickly.

It's parallel to the problem of Firefox [suddenly not saving cookies](#).

And what do you know, the solution to that:

Delete cookies.sqlite and cookies.txt (may not be there) in the Profile Folder.

Is a parallel solution to the problem of Firefox loading slowly:

There was a related topic to this that the moderator locked.

However, since people find this forum through Googling the problem they're having, I wanted to put up a topic here to address this issue.

If your Firefox suddenly starts taking five seconds longer to load, you have an SQLite file corruption.

1. Close Firefox
2. Go to C:\Documents and Settings\YourUsername\Application Data\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\YourProfile
3. Select all files of type ".sqlite"
4. Create a new folder on your desktop and drag them there.

This will solve the problem; next time you start Firefox it will load normally.

This would have been posted under a registered account but your system isn't sending out new user registration emails in a timely manner.

[Firefox recently started taking five seconds to load](#)

Morons find a way to be useless because they are unable to think about the task at hand. To them, because they are stupid, the world appears to be a subset of their own personality, so they treat each need as if it were their own version of that need.

They find it very difficult to get beyond what they're interested in right now, and then, to answer a question in a normal context that will benefit a normal user. But that doesn't stop them from shouting their suggestions!

We as a species have not left the chimpanzee far behind. A chimpanzee is incapable of seeing the world of all others, although it can see the world of another chimpanzee. Until we gain, as a species, the ability to analyze our world and respond to it in a non-personal manner, we will forever be surrounded by people who specialize in being useless.

Posted in: [Technology](#).

Hate speech laws reveal human confusion

Sep 3rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Advocates call the law a necessary control on hate speech in an age where the Internet makes the spread of messages easier and faster. Opponents say it's censorship and has no place in a free society.

[The Globe and Mail](#)

Not only are we divided on whether hate speech should be legal, we are divided on what it should be.



Is it hate speech to call other races subhumans, but legal to note in a scientific paper that there [IQ differences between races](#), [moral evolutionary differences](#), that there is a [biological basis to race and ethnicity](#) or even that statistically, [crime is not distributed evenly](#) between all groups?

Half of scientists say [race doesn't exist](#), [the others](#) keep quiet.

The bigger issue here is what we're obscuring the pursuit of truth with all sorts of social pretense.

"Hate" speech, in my view, would be a placing of emotion before logic, like screaming about hating an ethnic group to the world.

Logical speech however can include some things our society finds taboo:

- Critique of diversity as an idea
- Critique of democracy, equality and "peace" as goals
- Noting differences in ability between social classes, ethnicities, races, national origins, genders and professions
- Noting the pattern of history identified by Plato, Spengler, Toynbee, Nietzsche, etc. that shows us democracy and diversity are end-stages of dying civilizations

These things are all taboo, but must be discussed — we must pick a better future. Putting them on par with some idiot screaming about how he hates an ethnic group is slander to what are legitimate arguments.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Short-term versus long-term

Sep 3rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I remixed this story excerpt — re-ordering the paragraphs to de-obfuscate the story:

Prescribed burns are intended to protect homes and lives by eliminating fuel that can cause explosive wildfires. The wildfire that has blackened 140,000 acres — or nearly 219 square miles — in the forest over the past week has been fed by the kind of tinder-dry vegetation that prescribed burns are designed to safely devour.

Obtaining the necessary permits is a complicated process, and such efforts often draw protests from environmentalists.

Biologist Ileene Anderson with the Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental organization, said burn permits should be difficult to get because of the potential damage to air quality.

The agency said it granted six permits sought by the Forest Service to conduct prescribed burns on 1,748 acres in the forest this year. The agency reviews such requests to ensure air quality in the often-smoggy Los Angeles area will not be worsened by smoke from intentional fires.

But records show only 12.8 acres burned.

[AP](#)

There is always conflict between the short-term and the long-term.

In the short-term, solutions to long-term problems are inconvenient.

But if not addressed, those short-term blow-offs manifest themselves in real disasters, in the long term. But it's unpopular to be inconvenient, so we keep repeating the same dumb mistakes.

As long as we govern ourselves by what is popular, and not what needs to be done in the long-term, we're going to repeat those same dumb mistakes. A king can do an unpopular but necessary thing and get away with it, but an elected official cannot, which is why none do.



I'm sure the environmentalists made a dummheit here, but they were almost assuredly not the only ones.

The chamber of commerce, civic groups, local merchants... who isn't going to complain about more smog? Yet you still have to do what you need to do, or those blown-off short-term problems pile up and make for a heck of a big one.

Here's another form of the same dilemma:

Burk was a bright, bookish 17-year-old, whose future was ahead of her.

Samuel, 50, had been in and out of prisons for decades. He was a transient with a long record of criminal activities and drug abuse.

By dusk, Burk was dead, her body left in her car in a downtown parking lot — her head beaten and her neck slashed, according to Los Angeles police and other law enforcement officials. Samuel killed her, police suspect, during a botched robbery. He was arrested within 90 minutes of her death on an unrelated charge and was held in custody.

In July 1987, Samuel was sentenced to six years in prison for robbing a residence in San Bernardino County, according to the California Department of Corrections. In the years that followed, Samuel was paroled several times and repeatedly returned to prison when he committed other crimes or otherwise violated the terms of his release, records show.

[LA Times](#)

Another selective and revealing excerpt: this guy has been committing crimes impulsively for two decades. He cannot seem to stop himself. Like most criminals, he is addicted to excessive unnecessary pleasures. Like most predators, he is a criminal opportunist who cannot seem to think a step beyond his own actions.

And we kept arresting him, and letting him out. We didn't want to deal with the actual problem: this man cannot be part of our society. He is uncivilized and will do nothing but destroy.

We could have taken care of that problem a long time ago... but we have to wait until he kills someone. Otherwise, we might be "oppressing" him, and in the short-term, that's inconvenient because no one wants to be oppressed.

Yet a smidgen of "oppression" could prevent boatloads of victimization, in which good people are destroyed. And we all think our society is mostly morons, so we all know we need more good people, right?

Whether it's burning underbrush or exiling sociopaths, our society fails at dealing with long-term problems because avoiding short-term inconvenience is more popular. We can always postpone our dealing with the problem and figure it'll go away. And then it arrives, and we're surprised, because we were in denial.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Working poor mock socialized health care

Sep 2nd, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

You probably won't read this perspective on the Health Care Divide from the sheltered habitats of mainstream Editorial Land. Neither do the working poor tend to offer up an autobiographical accounting of themselves in any form of media.

So, here it is. The working poor are interested in spending their pay on vices, not on health care plans.

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — Police said they've busted two brothels in the Hamptons.

Southampton Police Sgt. James Kiernan said the brothels were run out of homes in Westhampton and Southampton, and catered to dozens of day laborers. One of the prostitutes was from New Jersey.

Three men and two women have pleaded not guilty to charges ranging from prostitution to promoting prostitution, and patronizing a prostitute.

Police believe there are more brothels in the area. The investigation is continuing.

[NJ](#)

Sure, we can quibble over the amount spent on daily vices like \$5 for a pack of cigs, some beer, booze, illicit drugs, or twenty minutes waist deep in raunchy snatch-for-hire versus the monthly cost of a health insurance plan.

[But, Who Pays and How Much misses the point.](#)

Whether we are stuck with a public option, a privatized option, or any hybrid combination, who pays the bill is not the right question to ask. The silent debate on national health care was always about preventive medicine for people betterment versus a treatment based model for raking in profit from the lifelong sickly.

Since we've elected treatment style health care in America, shuffling around the bill payer from private to public to hybrid isn't going to save us in the long run.

The [irresponsible majority](#), drawn from a growing population, will continue to flood clinics and emergency rooms in expanding droves, overtaxing these vital services until the breaking point.

Three out of five hospital nurses say they care for too many patients, according to a survey from the American Federation of Teachers and its health care division, AFT Healthcare. "Nurse understaffing may seem to save money in the short term—but it costs lives," says Candice Owley, chair of the AFT Healthcare division.

[articles](#)

The silent debate on all fronts including health care was always a question of our values as a civilization. Do we continue to variously profit from / pay for the mayhem resulting from unrestrained individual liberty or will we seek alternatives?



Posted in: [Politics](#).
Tagged: [consumerism](#)

On socialized medicine

Sep 1st, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This debate drives me bonkers because it's so ham-handed.



Many of us do not want more bureaucracy controlling our lives; we also do not want to support those who do not have their acts together. Why? Natural selection benefits us and makes a better world for our kids — after all, natural selection got humans this smart in the first place. We don't want some 90 IQ idiot criminal ruining life for people with 120 IQs and good moral character.

But then people demand a bureaucratic solution, claiming that (a) we owe it to all people who happen to be human and (b) bureaucratic well-intentioned solutions are a good answer. They then point to the post office and medicare/medicaid, forgetting that the post office is quasi-commercialized and market-regulated, and medicare/medicaid are not socialized medicine but reimbursement programs.

I propose a middle option that gives both sides what they desire:

Have our government, pooling the resources we've handed to it through taxes, purchase a health care plan for its employees — all American citizens. Then let us buy it at the reduced rate available, and let the private market regulate it, because although neither free enterprise nor government regulation are ideal, free enterprise reacts more quickly.

This would satisfy both sides. The vastness of government is used to reduce the cost of health care, and yet, it is also purchased so that the irresponsible and disorganized who spend their money on wine and entertainment instead of necessities manage to hopefully kill themselves off.

In the meantime, let's talk about problems with health care:

- Overloaded hospitals: forced to take everyone who shows up, they have long wait times, unless you've paid extra to have expedited health care in the form of a physician who can check you in directly.
- Incompetent doctors: many of these people are doctors because of the monetary reward, and demonstrate little competence.
- Incompetent nurses: believe it or not, a nurse is your primary caregiver in a hospital or doctor's office. Many of these are oblivious, lazy and under-educated.
- Nosocomial infections: hospitals are breeding grounds for disease. Maybe a redesign would help. See below.
- Poor design of hospitals: these are austere, mechanical places. Announcements ring out constantly. Every 45 minutes, someone comes by to do another small task like take temperature or apply pills. It's nearly impossible to get rest.
- Bad diagnostic skills: physicians find a niche, and get used to seeing the same ten causes and solutions, and so anything outside of that is bungled. Maybe rotate them, like we do active duty military personnel?
- No sacralization: by trapping doctors in this debate, we're alienated them behind mountains of paperwork, bureaucratic rules and poverty, when we really need them to be developing empathy for patients and improved skills.

Just a few thoughts while this debate rages on. At the end of the day, it's not about socialized medicine... it's about the liberal worldview (people first, even incompetents) versus the conservative one (ideals first, natural selection) and for that reason, no one on either side is actually thinking about health care itself.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

The fallacy of control

Sep 1st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We all want to know: are we on the wrong path, as a species, and if so, what is the one mistake we're making?

My answer: we treat the world as a subset of ourselves, as if we were Gods, when really we are a subset of the world.

This reversal creates a reversal in our ability to see cause and effect. Where humans are concerned, the cause is always external so it's not their fault. Criminals are in jail because they got a bad start in life; people are poor because an injustice happened; if a baby dies, it's an injustice; it's always good to save lives.

This culminates in a twofold illusion that's central to modern thinking:

- Each person should be able to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it, so long as they do not violate a basic social contract (murder, rape, arson, kidnapping, assault, treason).
- No one should be offended, and no conflict should be initiated, because the goal is that each person should be able to do whatever they want to do.

That conflict avoidance has two benefits — first, I am not responsible for whatever disasters are going on outside my door; second, no one can tell me what to do.



In this sense, we've reversed cause and effect from "Person X does Y task and gets Z result from the world at large" to "Person X got Z done to them by the world while trying to do Y." The person is never to blame.

The root of this pattern is conflict avoidance. In order to keep society together, we need rules; if those rules demand anything from us except that we show up for work and don't murder, rape, arson, etc., there's going to be conflict. Conflict endangers us when we try to stop others from doing crazy things; it also upsets us when others are able to criticize us when we're doing crazy things.

So we decide on a society of the rule of no rules, agree to disagree, make war to keep the peace, kill the

messenger to avoid conflict, and so on. It's a great denial conspiracy, with all of us pretending we're "enlightened" and "intelligent" for not interrupting behavior that, five steps down the line, causes criminal neglect or destruction.

I call this philosophy of no-philosophy "Crowdism," because it unites individuals into a Crowd hellbent on keeping others from criticizing those individuals. Here's a statement of it from my least favorite source in the universe:

"Don't be a dick" is the fundamental rule of all total social spaces. Every other policy for getting along is a special case of it.

...

No definition of being a dick has been provided. This is deliberate. If a significant number of reasonable people suggest, whether bluntly or politely, that you are being a dick, the odds are good that you are not entirely in the right.

Being right about an issue does not mean you're not being a dick! Dicks can be right — but they're still dicks; if there's something in what they say that is worth hearing, it goes unheard, because no one likes listening to dicks. It doesn't matter how right they are.

...

One can be perfectly civil and follow every rule of etiquette and still be a dick.

...

Telling someone "Don't be a dick" is usually a dick-move — especially if it's true. It upsets the other person and it reduces the chance that they'll listen to what you say.

[Wikimedia](#)

This document is written in cleverese (the international language of hipsters), which gets around the fact that this open definition works one way: if others object, you are obviously the dick, so you are the problem. Keep the peace at all costs. Avoid conflict by punishing the messenger.



The problem with this philosophy is this: it removes an obligation to truth, to reality, and to the whole, and replaces it with person-to-person social factors. Am I offended? Then he's wrong, even if he's right; he's a dick, even if he's polite; he's bad, even if what he says will ultimately produce good.

In other words, we've placed our own feelings before our ability to adapt to reality, which is the eternal pitfall of having big brains: we can delude ourselves by altering our memories and expectations of the world, and we won't catch on because the consequences will take a long time to manifest themselves, and then we'll be in denial.

You're asking — what does this matter in the real world? — and I'll tell you:

- Notice that your neighbor is stupid, violent and careless? Don't be a dick; let him be; keep the peace. Nevermind that in two generations, his descendants will outnumber yours and your town will be awash in abusive people, requiring an equally abusive police force.
- Catch on that people around you are starting to [loosen their sexual morals](#), [destroying the family](#) and [going back down the evolutionary ladder in breeding](#)? Don't be a dick, dude; it's their lives, it doesn't affect you. In a generation or two, your grandchildren are living among the [dumb and violent](#).
- Sniff out that people around you are using drugs and alcohol to excess? Stop being such a dick; it's their lives, they can live them as they want to. Nevermind that soon reality will be optional, and these people will be inert as far as interacting with society goes, encouraging more crime and destruction through their inobservance and general oblivion to reality.
- So you saw how people are easily convinced by television commercials, which tell them what to buy and how to vote. You could be a dick and point out that this will end well, or you could ignore it and soon those with money and power will simply purchase the votes they need and rule you.
- You found out that your neighbor, who makes \$30,000 a year, is planning on buying a \$50,000 pickup truck in addition to his house payment of \$1500. You're thinking: that won't end well. But it's a dick move to point it out to him. Well, don't be surprised then, when in fifty years there's a whole industry designed to profit off of reckless lending and idiots taking advantage of it, and that you have to play by their rules — and bail them out when they go wrong.
- You discover that your neighbors are planning a revolution. They're certain that their poverty brought on by drought is the fault of the ruling classes, and that a revolution is needed to bring power back to the people and punish these bad ruling classes. But you've seen these people spending \$50 a night each weekend on their bar tabs, and seen them buy expensive pickup trucks, and you've seen them

spending money on entertainment products like mad. You know that they're the cause of their own decline, but it's a dick move to mention that. Further, you're a dick if you point out their revolution will bring about a permanent "solution" to a temporary problem, and further destabilize your country. Be a dick, or live in a fallen once-important nation like France or Russia?

- Again, you are awakened late at night by your neighbor loading barrels of something onto his truck and driving off in a cloud of diesel smoke. You know he goes out near that old reservoir where people dump toxic waste, and there are no barrels in his truck when he returns, and of course that he does it late at night. It would be a dick move to assume he's dumping toxic waste, because there's a chance that there's an innocent explanation. Far more likely is that he's dumping toxic waste. Be a dick, or watch helplessly as toxins slowly invade land, earth, air and sea, including your food chain?

Yep, if you leave it up to human individuals, they'll decide that very complex decisions come down to a binary: are you being a dick, or not?

They'll then band together in a group and punish "dicks," which includes both those accused of witchcraft and those who point out the failings of anything popular with the Crowd. And that's what they've come: a lynch mob, a revenge crowd, a roving band of do-nothings looking for someone else to blame for their problems.

This is why we say that all human problems boil down to [individual irresponsibility](#) and moral inattention. While this mob is forming, the middle classes are dozing, happily stuffed with cheap food, cheap cable TV, lots of booze and cheap pot, and new products from Costco and Target every weekend.

But this wafflemaker plays a song as it bakes your waffles! Can we have it Daddy, please? Parents space out, caught between job responsibilities and the impossibility of explaining why things are stupid ideas to children who know only their needs, right now, and demands. They relax on that moral attention, and decide to not be dicks, and ignore all of the stupid stuff going on around them even if it means their children will inherit a mess. Maybe that's the high cost of that wafflemaker, kid.

As I've gotten more experienced in life, I've realized that while some conservatives are infected with Crowdism, for the most part Crowdism is a mental virus that seizes liberals — all liberals. The basic idea of liberalism is the freedom of the individual, not just from other individuals and government, but from obligation to ideas and laws of reality. If liberalism doesn't start out that way, like classical liberalism, it decays to that low level quickly, because by basing it on the individual, we have provided a one-way path to greater demands from the individual and no way of saying "no," because that would impose what we call "control."

Yet we're just as controlled by those rules saying we can't tell people "no." Crowdism, after all, is as much a control system for reigning in the individual as totalitarianism is; it's just while totalitarianism requires armed police, Crowdism just sets a lynch mob on anyone who says anything unpopular.

The traditional left-right dichotomy suggests that we have two basic choices: either we are controlled by government, or we abolish government for control of other individuals by individuals. However, there's a hidden third option, which is that instead of making it either bureaucratic or personal, we opt for mutual allegiance to agreed-upon values, or "culture."

When our cultural values say it is improper to dump toxic waste in rivers, we may not even need law enforcement; people feel fine "being a dick" in that instance. If our cultural values say it is foolish to spend your money on entertainment if your children are starving and you blame the government, people who behave that way will be regarded as deceptive. If our cultural values say that we treat everyone fairly, and some rise higher than others, and we won't fight over that because we are committed to making the system fair, we end the seemingly endless class wars.

This idea of culture, despite appearances, is a way of "sacralizing" or "making holy" the world as a whole. Instead of focusing on ourselves as things-in-themselves which deserve importance, we are means to an end — we are media through which patterns move, and the best of those patterns lead to good results. This does not mean we throw ourselves away, but that our focus includes self and world as a whole, as

guided by a shared values system which points out how life is non-random, how good behaviors are rewarded, and how bad behaviors must be curtailed. We know if we do well we will be rewarded, and that the only measure of well is how the patterns of our behavior stack up to the patterns the world rewards.

Sacralization and shared value is the **only** alternative to control. Otherwise, either you get authoritarian-derived systems, where government agencies have massive amounts of power and all solutions are bureaucratic, or anarchy-derived systems, where individuals are not held accountable and enforce prevailing trends, social notions and pretense of self-importance upon one another and are only regulated when they visibly murder, kidnap, etc.

Sacralization would help us avoid the following travesty:

According to Mercy for Animals, male chicks are of no use to the industry because they can't lay eggs and don't grow large or quickly enough to be raised profitably for meat. That results in the killing of 200 million male chicks a year.

The United Egg Producers, a trade group for U.S. egg farmers, confirmed that figure and the practice behind it.

"There is, unfortunately, no way to breed eggs that only produce female hens," said the group's spokesman, Mitch Head. "If someone has a need for 200 million male chicks, we're happy to provide them to anyone who wants them. But we can find no market, no need."

Using a grinder, Head said, "is the most instantaneous way to euthanize chicks."

[HuffPo](#)

This is horrific and insane, yet no one is going to be able to suggest a better solution — unless we have a reason besides profit and public opinion to do so. If we sacralize, or make holy, the world, the idea of tossing chicks in a blender will seem wasteful and pointless, and we'll work around it to another option, such as using roosters for another purpose. Even more, and this addresses the fears of the corporations in this case, the value will be shared, so no single company will break ranks and start liquefying male chicks just to get an edge in operating costs.

Scary as it is, the same forces that we think will liberate us... actually enslave us. And the forces that we thought were too scary at first may indeed be our liberation, although that liberation may not mean "100% free to do anything we want" but "75% free to do anything we want." Might be a worthwhile trade, if you can get past the advertiser-inculcated fear of trading 100% for 75% with better long-term consequences, much as you might buy an all-steel spatula for \$15 instead of a plastic one for \$5, knowing the steel one will last for twenty years.

Liberalism and conservatism are each axes on the graph of political placement; one side wants the individual, the other wants shared values. But that graph doesn't consider the *methods* they would use. This is why liberalism and conservatism cross over periodically: the hidden values axis in politics is the bureaucratic-anarchy axis. Conservatives want to conserve values, but by which method — a strong government, or libertarian-style natural selection that allows strong social forces to select those they want in the prosperous communities? Liberals want to liberate the individual from restraints, but it's tempting to get Stalinesque and use government to do that, while others believe that dropping into near-anarchy will perpetuate their cause the best because it is most popular among the majority, who have no experience in leadership or making decisions where long-term consequences must be considered.

That's how we get this lovely speech, completely ignored now, from everyone's favorite liberal:

No one disputes that America has lasting and important interests in the Persian Gulf, or that Iraq poses a significant challenge to U.S. interests. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime is a serious danger, that he is a tyrant, and that his pursuit of lethal weapons of mass destruction cannot be tolerated. He must be disarmed.

[Ted Kennedy, speech on September 27, 2002](#)

He doesn't sound very liberal there. He sounds like a Republican! But in times of fear, people swing toward overt control; in times of no fear, they swing toward covert control, because it's easy enough to not be a dick, and therefore ignore what your neighbors do, in exchange for them ignoring what you do, even if one or both of you causes negative social consequences later on.

From that example, you can see the problem of control-based societies, which come in two types — the bureaucratic and the anarchistic, regardless of whether you're Left or Right — in that they ultimately encourage allegiance to the symbol of correctness, to the bureaucracy itself, and not to the goals it is supposed to achieve. It's like "technically" washing your hands quickly (as a kid) instead of taking time to achieve the goal of having clean hands before dinner. We can always game the system, and control systems encourage gaming.

Sacralization avoids these problems, which is why the Crowd, the callow parts of industry, the weak parts of government, and every person who lacks confidence or knows they're up to something shady is against it. The future belongs to a conflict between those converging on means of sacralization — religion, heritage, national identity, philosophy — versus those still caught in the twentieth century, trying to choose which method of control they like best.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Real value dies with hair straightener and snitches

Aug 30th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

Crowdists insist who we are is our assigned or circumstantial external features: an investment portfolio or lack thereof, a residence in a particular neighborhood, a paper indicating educational ranking, our skin hue which by the way doesn't mean anything so why bring it up, a favorite sports team and the [products](#) we



buy.

Since there are several available external variables, the "everyone is a unique individual but nothing else" assertion fools many. Yet, because this set of variables is truly limited and often categorized, a euphemism for stereotyped; middle class, Raiders fan, master's degree, not infinite, the assertion cannot be true in every case.

Once you conform to the demands of these social reality police, externalized traits become their way of saying you're "just another white person like us and shame on those who indicate otherwise". That is to say, they'll accept you as one of us, but only on the crowd's terms and always, always when you are within listening distance.

The goal of this crowd is to expand itself indefinitely so that each individual is better able to hide his or her fearful self – afraid of struggle, adaptation, life and history – within it as camouflage. They want to draw you in, at your expense, to add to their numbers which then creates a louder chorus of [hyperreal](#) assertions; the crowd's method of operations.

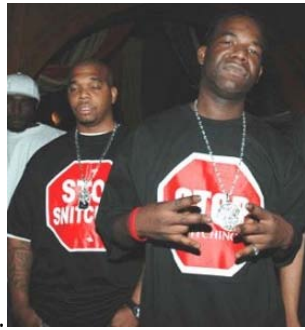
In the face of cultural pressure, the thinking goes, conformists relax their hair, and rebels have the courage not to. In some corners, relaxing one's hair is even seen as wishing to be white.

"For black women, you're damned if you do, damned if you don't," said Ingrid Banks, an associate professor of black studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara. "If you've got straight hair, you're pegged as selling out. If you don't straighten your hair," she said, "you're seen as not practicing appropriate grooming practices."

[nytimes](#)

Conformity is too obtuse of a term to tell us what is really going on here. Hair straightener is one of those external features serving the crowd camouflage symbiosis.

It is also the chains these slave masters offer you in exchange for your going along with them. What you give up in shame, who you are inside as an organic being with a biological lineage, is something they could



have never taken away.

The greater struggle is the battle for the integrity of our true selves against a bureaucratic industrial society that wishes to homogenize us all and therefore better control us to serve its own purposes. In trade, we are expected to whore ourselves to it in exchange for its promises of conditional acceptance and a secure and easy future.

When these promises are broken time and again, we are left adrift and betrayed in search of meaning. The search turns from the outer world's betrayal, which held our attention captive, to a discovery within: who am I, who are we, where did I come from and where are we going?

When the lesser battle of transient external features is lost to us, or we elect to abandon it, the greater struggle again calls us to arms to [protect](#) our natural, but very different intrinsic values.

"He told on a righteous person years ago," she said. "He told me that."

"I beat him to death. ... I killed him and cut him up," she said.

Simpson told Wingate she dismembered Neely's body and stuffed it into a trash can, which she then torched. The burning trash bin was found outside a North Phoenix church on Aug. 5. Police arrested Simpson for the murder on Aug. 19.

Simpson, who was already in jail when police caught up with her, told Wingate this is not the first time she's killed.

"I believe informants and child molesters should be killed ... period," she said.

Simpson said she was "kind of relieved" that police arrested her. She also said she takes medication and might be considered mentally ill.

"I think something's wrong with the world that I live in, but, according to other people, yes, something is wrong with me."

Wingate asked Simpson if she felt guilty about Neely's death.

"Guilty? For ridding the world of a snitch? No, I don't feel guilty," she answered.

[azfamily](#)

Isn't it time for a second emancipation proclamation? This time, you liberate not your body from physical chains on your limbs and your miserable living conditions all around as in the past.

This time, you cast off the mental bindings of the crowd which are its social expectations, its integration, and its transient categorizations that are as easily received as taken away again. As trends, they also change like the breeze, enslaving your attentiveness, your confidence and your time.

That which is not transient about us is where the greater struggle – greater because its value exceeds transient extrinsic things but demands more from us – takes place. Among these we find our natural selves which are expressions of our lineages, families and close communities of those like us and its values held

invisibly but kept in common for generations.

To abandon the battle for this greater value in life is to instead whore ourselves as slaves, outnumbered by millions of memes and trends beyond our control that exist only to push us around as if we were thoughtless cattle fattened for scheduled harvest. This is both an economic and a political trap set to snare us in a hundred ways to serve the ends of an impersonal social system that acts as our master.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [crowdism](#) · [identity](#)

Death Metaphor Deconstructed

Aug 29th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

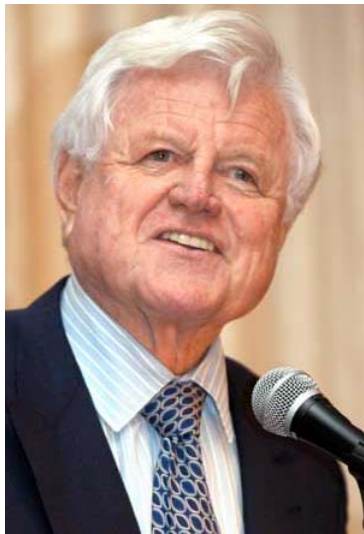
Following [the death of Senator Ted Kennedy](#) earlier in the week, one writer used the event to deconstruct one of the most ludicrous metaphors surrounding death: the idea of "losing a fight with cancer":

The fighting metaphor, especially when applied to cancer, drives me nuts. Cancer is not a war or a football game. It's an involuntary dance with a partner you didn't choose. The fighting metaphor is insidious because it not so subtly implies that if you fight, you can "win." And that if the cancer takes your life, if you "lose," it is to some extent your fault. It's not only patients and their loved ones who fall into this battlefield thinking, but doctors, too, who often see death as a failure. Their failure.

In truth, cancer doesn't care whether you fight or not, whether you win or not. It's simply there, just like all the other horrible, debilitating, scary, painful, life-wrecking chronic diseases that millions of Americans deal with every day.

The challenge, it seems to me, is to do precisely what Ted Kennedy did. He sailed his boat. He spent time with his wife and kids. He found good doctors, and trusted them. And he kept doing the work he loved, right up to the end.

[[±](#)|Boston.com]



Whatever your feelings on the now deceased Senator, if it's true that he accepted his fate and spent his time settling up his estate, sailing his boat, and spending time with family, the man at least had a decent attitude toward death. Then again, doesn't this just go to show that people *don't* live full lives until they're given a death sentence by a doctor?

The writer of the op-ed raises some good points above: other people treat death as something that's not inevitable until the bitter end, so we like to label a body's battle with cancer as a fight that can be won instead of embracing the reality of death and moving on from there. There are walks with pink ribbons dedicated to this idea: find a cure. Everyone has a story; my mother, her sister, that guy's aunt all died of "Cancer Of The [fill in the blank]", and can somehow try to change that by walking a few miles and raising money to give to a research institution. I'm more interested in why the person who is given the death sentence suddenly lives a full life when they should have all along.

Since most people know that hardly anyone truly lives a full life these days, we consider it more tragic if someone gets hit by a bus and is otherwise young and healthy when they die, vs. having brain cancer at an old age and suddenly becomes enlightened during those six months to one year when one has time to plan

the closure of one's life.

If there's time involved, we can call it a fight, we can hope for a miracle; we can melodramatize about death and call someone who accepts it a valiant man of honor, and that makes us feel good about our own mortality – if briefly. In reality, death doesn't discriminate, so we get upset when it strikes unexpectedly. Death will take you any time, and the best thing you can do is to plan ahead for your family's future while living the fullest life you can with them today.

This would include, perhaps, an estate plan, life insurance, a trust fund, and other measures to ensure your



legacy – meaning your family and loved ones – are protected in the event of death. In our modern society, unfortunately, the government will absolutely rape your estate clean if you're caught without a safety net after death, so this just makes common sense.

Live the year that Ted Kennedy just lived, but earlier in life, by planning for death if there are people who depend on you, and it won't matter whether you're hit by a bus or have slowly growing cancer in your brain which gives you just enough time to set up an estate plan and "sail your boat". Then, if you do happen to become stricken with a fatal disease which gives you time to reflect before death, you can laugh at people who don't see any change in your demeanor as you tell them, "I had great perspective all along – or didn't you notice?"

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [death](#) · [nihilism](#)

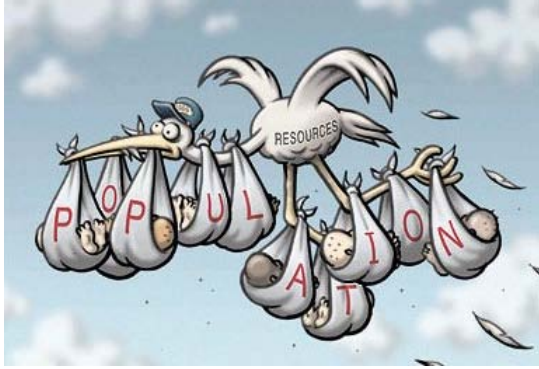
Overpopulation Still Taboo For Most

Aug 27th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

There are many people – some of them well-respected scientists – who have been talking about overpopulation for decades.

[Dr. Albert Bartlett](#), even [Isaac Asimov](#) – intelligent men who see through our complex social structure and boil it down to the simplest form, so it can be seen for what it is.



Most people in modern society don't like talking about overpopulation because they don't want to admit that not every single human life is precious and worth saving – which denies the simple reality that death happens; either at old age or infancy, it's inevitable. It can happen under tragic or not-so-tragic circumstances. The most profound part of our existence is the fact that it ends, and yet we still can't really grasp it. If every human life isn't worth saving, the thinking goes, then maybe *my* life isn't worth saving, and this is unacceptable to just about everyone. Instead of simply admitting that we are a society of narcissistic morons who parrot about individual rights and entitlements while hoarding and consuming all available resources, though, we project that thinking into, "no one's life is anything but precious, therefore anything that reduces or limits anyone else's entitlements is a direct attack on humanity and life itself." Of course, this is silly as it relates to overpopulation, because the simple fact of the matter is that the less people we have, the more resources there are for everyone.

The point that's being driven home by those who believe overpopulation has and will continue to be a real problem in our world, can be expressed in this equation:

$$\text{Number of people} * \text{Average resource consumption per person} = \text{Total resource consumption}$$

The simple beauty of this equation really begins to shine when one considers what humanity can control and what makes sense to control: the average consumption per person, or the number of people on planet Earth? The answer is obvious, but cutting through social norms proves a bit more difficult:

This is a column I don't want to write. Its subject is ugly; it makes me instinctively recoil. I have chastised people who bring it up at environmentalist meetings. The people who talk about it obsessively have often been callous about human life, and consistently proved wrong throughout history. And yet ... there is a grain of insight in what they say.

The subject is overpopulation. Is our planet overstuffed with human beings?

Are we breeding to excess? These questions are increasingly poking into public debate, and from odd directions. Phillip Mountbatten — husband of the British monarch Elizabeth Windsor — said in a documentary screened last week: "The food prices are going up, and everyone thinks it's to do with not enough food, but it's really (that there are) too many people. It's a little embarrassing for everybody, nobody knows how to handle it." He is not alone.

[±|[SeattlePi.com](#)]



Further complicating this issue is the manner in which overpopulation is becoming a problem for everyone. Of course, planet Earth is still a big place, so the problem isn't evident everywhere, and many people are now used to the idea of living in crowded cities so they scoff at the idea that infrastructure could collapse if yet more people were added into the fold. This is another layer of our social reality that most people refuse to see through, but when you look at the facts from a birds-eye view, you realize that something unpleasant has to happen – even with the first-world relief valve of immigration (legal or illegal) continuing to allow populations nearest the equator to continue to grow:

In 2008, world population is 6.7 billion: 1.2 billion people live in regions classified as more developed by the United Nations; 5.5 billion people reside in less developed regions. "We will likely see the 7 billion mark passed within four years," said Carl Haub, PRB senior demographer and co-author of this year's Data Sheet. "And by 2050, global population is projected to rise to 9.3 billion. Between now and mid-century, these diverging growth patterns will boost the population share living in today's less developed countries from 82 percent to 86 percent."

"The differences between Italy and the Democratic Republic of the Congo illustrate this widening demographic divide," said Mary Mederios Kent, co-author of this year's Data Sheet. "On one side are mostly poor countries with high birth rates and low life expectancies. On the other side are mostly wealthy countries with low birth rates and rapid aging."

Worldwide, women now average 2.6 children during their lifetimes, 3.2 in developing countries excluding China, and 4.7 in the least developed countries. Lifetime fertility is highest in sub-Saharan Africa at 5.4 children per woman. In the developed countries, women average 1.6 children. The United States, with an average of 2.1 children, is an exception to this low-fertility pattern in the world's wealthier countries.

[[±](#)|2008 World Population Data Sheet]

Interestingly, my perspective is one of a father-to-be. People grasp at straws when it comes to the supposed "irony" of my reproducing vs. my feelings on overpopulation. What they don't understand is the process by which this problem is shared by everyone, and that [fertility rates](#) are higher in places they have no business being high at all (whereas, in places where fertility rates are low, average resource consumption tends to be high). The overflow [comes home to roost in places like Portland, Maine](#) when developed nations provide the aforementioned relief valve for overpopulation, when it would be better to simply reject massive waves of immigrants into towns and cities that not only don't want it, but certainly don't need it.

Since our economies are based on the idea of ever-expanding growth, though, we once again hit the wall of social reality and have a hard time saying "no". The simplicity of Dr. Bartlett and Asimov, among others, states that it's about time we say no not only to more immigration waves, but consumerism as well. The first step is admitting there's a problem, as the saying goes, and for society to admit world overpopulation is a concern would be a great first step.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

Distrust of the majority

Aug 27th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

As humans we learn to distrust early. First we are told that there is a process, and so we go along with it. Then we figure out that while the process has a goal, some people have changed their goal to be the process itself, which lets them have other more selfish goals.

For instance, rules about discipline. You're not supposed to cause conflict. So some kid starts whispering nasty things about your mom until you finally turn around and tell him to shut up. Then his hand goes up. The teacher, distracted and barely in control of 30 students, needs to make an example of someone to keep the herd in line. He sees the raised hand. You're the bad guy now.

This is where Americans and Europeans especially split: Americans have learned to fear bureaucracy more, because in a "melting pot" society we cannot rely on common reference points, so everything must be done with very specific rules.

And rules, which work as absolutes without any consideration of context, tend to be overreactions in their mechanical blindness. A central body decides what is "right," and then forces us all to comply. Do this or you face bad consequences. Rules also reflect the utilitarian error of assuming that what most people think they want is what is best for us all.

Even worse, rules are administered by governments. If you want an unchallenging career where you can almost never be fired, and where you'll be valued because you are from a group that traditionally has not succeeded in business, government is a good place to be. As a result, although not all government workers are this way, many are incompetents bristling with revenge — and rules give them the ability to tell more successful people to STFU.



This is why many of us distrust government. We don't like

bureaucracies, and we don't trust the rest of you. We know that most of you are like the kid who insults our mother and then informs on us to the teacher-bureaucracy. If most of you weren't this way, humanity would not require so many rules, regulations, legal debates, and oversight. But it does because when we remove these things, situations really get out of control.

Those of us who have accepted reality have also accepted that most of you have changed your goal to be the process itself, because you have no goal except yourself. You are irresponsible. You don't care about your effect on others, nature, or the world at large. You want whatever it is that has popped in your little heads, and you don't care what you have to do to get it. If you get caught, you'll blame the person who caught you. You'll blame anyone but yourself. It's never your fault, and we should always pay for your mistake.

That's the root of our hatred of socialism — the idea of equality in schools, the welfare state, the nanny state, socialized medicine, no child left behind, you name it — we see how socialism makes more bureaucracy necessary and gives more power to the people without goals who take over the process, instead of having a goal like those of us who are more realistic.

Instead of life being a game where finding the right federal agency or right social policy is the way to win, people like me would argue, life is a game of picking the good people and promoting them, and kicking out the bad, lazy, criminal, irresponsible, opportunist, stupid, etc. That's an analogue to natural selection, and natural selection is the only reason we're not still covered in hair, flinging poo and living in trees.

It's funny how people are so quick to freak out about someone who denies the theory of evolution, but if you bring up the other part of natural selection — that we're not equal, and that for us to improve, we need to weed out the stupid and reward the best — they freak out because, tautologically, that doesn't support equality and they equate equality and tolerance for all people with The One True Moral Path.

Here's why we hate bureaucracy:

A County Londonderry pensioner who has lived without electricity for 27 years has been told NIE will charge him £67,000 to link his home to the grid.

John McCarter, 74, has no central heating at his Downhill home and uses bottled gas and candles for light.

The electricity company said the cost was so high because cables would have to go underground because he lives in an area of special scientific interest.

[BBC](#)

"Special scientific interest" shows there was clearly once a reason for what's happening here. But in the hands of a bureaucracy, it becomes a knee-jerk absolute reason that cannot be argued with except by, of course, getting public attention to it. Yet what about the people without the luxury of so much time they can devote themselves to fighting this one aspect of thousands in life? That's right: they just STFU while the bureaucracy gloats.

We don't want this to happen to our health care. We don't want this to happen to our society. We also don't want it to become part of our values system.

Now look at who's cheering for socialized health care. Big media, as you know, reports what it can but also must make its advertisers happy. So some stories are "news" and others are basically advertising. They can easily fool us by re-districting categories to include unrelated things with one thing in common, in order to prove a point. See this in action here:

Critics of President Obama's push for health care reform have been whipping up fear that proposed changes will destroy our "world's best" medical system and make it like supposedly inferior systems elsewhere.

The emptiness of those claims became apparent recently when researchers from the Urban Institute released a report analyzing studies that have compared the clinical effectiveness and quality of care in the United States with the care dispensed in other advanced nations. They found a mixed bag, with the United States doing better in some areas, like cancer care, and worse in others, like preventing deaths from treatable and preventable conditions.

The bottom line was unmistakable. The analysts found no support for the claim routinely made by politicians that American health care is the best in the world and no hard evidence of any particular area in which American health care is truly exceptional.

[NYT](#)

What a lovely sleight-of-hand! First they tell us we're doing better in some areas; then, they say that we're not doing enough to "prevent deaths from treatable and preventable conditions." But they don't assess whether the patients have done enough to help themselves in that category. After all, a patient has to ask a doctor for help, but if we believe these Urban Institute geniuses, the doctor should be prescient and find patients with treatable conditions and force them to get treatment — to keep our numbers up, of course.

The conclusion these rocket scientists draw is that our health system is not the world's best, because — and it literally hinges on this — we don't do enough to prevent deaths from "treatable and preventable conditions." Like what? Smoking? They're trying to convince us that the results of patient + medicine are entirely dependent on medicine alone.

Never mind that different countries have different people. Never mind that not every person takes a responsible attitude toward health care. We want to have someone to blame! And so they cook up this "[study](#)," which like all things fits under that old saw ("correlation is not causation") expanded to our new rule here at Amerika.org: "considering effects but not causes lets us blame the last visible actor in a complex situation."

Like the kid who snaps back at the kid who repeatedly insults his mother. The (passive) aggressor is the insulter, but the blind and stupid social bureaucracy blames the snapper, and then calls it justice, and then tries to rally all of us to crush the snapper if he protests. That's why we distrust the rest of of you: society's problem isn't that it's unequal, but that it's unjust, especially to those who insist on order that the system itself has not made a bureaucracy out of.

The Patients Association said its report showed that appalling standards were more widespread than just at that trust.

Relatives described how they found their loved ones dehydrated or lying in faeces, blood and urine, and told of problems in getting help from nurses.

Ron Kirk said his father, Leslie, was admitted to hospital in October 2007 having suffered a stroke, but his treatment at the hands of some nurses amounted to cruelty.

His father had been fitted with the wrong catheter, leaving him in pain, but nurses took away his bedside alarm because they thought he was "pressing it too often", Mr Kirk said.

[BBC](#)

As William S. Burroughs says, bureaucracies are a cancer. I doubt he voted Republican. My guess is that this issue should be bipartisan, but big media and social figures have convinced leftists to cowlike support anything tinged with "socialism," even though socialism itself is a substitute for the goals of the left. If you're the provoker, socialism is good; if you're the independent who doesn't want to hear his mom insulted, it's bad.

Here's more measuring of effects without considering causes — liberal concern over [the "inequality numbers" revealing the share of our economy held by the top earners](#) — which of course doesn't consider the vital question: has our population changed? Well of course it has, especially dramatically since 1965.

Maybe this would have a consequence on such numbers. But we don't want to consider that. We want a single point of blame, so we're going to blame the rich for continuing to succeed while we flood this society with home-grown idiots, migrant day workers, college-educated fools sired of strippers by fat businessmen, and so on. We, the people, want someone to blame so we can go back to ignoring all the problems because ...look what's on TV!



The problem is not that inequality exists, or that our health care is bad. Our health care is the best in the world, for those who are willing to be alert, responsible, and proactive about finding care. Life here is better than anywhere else, if you're willing to find a good job, work hard and effectively at it, and be responsible in your personal life. But that key concept, responsible and attentive, is what pisses wannabe socialists off. They want a bureaucracy to spoon-feed them, and even while they mew like babies about state control, they won't mind if that state control is both free and easy.

At the end of the day, I — and many others who are now discontented in this country — are from the other group. We want to tell that kid to shut up about our mother and if he doesn't, we'll pound his ass and if we lose, he'll know that next time it won't be easy. We want to work hard on making ourselves responsible and taking care of our families, and we want the clueless and irresponsible people to die out, if possible, but at the very least we don't want them perpetuated on our dime. We like both evolution and natural selection and don't go into denial about them for religious or political reasons.

We are the group that has made the USA what it is. We don't require state support. We don't need subsidies. We don't complain, we just do what we do to take care of what we believe in. Europe also has many of these people, but since 1789 and even more since 1917, they've been in decline. This is why to everyone except the Western media, it's clear the West is in decline.

The health care debate is just a small part of our attempt to reverse that decline, not by political solutions, but by retuning our spirits and outlooks toward rugged independence and distrust of the parasitic majority, so that we can begin rewarding the excellent among us again instead of spending all of our energy trying to help those who will not and cannot help themselves.

Summary: Why we don't want socialism — we distrust the irresponsible majority who blame us for their own problems

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Advertising Creates More Consumer Whores

Aug 26th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Just when you thought advertising couldn't sink any lower than [suspicious packaging intended to push a cartoon of animated junk food items](#), companies like McDonald's have now turned to the realm of corporate sponsorship. They were already there in many forms, but this is a new one: hidden cameras in classrooms intended to catch students' true reaction to a new coffee product. If it were me paying \$40,000 or more per year at this private university, be it during an advertising class or philosophy class, I might be just a little rattled at the idea of being taped and then pressured to sign a release to allow the images to be used on TV. Sadly, these advertising students were all too willing and eager to sign the release for what amounted to \$10 worth of crappy music, excited that they had a fun story to tell their other classmates:

The commercial was filmed last month in a lecture hall at BU. Crews from Redtree Productions, the company that Arnold worked with on the ad, fitted three hidden cameras and built a set inside the classroom. Behind the guest speaker, workers added a chalkboard that turned out to be a one-way mirror that filmed the students head-on to capture their real reactions. Another camera was placed behind the class as they listened to guest lecturer Robert Deutsch. He purposely rambled to make students tired, officials said.

In the commercial, the students appear tired, dazed, and yawning until a crush of chipper uniformed McDonald's workers, some actors and some real employees, swarmed into the lecture hall. They served everyone cups of iced and hot coffees. On camera, the students perked up and sipped their drinks.

After the commercial was taped, students featured in the ad signed a release so that their images could be used. For their participation, the students were each given a \$10 gift card for Apple iTunes. Typically, a union actor featured as a principal in such an ad could earn \$592 a day while an extra can get \$323, according to Boston Casting Inc.

[[±](#)|[Boston.com](#)]

This is a bit baffling on many levels, so let's deconstruct:

- Students in an advertising class are bored with the material, even though their parents are paying about what a BMW 3-series costs in total, per year, for them to go.
- In ironic hipster fashion, McDonald's comes barging in and shoves sugary, watery coffee drinks down the throats of these bored students.
- Students react with glee as a new, shining product in the form of coffee in styrofoam cups (what a novel idea) pumps caffeine into their bloodstream and wakes them up from the inevitable coma of not having enough flashing lights and dancing figures in front of their eyes.

McDonald's will undoubtedly spin this as, "look at the positive reaction we got from students drinking our coffee!" What everyone knows, or should know, however, is that free food and beverages are always a welcome distraction from pretending to be a good listener in a lecture hall for far too many students (and professionals...and just about anyone these days). This series of events should be a lesson in how easily people crammed into a lecture hall to listen to a moron go on about product advertising are swayed by a distraction – any distraction, especially one that will fill their bellies and leave them with something pleasant to think about as they daydream their way through the rest of the lecture.

For the video, [click here](#)

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#)

Our shopping mall nation of broken spirits

Aug 25th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

Modern marketplace thinking destroys our sense of community and solidarity, leaving us alone against predators who will do anything for our money. We're now fiercely individual competitors selling each other memes, tricks, and gimmicks to get ahead of a teeming crowd who might have otherwise been friends and neighbors.



With the severe economic downturn comes the opportunity to review some of our basic values as a civilization. Utilitarianism cannot work because it is consistently undersupported.

This ideology was never needed for having friendships and community. It is after all only such collective solidarity that can both build and maintain a utilitarian ideal.

Diversity makes solidarity more difficult in all things save ruthless commerce. Collective is presently treated as a naughty, unfree word.

As individuals, few people are both mentally wired for charitable compassion and bear the means to deliver this sentiment across a densely populated society.

The greatest good for the greatest number of people has however become a commonplace marketing slogan. Therapeutic solutions abound for what were always ordinary woes in life. It seems no part of our isolated lives is untouched by someone else's sales pitch.

Even what used to be sacred ideas representing something more important than mankind are infected with marketplace thinking.

We want to show how God meets their needs, makes them happy, and how religion makes them nicer people and how religion will make the world a better place. In other words, we have a marketplace mentality. If we can just show people how great God is and how super dooper religion is we're sure they'll buy the product.

[gkupsidedown](#)

Now nothing is higher than mankind, or rather, an individual man's free pursuit of self-interest. What are considered national heroes easily take a back seat to the struggling financial profiles of millions.

Underfinanced memorial construction for national unity against foreign enemies grinds to a halt. Maybe our economic fixation will help us forget them all so we can get on with our commercial anticulture and

individual diversions.

IN September 2004 Gov. James E. McGreevey used a ceremonial shovel to break ground for the New Jersey 9/11 Memorial called "Empty Sky."

But more than four years later, little has happened at the 1.6-acre site on the eastern edge of Liberty State Park that is now ringed with an 8-foot fence. Because of a pending legal dispute, a larger-than-expected price tag and a daunting fund-raising challenge, the future of the memorial could even be in doubt.

[nytimes](#)

[Americans](#) no longer know who they are. Dwelling in a continental scale shopping center, we are customers and laborers from all corners of the globe, so we are no longer a definite people at all.

We are nothing more than The Haves and The Have Nots, the greatest single social advancement of reductionist modernism under liberal democracy.

The measure could be the nation's first citywide, non-emergency curfew to include adults, several experts said.

"We're trying to think outside the box," said Mayor Jose Torres. "This was triggered predominantly by fear among city residents over the shootings that have been occurring this summer."

[huffingtonpost](#)

Former assurances of a secure future cannot be delivered upon and everyone knows it. The utilitarian ideal is also set for failure with the decay of social security. Our giant impersonal bureaucracy is unable to deliver us ease in our retirement years in exchange for a life of taxed labor.

Detached social systems reduce living people to records in database entries. These systems are no sure replacement for the role once served by family, friends and close community before the New Deal era.

Social Security is also facing long-term financial problems. The retirement program is projected to start paying out more money than it receives in 2016. Without changes, the retirement fund will be depleted in 2037, according to the Social Security trustees' annual report this year.

[AP](#)

The expense of foreign adventures to maintain our commercial way of life continues. Here we find ourselves in the latest of sixty years of nationally divisive military expeditions abroad.

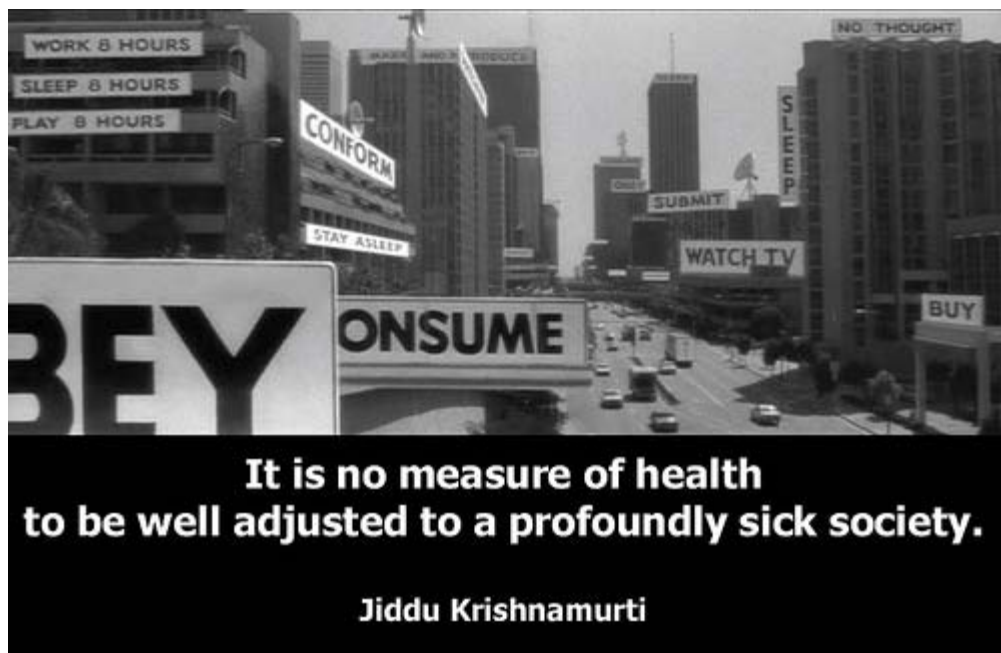
American spirits have not been overwhelmingly dedicated to the last several foreign adventures for sustaining the modern way of life. Such uniform commitment is however what kept our outgunned opponents from Korea, to Vietnam, to the Middle East tenacious and persistent against us.

Mullen said the security situation in Afghanistan needs to be reversed in the next 12 month to 18 months.

"I think it is serious and it is deteriorating, and I've said that over the last couple of years, that the Taliban insurgency has gotten better, more sophisticated," he said.

Just over 50 percent of respondents to a Washington Post-ABC News poll released this past week said the war in Afghanistan is not worth fighting.

[AP](#)



Where did this marketplace thinking that replaced our ages-old native traditions and commitment to our nation come from?

Although we like to think of ourselves as civilised thinkers, we're subconsciously still driven by an impulse for survival, domination and expansion. This is an impulse which now finds expression in the idea that inexorable economic growth is the answer to everything, and, given time, will redress all the world's existing inequalities.

The problem with that, according to Rees and Hern, is that it fails to recognise that the physical resources to fuel this growth are finite. "We're still driven by growing and expanding, so we will use up all the oil, we will use up all the coal, and we will keep going till we fill the Petri dish and pollute ourselves out of existence," he says.

But there's another, more recent factor that's making things even worse, and it's an invention of human culture rather than an evolved trait. According to Rees, the change took place after the second world war in the US, when factories previously producing weapons lay idle, and soldiers were returning with no jobs to go to.

American economists and the government of the day decided to revive economic activity by creating a culture in which people were encouraged to accumulate and show off material wealth, to the point where it defined their status in society and their self-image.

Rees quotes economist Victor Lebow as saying in 1955: "Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate".

[newscientist](#)

Where is this liberal democratic progress taking us in the next 10 to 20 years?

28 minute video [Nils Gilman: The Global Illicit Economy](#)

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [identity](#)

A critique of diversity is not an attack on any group

Aug 23rd, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Attacking [diversity](#) is not an attack on any minority group.



Why? Because we would be committing a [fallacy of division](#). If purple people and green people together compose a system called diversity, and diversity has a property called failure, we have not at any point stated that purple or green people are failures. Most people have a problem comprehending [design scope](#) because to learn this tool, they must possess enough spatial IQ.

[penetrate](#)

However, it is a method our beloved [hipster](#) uses in an attempt to argue with humans:

Human, "Multiculturalism isn't so great. What good is it?"

Hipster (knocks down strawman), "So what's your problem with the new Orange People in town?"

Some critiques against diversity are snared by an inversion of the logic failure given in the foregoing examples. But, rather than insisting an attribute of a whole system must then be found in any of its parts, the opposite occurs.

These critiques will single out one corrupted part of the system (old white men, dancing Latinas with fruit basket hats and frilly dresses, or gray skinned Zeta Reticulans with ray guns) as a way to demonstrate multicultural system malfunction.

Such a fallacy of composition, the flip side of division, is equally a failed argument. Moreso than sensationalist politics, logic is everyone's ally.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [identity](#)

Shredded Wheat Ad Mocks “Progress”

Aug 22nd, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

To maintain irony, the people selling Shredded Wheat cereal decided to mock progress. After all, some foods are eternal. What else can we do to shredded wheat, besides ruin it by adding marshmallows? This mockery of the modern notion of “progress” also mocks the idea of adding unnecessary complexity to products just to make them trendy and saleable.

Here’s another example: our gasoline-powered cars may be causing pollution, so we imagine a better car powered by both gasoline and a battery, storing energy each time it brakes so it’s less of a threat to the environment. Great, that sounds like a brand new easy solution, so the car is bought. No one in the process is wonder: what happens in seven years when this thing heads to the junk heap?

When enough time has passed for the purchase to be forgotten, the furry little human monkeys will send the car on for salvage. Never mind the questionable quality of construction, or that there’s not much one can do to recycle all those batteries, because back in 2009, the car sold and sold well. You may have saved some gasoline, but the whole process — from manufacturing to grave — may be less efficient and “green” than you think.

Anyone reading this knows I describe the Toyota Prius and Honda Insight. Interestingly, BMW and Mercedes (luxury car makers who’s buyers normally don’t care about hybrid or non-hybrid) are actually the most truly progressive among concept [hydrogen-powered vehicles](#) and [production clean-diesel solutions](#), not to mention vehicle safety. But because these cars aren’t considered “vehicles of the people” in cute marketing gimmicks, we ignore reality and give lip service to progress where it suits our social needs.

How about not building our cities around the automobile, having only one per family, and designing systems of travel not reliant on dangerous and nonrenewable energy sources? Modern progress is dependent on the idea of individualistic rights: rights to open up plastic packages and throw them in the trash when buying something new; rights to drive anywhere and everywhere (so of course we NEED a car that’s not dangerous to the environment, even though the act of making one is worse on the environment than driving one).

The video resonates on several levels: taken at face value, it's pretty easy to see that they're advocating their simpler food which also has the benefit of lots of fiber, something lacking in modern diets. Then again, if you look deeper: where is the paper being sourced from to wrap this up in a box? I'd be willing to bet there's a plastic sack inside to protect the cereal. And what about the machines used to gather the wheat, cook it, process it, and shred it, and all the energy that requires, not to mention the gas and truck maintenance in distributing the product?

Maybe if Shredded Wheat was truly about ending "progress" as it's currently viewed, helping quell landfill and resource consumption concerns, it would distribute its surely wonderful product as follows:

- Stop wrapping the product in plastic bags
- Use as little energy as possible in processing the wheat, maybe even shipping the product raw so one can cook it on its own (like dried oatmeal, but instead, dried "wheatmeal")
- Use only post-consumer recycled content on the box
- Use only hydrogen powered vehicles to distribute
- Since the cost of hydrogen powered BMW 7-series seems a bit much, try initially using an army of foot soldiers to target heavily populated areas to maximize profitability, selling the product on the street.

I have a modest proposal for the marketers and Board of Directors at Post: the solution to all this gimmicky "progress" would look something like a handful of seeds to plant wheat and a set of instructions printed on recycled paper on how to process it and make your own cereal. Now that's progress.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [diet](#) · [individualism](#)

The marketplace versus the bureaucrats

Aug 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

America is a giant marketplace. We who live here now should heed this, because it saves us the pointless political debates.

While the poorest may not have health care, those who can afford it get better care.

While this is ass, it's the best we've come up with because it is both disorganized and organized. The market needs few central controls, and most of those are impotent. But it is organized because it gives each individual a clear path to follow, and a goal to shoot for.

The other option, which is having more centralized control, which means bureaucracies and panels reading over a few pages of our case files and then telling us what to do, is a lesser option because:

- (a) Bureaucracies are detached and impersonal, and apply uniform rules to a non-uniform population
- (b) Bureaucrats tend to be the worst abusers of power because they are both impotent and can enforce rules absolutely
- (c) Without the ability to distinguish themselves personally, people go with the flow for a mediocre result
- (d) Centralized bureaucratic controls rapidly produce elites of those who manipulate them
- (e) People quickly learn to "game the system" or obey the rules without putting forth honest effort

As a result, the places with bureaucratic control tend to be less competent, while those that rely on a self-organizing system like capitalism tend to be more flexible and more competent, even if we all agree they could do better.



Like nature, this type of order is not perfect. Injustices happen; however, in every system injustices happen, and in a more flexible system, there's "more than one way to do it" and determined people can work around setbacks. In a centralized control system, there's only one way to work around, which is going through the bureaucracy.

Decentralized and self-organizing systems are like natural selection in a weird but mostly viable form. They don't always get it right, but they get it right more often than a central bureaucracy, and if something goes wrong, it's easier to fix them and keep going.

Even in societies with light bureaucracy, we have all had horrible experiences with rather dumb people behind counters who pay more attention to rules than reality. The rules become more important than the goal of the rules; then, all sense of the goal is lost and as soon as one person starts gaming the system, so does everyone else, to compete. Bureaucracies produce entropy.

Right now, America is torn up over this universal health care issue. One side doesn't see why we don't just give everyone health care; the other side wants government to back off, and does not want to support those who cannot make it on their own. The former side tends more toward wanting central bureaucratic order, and the latter wants more of a "natural selection" scenario, where the rules are reasonably fair and those who can organize themselves to survive well will rise.

As stated in another post, there's more sense to the natural selection side because it never reaches a moribund state in and of itself, while bureaucracies do. If you insist on subsidizing everyone, you must have a central agency to implement that, and so you get an unruly mob ruled by an iron hand. On the other hand, if you let self-organizing forces work, there's less need for control.

In addition, by accepting injustice, you create a more realistic view of society. In any age and every age, injustice has existed; this is the nature of a chaotic environment. If we accept it, and also accept that some will rise above challenges and survive well, we have a healthy outlook. If we bemoan injustice and invent "progressive" notions to compensate, we are rejecting reality and become very negative toward life itself.

Mobs united by negativity toward life become destructive. In this split over health care, which isn't really about health care, we see a mob forming like a hurricane in the gulf, and then we see the people who don't want that to happen trying to resist. They know, on some instinctual level, that empowering a mob will cause destructive, negative psychology to become the norm. That in turn will lead our civilization into internal conflict and decay.

The downside of a marketplace is that it consists of people who are trying to sell you stuff by convincing you that they, the sellers, are good people. They do this through the universal methods of politeness: they approve of whatever you want, and will tell you how great it is in order to make you like them. This is why big media, your friends, even local businesses tend to be "liberal": they approve of and encourage the crowd.

Let's use critical thinking to deconstruct some of this marketing/propaganda:

"I don't understand why the people who have stuff are enraged, and the people who have nothing are warm and hopeful."

[Raw Story](#)

Well, of course they're hopeful — they're about to get something for free! And of course the people who have stuff are enraged, because they're about to have something taken from them, and given to their ideological enemies. It's flamingly obvious. But these people don't want you to see it that way. They want you to see that "everybody else is doing it" and go along with the plan. Really high school, isn't it?

Here's another one:

"Most of the 'green' stuff is verging on a gigantic scam," Lovelock told the New Scientist shortly before the release of his latest book, *The Vanishing Face of Gaia*. "Carbon trading, with its huge government subsidies, is just what finance and industry wanted. It's not going to do a damn thing about climate change, but it'll make a lot of money for a lot of people and postpone the moment of reckoning."

[Alternet](#)

Of course it's a giant scam. The real solutions — fewer problems and humans using less land — are taboo because that means shutting down someone's dream, whether to open a McDonald's or own a 13,000

square foot house in the suburbs. "Not everyone can participate" is the message of responsible environmental change, but that makes each person fear for themselves, so instead we get harmless or pointless actions that are popular. Profit is made.

How do we turn this around? An interesting idea:

Another is that we should stop comparing national economies as if they were running a race. Plainly, they are not. Supply and demand do not respect borders. For one country to have a surplus, another must be running a deficit. It is imbalances between economies that puts prosperity at risk; the way different nations structure their economies within the globalised market probably matters less than we like to think.

If we stopped comparing the "competitiveness" of national economic models, we could devote more attention to what kind of society we want, and what economic policies will get us there. That, indeed, is probably the economic equivalent of another famous Socratic injunction: know thyself.

[The Guardian](#)

In other words, if we don't want to be ruled by the market, we have to **give it goals** which requires all of our society **agree on what's important**. And that is what this healthcare debate is about: one side wants values that reward good people, and the other wants to subsidize everyone. One side wants natural selection, the other wants social acceptance. Until these values are reconciled, we're at the mercy of the markets forevermore.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Overproducing food makes life worse

Aug 17th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

Modern life is a place of illusions, missing information and increasingly miniscule individual roles in society helping to keep our understanding of reality as a whole system at bay. Among these many misperceptions is the Civilizing Effect.

Society provides a market, people wander in, money crosses the point of sale, an item magically appears as if by conjuration and everyone is happy. But, much is hidden from the consumer. The total cost is not summed up on the price tag of a given item for sale.

Groceries are one example. Industrialized farming and product distribution relies heavily on fossil fuels, a byproduct of our diplomatic and military might; our taxes at work.



Agriculture itself transforms fertile land from self-sustaining biosphere into an artificially sustained cropland patchwork of less fertility. With its constant expansion, planet Earth is moved aside to make way for a costly and redundant human monoculture.

“Anthropogenic biomes, also known as “anthromes” or “human biomes”, describe the terrestrial biosphere in its contemporary, human-altered form using global ecosystem units defined by global patterns of sustained direct human interaction with ecosystems, offering a new way forward for ecological research and education.”

[ecotope](#)

With profit as the driving force behind modern agriculture, crop yield must be maximized. Pesticides come into use to keep insect and disease predators in check. These poisons act like nerve-attacking agents that accumulate and persist in the environment.

In our panic to stuff every belly on the planet, we make ourselves sick with crippling neurological disorders. But, even as it dawns on us that our first snappy technological fix was in fact a bust, we have [genetically modified crops](#) with all its missing information to the rescue.

“Used widely in the United States from the 1950s through the 1970s in agriculture, the chemical was also found until fairly recently in the insecticide lindane, used as a treatment to kill fleas and ticks on pets and lice in humans. Even if you’ve never treated a dog or cat with lindane or worked in agriculture, the odds are you’ve still been exposed to the toxin. Banned in the 1970s, B-HCH is a dangerous contaminant that won’t go away — it is still found as a contaminant in water and soil.

Now a team of researchers have found it in human blood. What's more, they've identified elevated serum levels of the pesticide in patients with Parkinson's disease, strongly raising the possibility this specific pesticide is tied in to the development of PD."

[naturalnews](#)

Soil fertility on such land is propped up by a manmade crutch called fertilizer. This fertilizer, which changes the natural fertility cycle into a cycle dependent on the reapplication of fertilizers also turns into a runoff pollutant that enters fresh water courses.

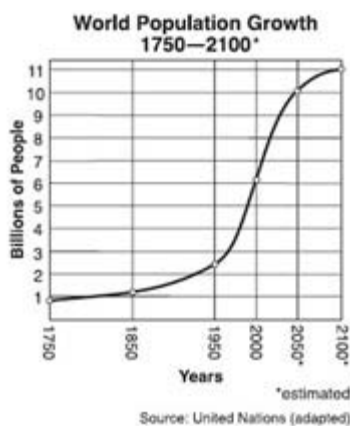
Since streams and rivers are bound for civil populace consumption, we have water treatment facilities. These facilities have their own operating costs, an expense that is roughly kept in check for a while by having non-stop growth of paying recipients.

The [majority of consumers](#) only see what they immediately pay. But, that \$3.49 loaf of bread was more than just compensation for its production and distribution.

It came at the cost of biodiversity now lost to future generations because their predecessors demanded constant, instant gratification and endless growth to keep prices low. Everyone could have as much of anything as they desired. All they ever saw were some digits on a price tag stuck to a plastic package.

"But in the past three centuries, exponential human population growth has led to a 500% expansion in the extent of cropland and pasture world-wide (see box 1, figure a). In Europe and North America, unchecked agricultural development has already transformed many natural habitats and depleted their biodiversity. Similar transformation is now underway in the tropics, where most of the world's biodiversity is found, with huge implications for both wildlife populations and ecosystem functioning. Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs), globally important centres of biodiversity, are under above-average threat from agricultural expansion (box 1, figure b). As tropical forests are the predominant natural habitat in EBAs, this tells us that they too are particularly threatened by agriculture."

[birdlife](#)



Maybe it was the prior centuries of mass deaths from wars and famines that have caused a more destructive humanist overreaction where we are bound for more of the same, but on a global scale.

Unlike so many species that thanks to our careless expansion have recently vanished, mankind was never endangered in the past, leading us to understand our overreaction is irrational.

Following the age of industrialization and emotional panic, world population on its tiny incline suddenly shot straight upward. Now it is clear that excessive food production is not needed for anything and is costing us dearly.

"Over the past 20 years a dramatic transition has altered the diet and health of hundreds of millions of people across the Third World. For most developing nations, obesity has emerged as a more serious health threat than hunger. In countries such as Mexico, Egypt and South Africa, more than half the adults are either overweight (possessing a body mass index, or BMI, of 25 or higher) or obese (possessing a BMI of 30 or higher). In virtually all of Latin America and much of the Middle East and North Africa, at least one out of four adults is overweight."

[scientificamerican](#)

The proposed global Carbon Tax to prevent climate change and thus human deaths has been making headlines. This idea is like trimming a tree by clipping only one outer branch.

The trunk, our overproduction of food, is an insane reaction against our fantasy of too many human deaths.

The trunk is where a more effective control mechanism can be applied. One proposal is to apply a tax at the mass industrial food production source and let the damage mitigation flow outward to all points from that primary source point.

The Carbon Tax controls only an end point far from primary sources of output, only adjustable after damage along the way has occurred.

Worse, the Carbon Tax only indirectly impacts, and only after the fact, so many of the symptoms outlined above that are caused by overproducing: pollution, overpopulation, obesity, poisoning people, destruction of the biosphere and the dieoff of species.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [consumerism](#) · [humanism](#)

Simplicity: The First Step Toward Something Better

Aug 17th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).


In the modern age, simplifying one's life can be defined in many ways. What is one simplifying? Is it melodrama between family members? Perhaps it's reducing debt; or better, not chasing after that extra shiny gadget that will undoubtedly carry a high price tag in the form of interest financing for years to come? Maybe it's reality – that is, stripping away the layers of nonsense in modern society and looking at life in the most objective manner possible?

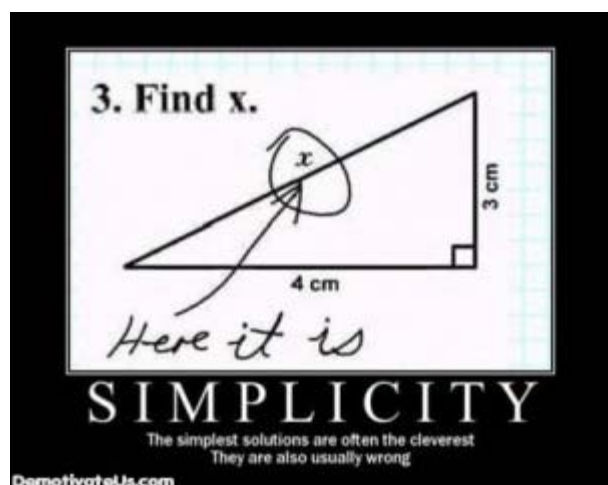
The last point is a bit advanced for many, so some observe the most basic interactions between people in first world society – economics – and start there:

Our decision to sell our 4-bedroom house and move to a 2-bedroom rental probably perplexes many people, but I'm finding there are many who do understand. Right now, I cannot say that we are truly simplifying our lives—as the stress of a new job and moving, along with our tantrum-happy toddler makes life anything but less complicated. But we are finding ourselves re-examining some key values and liking what we are finding.

Much of what some people describe as voluntary simplicity calls to me and my family. Unfortunately, it is a topic risky with implicit comparison and judgement against those who have and spend more money. But I'm not saying we are "better," it's just that we have found our priorities shifting and the stark contrast around us makes us more aware of how much we used to take for granted.

[[±](#)]

 A movement with a catchy name like "voluntary simplicity" shouldn't be necessary to address the reality that we all shouldn't – and can't – live like people do on HGTV, where trendy couples pick at the most minute details of a huge four bedroom home instead of paying attention to how to raise the family inside it (Jon & Kate, anyone?). The writer focuses on his family's journey from being a cookie-cutter American family to voluntarily keeping spending low and having kids share rooms. If that's what's needed to ensure you're not racking up credit card debt to buy necessities, that's a wonderful and mature decision. If you're doing it despite the fact that you have plenty of money to buy a nice spot of land and build a solid house on it with plenty of room, then this "voluntary simplicity" idea misses the point.



The writer chooses to have his kids share a room, and chooses to live in an apartment complex instead of a single family home, even though it appears he can afford it comfortably. Instead of controlling himself and his family in terms of how much they spend on what, he's

taken that choice away by living in a smaller space where they can't load up with lots of stuff, and he indicates this has enlightened him to a point where he doesn't need it anymore. On the one hand, I'm tempted to say, "bravo", for forsaking modern living and taking up less space than in a McMansion. But the reality is that one can live in a large home and still have healthy ideals; it's a sign of weakness if one voluntarily removes oneself from that lifestyle because it's too tempting to "keep up with the Joneses". Truly simplifying one's life involves shedding the want for the SUV loaded up with crap from Home Depot in the first place; not oversocializing your kids for the sake of playground politics; cutting out the needless drama in one's life/family; mending fences with old friends who share similar ideals but who have been alienated by your lack of time for them. Simplicity is just the first step toward a fulfilling lifestyle, but the writer unfortunately treats simplicity as an end in itself. If it were only so "simple".

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#)

Bibles in schools: a non-issue

Aug 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People are going to absolutely freak out about this, at least until someone points out to them why it's hypocritical to do so:

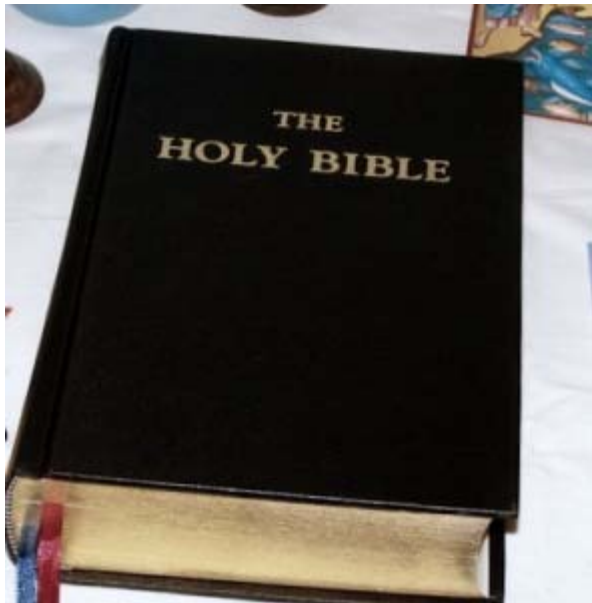
The school year is almost here, and if literature of the Bible is not already offered in your child's school, it will be this fall.

Books are a common sight in classrooms around the nation, but the Bible is one book that is not. Come this fall, a Texas law says all public schools must offer information relating to the Bible in their curriculum.

"By the end of the year, what they begin to realize is that it is pervasive. You can't get away from it. The kids came back and were like 'It's everywhere,'" said John Keeling, the social studies chair at Whitehouse High School.

[KLTV](#)

The thing is that this really is a non-issue: we all agree that all children must be taught some central system of morality. Since the 1960s, at least, our schools have become heavily invested in teaching values our government considers essential.



And no raging protests have come about from that!

So clearly, we all agree that **all children must be taught one central curriculum of moral logic** — so now we're just fighting over what that is.

And how far is the Bible from any of our values systems? Probably not all that far. Among other things, that longhaired, probably pot-smoking radical Jesus Christ encouraged ideas of equality, protecting the poor and meek, and fighting centralized authority — sounds a lot like the liberals of today.

Of course, he also told people there was a hard line in the sand between the good people and the predatory, parasitic, opportunist jerks, and he did kind of hint that God just handed you what you got, and you wouldn't change.

So maybe we're closer than we thought, and not just on the Bible:

Large majorities of both left and right wing radicals, but few moderates, agree that "We'd be much better off now if our foreign affairs were conducted out in the open, for all to see, rather than secretly" and that "I often feel that the really important matters are decided behind the scenes by people we never even hear about" and that "Most people don't realize how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret places."

Both groups can be equally intolerant of free speech. Only about 40% of both left and right wing radicals, but 71% of moderates, agree that "Free speech should be granted to everyone regardless of how intolerant they are of other people's opinions."

Regardless of ideological convictions, the far most important factor deciding how far you'll go within politics is your psychological motivation. If you look at the Far Right and Left, the reason to why they fail as movements is essentially their group psychology. They're more focused on being oppositional and ideologically "pure" than on working with real issues in a serious and socially acceptable fashion to actually get something done. Ever wondered why Marxists and neo-Nazis always show up at each other's rallies to destroy? Their goal is to be a cult waging war against other cults.

[CNS](#)

So as we can see, this is a non-issue dressed up as a big issue so that one political group can get ahead of another. They're trying to use us and our outrage as leverage for their own ends, not in any particular drive to make life better.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Non-plastic food storage solutions

Aug 14th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

So you're worried about plastic decomposing under heat and leaching strange chemicals into your food? All I can say is: that's perfectly reasonable.

No sane "science" will tell us yea or nay on this one for another fifty years, or indeed ever, since we cannot mathematically isolate this factor, unless we find someone who literally has eaten all food out of tupperware and had no other environmental influences.

So in the meantime, we're left with instinct and mine is: stick to what has been in use the longest if you want to minimize environmental toxicity.



[Amazon](#), \$20.99

Here's the first part of your solution: pyrex bowls. You can find them at [Bed, Bath and Beyond](#), which although all your hip friends tell you it's a giant tower of corporate and possibly (gasp) Republican doom, is the best place to buy these things.

The three bowls are reasonably sized: the hugest is a 4 quart bowl that's about the size of a salad bowl you'd use to serve a party of eight, the middle is a 2.5 quart bowl that is about the size you'd use to marinate a couple steaks for barbecue, and the "smallest" is a 1.5 quart bowl that will fit comfortably a meal for four people that got cooked and then not eaten because pizza arrived that your teenage daughter ordered.

True, the lids are plastic; however, nothing seals better than a flexible substance, so plastic is your option if you want a tight seal. Try not to pack them to the rim, and it won't touch your food. Seems a reasonable compromise to me.



[Amazon, \\$14.99](#)

Here's another, this time from what all your urban friends will agree is the world epicenter of Satanic industrial might, [Wal-Mart](#). Although they're showing the set and don't list it, you can get the 1 quart flat-bottomed piece for \$6, which is a good deal. Flat-bottomed is important: if you have leftovers which need to sit flat, like lasagna or enchiladas, this'll do it.

Next time someone tells you about how plastics are killing us all, remember a balance between idealism and reality: buy sterile, non-leachy pyrex for your containers, and let the lids be plastic. This is a realistic response and one more thing you can cross off your list of modern terrors.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [non-toxic](#)

Welcome to The Fall

Aug 14th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

One of the more poignant lyrics of the late 1990s:

All of us were taken
All that was is gone
Of this information
Shames us one and all
Wheres my compensation?
Watching others fall
Welcome to the fall
Everything is useless
Nothing works at all
Nothing ever matters
Welcome to the fall

It reflected a fear that had come out of that time, which was that now that we finally got a hippie president, we were able to see the emptiness of it all. Our decade of rebellion against Ronald Reagan had been simply teenage. We picked a part out of the whole, called it the Enemy, and then thrust our scapegoaty demonization into it. But when it passed, and we had the Obama of the 1990s, Bill Clinton, nothing was all that different. The decay continued.

And we know what lies at the end of decay: The Fall.



What is The Fall? It is what happens when a situation that requires many spirals out of control. We as individuals cannot redirect it, and we depend on others to listen to our words of wisdom and understand, in order for us to work together. But what if no one wants to listen? What if the important information becomes taboo? What if the corruption isn't physical — like corruption of a government agency, a file, or a person — but a [shared spirit of illusion](#) among us all?

That's The Fall. It's what we cannot control. It's what brings us down together because we could not work together. It happens to all civilizations at some point; the smart ones find a way to be damn near eternal, but it's possible humans just aren't that good, and we're going to get filtered out like other species that went extinct when they were obsolete. It's one of our greatest fears and one of the most taboo things to discuss.

The Fall is unique in that, unlike all of our surrogate anger and vicarious rebellion, there is no external unit to point to. It does not occur because of an oppressive dictator; he occurs because of it. It does not occur because of a government, or Goldman-Sachs, or even school shooters; they, too, are symptoms. It occurs because collectively we lost the ability, inclination and critical thinking to pay attention to reality and to separate the realistic people from the destructive, pointless, selfish jerks who currently seem to be most of our population.

It's entropy, in other words. You either push back against entropy, that ten-millionfold manifestation of breakdown that challenges us like time and inclement weather, or it takes over. At some point, you're too tired, self-pitying, depressed, self-obsessed to bother, and then it strikes. Soon it's the norm. Then no one even recognizes it, just burbles on in happy oblivion. That's the face of the fall: ignorance enshrined as wisdom, apathy praised as activism, tolerance of the stupid and destructive seen as more positive than defending the innocent, intelligent and useful from the horde of people who are basically a manifestation of entropy.

Is there a mathematical or scientific representation of The Fall? ¡Ay, caramba!

The conventional wisdom about many Web-related growth processes is that they're fundamentally exponential in nature. That is, if you want some fixed amount of time, the content size and number of participants will double. Indeed, prior research on Wikipedia has characterized the growth in content and editors as being fundamentally exponential in nature. Some have claimed that Wikipedia article growth is exponential because there is an exponential growth in the number of editors contributing to Wikipedia [1]. Current research show that Wikipedia growth rate has slowed, and has in fact plateaued (See figure at right). Since about March of 2007, the growth pattern is clearly not exponential.

Some Wikipedians have modeled the recent data, and believe that a logistic model is a much better way to think about content growth. Figure here shows that article growth reached a peak in 2007-2008 and has been on the decline since then. This result is consistent with a growth processes that hits a constraint – for instance, due to resource limitations in systems. For example, microbes grown in culture will eventually stop duplicating when nutrients run out. Rather than exponential growth, such systems display logistic growth.

[ASC-PARC](#)

This is the pattern itself. Right away, our audience has fragmented because most people cannot recognize a pattern. They can recognize familiar objects, and they can recognize similar situations, but they cannot spot a pattern if it doesn't occur in the same material form as before. For those over 120 IQ points, patterns are visible and finding patterns in different situations is a necessary skill.

The pattern is that all things in life have boundaries, because otherwise they would have no form. As a result, every part of life has a logistic curve, as you'd expect. First, it expands to fill available space; then it turns inward, and makes itself more efficient. Since in a time-based system it's difficult to predict the effect of one tendency among many, becoming more efficient occurs through a filtration process: pick more of that which works, and throw out that which doesn't.

Humans, however, are afraid of death. We're afraid of decay and don't want to admit it exists. So we plan on an exponential model, where every kitten survives and gets fat in the suburbs. But for cats to be efficient, some kittens must die. This is why humans oppose natural selection, and replace it with social selection, where anyone who demonstrates allegiance to the principle of harming no one else is accepted. It's a vast tacit conspiracy against natural selection by those who fear they are incapable, and they become

agents of entropy.

Do we see shades of The Fall in our everyday lives? O yes, we do.

Logistic patterns/distributions are caused by boundary functions, or the tendency of a boundary to cause repercussions within what it contains. What are the boundaries in life? Well, besides resources, there's our will to resist our inherent neural tendencies:

Panksepp has spent decades mapping the emotional systems of the brain he believes are shared by all mammals, and he says, "Seeking is the granddaddy of the systems." It is the mammalian motivational engine that each day gets us out of the bed, or den, or hole to venture forth into the world. It's why, as animal scientist Temple Grandin writes in *Animals Make Us Human*, experiments show that animals in captivity would prefer to have to search for their food than to have it delivered to them.

For humans, this desire to search is not just about fulfilling our physical needs. Panksepp says that humans can get just as excited about abstract rewards as tangible ones. He says that when we get thrilled about the world of ideas, about making intellectual connections, about divining meaning, it is the seeking circuits that are firing.

The juice that fuels the seeking system is the neurotransmitter dopamine. The dopamine circuits "promote states of eagerness and directed purpose," Panksepp writes. It's a state humans love to be in. So good does it feel that we seek out activities, or substances, that keep this system aroused—cocaine and amphetamines, drugs of stimulation, are particularly effective at stirring it.

Ever find yourself sitting down at the computer just for a second to find out what other movie you saw that actress in, only to look up and realize the search has led to an hour of Googling? Thank dopamine.

[Slate](#)

So we're wired to find any kind of seeking behavior addictive. That includes all lost causes, and political/moral assaults that lead us farther from answers and more toward... more seeking. Progressives and moralists alike are addicted to the idea of finding a better way, even if that better way exists in the past. They don't want the lack of drama; they want more drama. This is why many ancient religions, like Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, emphasize a spiritual stillness or quietude — to keep us panic monkeys from running around in a frenzy trying to "fix" that which needs no fixing.

To justify this pursuit, we bring negativity into our minds. "I hate the world" is a good excuse to burn it down and try again, but because finding what you hate is a lot easier than finding what you'd like to have replace it, it's also a purely destructive mentality, and it becomes queenly. "My soup was cold — burn the world!" is the mentality that arises in the intersection of consumerism, entitlement and negativity.

How does this karmic frenzy manifest itself? Oy gevalt:

Modern Man's twin evils are overconsumption and overproduction. Half the world eats too much, the other half has too many babies. There is just too much of us, human flesh.

The food industry is one of the biggest causes of our planet's pollution. The Government has predicted that half of all adults will be obese by 2050. Meanwhile, the United Nations reckons that by then the world's population will have risen by 40 per cent to 9.1 billion. That's a lot of extra mouths to feed, even if they don't pig out quite as indecently as we do in the West.

So why do we keep on eating and birthing? I was preoccupied by this question last week, when, for another article, I spent a day in an NHS clinic for the morbidly obese. It was there that I read a new report on childlessness from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). I was surrounded by people made utterly miserable by their inability to override their instinct to eat. It

got me thinking about the parallel with other primitive urges.

The answer is that our bodies are hardwired for life in East Africa, 20,000BC, not East Grinstead, 2009. Our problem with babies and beer bellies is thanks to how ruthlessly our DNA was then honed for success. Back in our native habitat, refusing food or refusing children would have been suicidal. Both were, for various reasons, scarce. Now both are overabundant. Refusing them is the means to our survival.

But is it even possible for humans to override their instincts like that? Of course, individuals have practised self-denial, but it's not something we've ever undertaken as a collective project.

[The Times](#)

Why do we keep eating, indeed? A complete lack of control over our impulses. But if we stop considering ourselves all equal, we realize this afflicts most but not all. However, since "most" is the greatest statistical group, it overshadows everyone else. We also have to realize that over the course of a civilization's life cycle, what "most" is differs — like all things, civilization is a cycle and with each iteration, it adds more of whatever is predominating.

Civilization destroys itself because, in bowing to what is "popular," its leadership gives in to illusion — the illusion that natural selection doesn't exist, that some people are good and some are bad, and that we can just let go of the steering wheel and the car (of state) will keep going good places. What makes this difficult is that all tangible signs point to success as a civilization goes off course, because it focuses on producing more comfort goods and stabilizing factors to compensate for its own off-course-ness.

It also produces its own cancer. The entropy group, which I call [The Crowd](#), is composed of those who take civilization for granted. They are oblivious to the consequences of their actions, selfish, disillusioned underachievers. They come about through general genetic decay — once we're no longer challenging ourselves, any idiot will do for any role — and a "civilization mentality" of entitlement, where the person in question is accustomed to having others provide goods and services on the basis of the person in question being human.

"I am, therefore I demand" is the essence of that mentality, and it rapidly progresses into "It's just the roll of the dice that I am where I am, and others where they are" and from that to "It's not my fault, you clean it up." This civilization mentality creates a large group of people who are unrealistic: their self-image is higher than their abilities, and so they are always discontented and violent (the [Dunning-Kruger/Downing effect](#) plays a huge role in this: the dumb have no idea how dumb they are because they cannot understand anything smarter than they are).

This Crowd rapidly forms around a big excuse, which is that "It's not my fault" paired with "I deserve more." This leads to them resenting anyone with more than they: more intelligence, more success, more wealth, more beauty, more kindness. This is why we love to see celebrities crucify themselves, and why people are always moralizing whenever a rich/talented/nice person has a setback. This *resentment*, as both Nietzsche and Alcoholics Anonymous classify it, causes the Crowd to unite not *for* something better but *against* those who are succeeding with what exists.

This is why the Crowd is a cancer on society: it knows only how to destroy, and is on a mission to destroy. It does not create in the place of what it destroys. Rather, guided by the resentment that makes them hate life, members of the Crowd wreck anything they dislike and then construe themselves as smarter, more altruistic, more progressive and more empathic for having done so. Because they need dragons to slay, anyone in power becomes a dragon.

Watch the Crowd in action — they love it when money is taken from others and given to them:

A \$200 back-to-school giveaway for needy kids sparked a mad rush for money on the streets of New York on Tuesday.

"It's free money!" said Alecia Rumph, 26, who waited in a Morris Park, Bronx, line 300 people deep for the cash to buy uniforms and book bags for her two kids.

"Thank God for Obama. He's looking out for us."

Daily News

Free money? Money doesn't ever come free: it's a token of wealth, and that wealth needs to come from something or the money becomes worthless. But your average person doesn't know that, and thinks civilization just prints up more of the stuff, so it's free. Even more, they know their taxes stay the same because their income is the same, so they assume they're getting a free ride courtesy of those "lucky" (but not genetically smarter or more able) enough to have more.

Nevermind that as they devalue the currency they become more impoverished. The Crowd cannot see past their next pay period, and they are motivated more by hatred than they are by any sense of constructive behavior. They have basically given up hope: to their mindset, life just gave them a bad hand, and so now they just have to endure it and if they can screw the people who have more than them, well, let it be so!

Are they irresponsible?

A state program that put \$200 cash into the hands of low-income parents of school-age children is opening the door for "rampant" fraud and should be suspended, Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks said Thursday.

The county reports that employees at the Wal-Mart store on Hudson Avenue called the Department of Human Services to say they thought welfare fraud was going on because there was a run on high-end electronics.

Tops reported that people would go through the checkout to purchase a pack of gum in order to get cash back from their food stamp debit card and repeat the process, as only \$40 is allowed at a time, said communications manager Katie McKenna. Registers ran out of money.

Democrat and Chronicle

This Crowd behavior creates a class of people who empower the Crowd. They do this knowing they will profit from having many people thinking they're cool. All celebrities, most politicians, and all marketers fall into this category. Those who behave this way but do not have political/economic power are hipsters.

The hipster is defined by an approach and a method.

Their approach is to invert logic; instead of finding something appealing for its own sake, they find only appealing that which they can use to adorn themselves — and make them more valuable to the Crowd. They pander to others by accessorizing themselves with art, ideology, politics, memes, anything they can lay hands on. They do nothing for its own sake, or because it is right. They do everything as a signal to others with the hope that their pandering will make them [more popular](#).

Their method is simple: when you encounter another person, offer them a negative outlook and then vulnerability. It's a way of saying "we hate the world and resent everyone, but our primary mode is avoiding conflict" or in other words "I'll do anything to add another person to my ring of supporters." Hipsters are raw realpolitik in the small, currying bands of favored people because they hate, distrust and resent life.

This is why the hipster loves the poignant, mixed-emotion and ironic: they like things without direction that are nonetheless "interesting" without drawing any dangerous conclusions or any ideology that requires they stop doing what they like doing. They are in favor of anything that appeals to The Crowd, and that group likes nothing more than a clarion call to inaction.

As the Crowd becomes more powerful, a group arises with the sole purpose of cutting the umbilical cord

between productive, positive, creative, responsible, reverent people, and the vast horde of people going nowhere who hate everything (although they conceal it behind “progressive” and “positive” ideals).

Plato notes this:

Their victims attempt to resist; they are driven mad by the stings of the drones, and so become downright oligarchs in self-defence. Then follow informations and convictions for treason. The people have some protector whom they nurse into greatness, and from this root the tree of tyranny springs.

[Plato, *The Republic*](#)

Now the counterreaction:

After years of mainstreaming and idealizing antiwar protesters and marches supporting illegal immigrants as “grandmothers with canes, parents with children in strollers,” dissent against a president’s policies is no longer cool at the New York Times.

The Times finds the newest batch of protesters against Obama health care to be “angry,” “irritable” crowds of whites taking marching orders from conservative talk radio and web sites.

Many seemed concerned about issues that are either not in the health care legislation or are peripheral to the debate in Washington — abortion, euthanasia, coverage of immigrants, privacy.

[NewsBusters](#)

It is the modern religion. People are literally brainwashed, but by their own choice, so they illogically defend their viewpoints. Never hurt anyone, even criminals. Never say that some are unequal in a pejorative sense; it’s fine for you to be more equal if you have money, but don’t denigrate anyone. Everyone has the right to everything good.

It’s misplaced pacification combined with politeness. When we are polite, we offer absolutes of acceptance to others so they feel OK or good being around us. When we pacify, we let others do whatever they want so we avoid conflict. Peace in our time, indeed. More likely a straight course to decay, [third world status](#), true [tyranny](#), and finally, irrelevance and becoming a technologyless, cultureless, disorganized fragment of a once-great nation.

And finally people are starting to take notice of The Fall:

We know there were social tipping points in earlier civilizations, points at which they were overwhelmed by the forces threatening them. For instance, at some point the irrigation-related salt buildup in their soil overwhelmed the capacity of the Sumerians to deal with it. With the Mayans, there came a time when the effects of cutting too many trees and the associated loss of topsoil were simply more than they could manage.

The social tipping points that lead to decline and collapse when societies are overwhelmed by a single threat or by simultaneous multiple threats are not always easily anticipated. As a general matter, more economically advanced countries can deal with new threats more effectively than developing countries can. For example, while governments of industrial countries have been able to hold HIV infection rates among adults under 1 percent, many developing countries’ governments have failed to do so and are now struggling with much higher infection rates. This is most evident in some southern African countries, where up to 20 percent or more of adults are infected.

[Grist](#)

This crazy teabag/tax and healthcare protest we’re seeing now how little to do with healthcare. It’s about a fundamental split in viewpoint.

Normal, healthy people want natural selection.

Insane people fear natural selection, and make up a religion of “progressive politics” in order to deny it. This group, formed of The Crowd and hipsters, will say anything to try to convince you otherwise, but if you look into their motivations, their desire is to have society stand in for natural selection and take care of everyone, no matter how screwed up, just because they’re human.

Normal, healthy people recognize that not everyone needs to come to the party. Some, if not many, people retain evolutionary vestiges of unproductive behavior. They will destroy good things and good people if given a chance. Pedophiles, criminals, rapists, opportunists, and simply lazy and irresponsible people all fit into this group. Hipsters defend the Crowd; the Crowd defends itself; they want universal tolerance because they fear their own incompetence and are bitter at those who have more of anything than they do.

“Why should he be ahead of me? We’re both human, right?” — that’s the voice of hatred. That voice hates the idea that anyone rises above the Crowd, or has moral or personal standards above the lowest common denominator. If you fail at life or just think you might, you are filled with this fear and hatred.

Here’s a theologian on that group:

“The pretensions of the self therefore can be maintained only by willful deception, for which Tertullian had the very accurate description of ‘willing ignorance.’ This deception does not require a conscious act of dishonesty in each individual instance. The deception of sin is rather a general state of confusion from which individual acts of deception arise. Yet the deception never becomes so completely a part of the self that it could be regarded as a condition of ignorance.”

“The desperate effort to deceive others must, therefore, be regarded as, on the whole, an attempt to aid the self in believing a pretension it cannot easily believe because it was itself the author of the deception. If others will only accept what the self cannot quite accept, the self as deceiver is given an ally against the self as deceived.”

– Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*

[Slacktivist](#)

He’s talking about the tendency for justification, or backward logic. Like the hipster, many people use justification, which is finding ways to explain themselves after they’ve already acted, instead of acting toward a goal. It’s a way of deferring responsibility and shifting it to others. They love to blame government, corporations, etc. but not blame themselves and then simply *fix the problem* by forcing themselves to be disciplined, responsible and socially active. They are those who make the best excuses and still do nothing.

The tendency of average people to blame some external force, but not take responsibility for themselves, is summed up by Immanuel Kant’s philosophy of “radical evil”:

Before Kant offers an answer to this question in *Religion*, however, he provides a more extensive account of the obstacles to right willing and right conduct than he offered in his earlier critical writings on moral philosophy. Central to this account is the development of the notion of “radical evil” in human moral life and of the moral conversion that is needed to overcome it. He presents the notion of radical evil in Book One of *Religion* under the guise of a philosophical counterpart to the Christian doctrine of original sin. His discussion of moral conversion in Book Two then parallels the Christian doctrine of redemption. Kant places particular emphasis upon human responsibility for both radical evil and moral conversion. Unlike original sin, which Christian belief has understood as inherited, radical evil is self-incurred by each human being. It consists in a fundamental misdirection of our willing that corrupts our choice of action. In Kant’s terminology, it consists in an “inversion” of our “maxims,” which are the principles for action we pose to ourselves in making our choices. Instead of making the rightness of actions — i.e., the categorical imperative — the fundamental principle for choice, we

make the satisfaction of one of our own ends take priority in the willing of our actions. We thus inculcate in ourselves a propensity to make exceptions to the demand of the categorical imperative in circumstances when such an exception seems to be in our own favor.

Overcoming radical evil requires a “change of heart” — i.e., a reordering of our fundamental principle of choice — that we are each responsible for effecting in ourselves. Effecting such a change, however, leaves unsettled our moral culpability for those choices that were made under the inverted maxim of evil. In the language of traditional Christian theology, what happens to the “old man” [sic] — and to the consequences of choices made under that guise — when conversion makes us “new”? In answer to this question, Kant reinterprets the Christian doctrine of the atonement through the death of Jesus Christ. He rejects the view of “vicarious atonement” — that Christ takes away the guilt of previous evil conduct by standing as a substitute for all of us — in favor of an “exemplary” one. Christ thus provides a model in which we recognize steadfast adherence in both word and action to the principle of moral rightness which we already possess in the categorical imperative as the principle for the exercise of our practical reason.

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

It's easy to claim Satan causes all bad news in the world, all while acting irresponsibly because other people do it and get away with it too. Instead of acting as one should, the irresponsible person [hides in The Crowd](#) and makes as many excuses/justifications as necessary to avoid [moral attention](#), which is the idea that tolerating bad behavior creates more of it, and not supporting good behavior makes good behavior rarer.

It's easy to blame Satan, just like it's easy to blame government, corporations, The Right, etc. when the problem is us — the problem is that we have too many irresponsible people, and a social outlook of tolerance for all people just because they're human makes more of them. There is no compromising with this split. Either you want us to support everyone, or you accept natural selection.

The latter — natural selection — is the province of the honest right wing, and the new right (Nietzschean conservatives), even if in America they're under assault from within by religious fanatics and covert liberals.

The former — support everyone — is the province of the Crowd, the undifferentiated majority, the bitter, the failed, some lunatic conservatives and many religious fanatics. Indeed, Jesus Christ's declaration that “the meek will inherit the earth” and his calls for equality are completely in line with the communist and socialist ideologies among us, or their parent ideology, which is The Crowd justifying itself.

I think healthcare will end up being a small issue in the big picture. What people are fighting over is the principle. The responsible middle class, whether they've been voting Democrat or Republican, is finding itself pushed toward the conservative (natural selection) viewpoint, and the left is gathering its friends among the discontented and priming them for more free money.

This is part of our progress through The Fall, which has been going on for longer than I've been alive. But we all know that we stand a chance of reversing this. If we go toward a natural selection viewpoint, we can stop ecocide, stop overpopulation, and stop the general crappiness of our civilization, which seems more concerned with supporting irresponsible idiots (there are more of them to buy our exciting products!) than it is with promoting the best and setting new standards for excellence, most of all in personal and moral behavior. O no.

If we decide to take a stand against entropy, The Fall, and the Crowd and its hipster lapdogs, we will have to make a single hard decision: do we cut people off because although they are human, they are not the right kind of human for us? For some reason, we have trouble doing this politically, although we have no problem calling the cops if one of them shows up and threatens our homes.

Why is this? The root of the problem: we are thinking socially, or like hipsters being concerned with how our actions look to others, and we're not concerned enough with that ultimate judge of all things, which is how well our ideas work in reality. Reality is, after all, not polite and not social; it ranks us by ability, and

points out that some people are just destructive, irresponsible and useless, even if they are human.

When we are afraid, of death and of our own inability, we turn to this idea that everyone who is human should be accepted — so that we are “guaranteed” acceptance. But that acceptance only occurs because of the wealth of civilization, and if civilization collapses, goes away. Instead of worrying so much, we should be brave and surge forward in the only way that matters — making ourselves as individuals better, and casting out the dysfunctional in favor of the functional.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [resentment](#)

Unhappy meal exposes social reality

Aug 11th, 2009

by [Doug Vance](#).

If it's unpopular and makes us uncomfortable or inconvenienced, it isn't going to fly. So, we form a colossal crowd of equal voices to assert antireality against truths that are difficult to accept.



The truth? Industrial scale farming and food processing relies on cost cutting to keep ahead of competition.

That means ever more units crammed into limited real estate confines. Add cheaper feed and lower wage, low IQ and poor moral character workers to the system and ugliness begins to surface.

But the crowd's goal is to convenience its members, not to improve them. It wants to quickly appease its demanding kids so it can move on to more important things in life like sofa time with Oprah.

"Unhappy Meals" featuring a knife-wielding Ronald McDonald and bloody rubber chickens are upsetting parents who say the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals are unfairly targeting their kids at McDonald's restaurants across the country.

PETA's "McCrucely Campaign" has ruffled the feathers of moms and dads in Albany who say they don't want their kids exposed to any throat-slitting chickens or pictures of slaughtered poultry.

"I don't want my son to be around something like this. This is not fair for a child," Stephaine Gipson told FOX23 News in Albany.

"I think it's unhappy that they target children," said parent Michelle Natale.

But the animal rights activists say kids are jaded enough by television and video games to handle the carnographic images, and intend to continue their campaign pressuring McDonald's to use more humane means of killing chickens.

"I think children and adults deserve to be told the truth — and that's that behind Ronald McDonald's smile is cruelty to animals," said PETA spokeswoman Lindsay Rajt.

[foxnews](#)

Social reality isn't anything unique, or particularly American. It is an effect of post-revolutionary civilization and always a major cause of its fall. In Soviet Russia, *pravda* was the public desire for how things ought to be. Its counterpart *istina* means how things actually are.

The idea was to insert pravda like equality and prosperity into public life using legislated correctness and broadcast propaganda. The hope was that by doing so, somehow reality would change. People came to accept this idea was a fraud because nothing was getting better through wishful thinking alone. They stopped playing along with the Soviet system, even mocked its pravda, and eventually the USSR came to an end.

As any Russian-speaker knows, N. K. Mikhailovsky is correct about the etymology of "pravda." It is closely related to such words as "pravj" ("correct"), "pravo" ("right", "law"), "pravilo" ("rule"), "spravedlivost'" ("justice"), etc.

"Istina," the other common word for "truth," is related to "istinnyj" ("genuine").

[cyberussr](#)



In America, pravda, or social reality is not state *enforced* as with the Soviets, but rather state *protected* by a concept called freedom. When given a choice, the bottom majority of humanity chooses comfort more often than improvement.

Freedom allows overwhelming crowds to vote uncomfortable truth out of office, to move away from it, to form angry protests against it, to buy more cheap products and avoid having fewer quality alternatives. This is more effective than brute coercion because it appeals to our complacency, our desire to keep the peace and not rock the boat.

We avoid adding any more cumbersome obligations to already busy lives or to thoughts buried by daily information overload. In this way, our own state of disorganization corrupts our personal liberty into a force for destruction.

To paraphrase political scientist Tomislav Sunic, the Soviet system vanished because its goals were better implemented by Americans.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

Climate change puts spotlight on overpopulation

Aug 9th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

We already know that [increasing food production causes population growth](#). Volume of food production is like a piston. Habitat is the cylinder it slides into. The gas or fluid inside is the size of population. The piston goes up and population expands. Shove it down (or provide us expensive affluence) and our numbers contract.

We also know that clearing land for agriculture to Feed The World reduces our biosphere's carbon absorption. Since unabsorbed carbon becomes a climate changing greenhouse gas, humanitarian activity later causes at least *some* humanitarian disasters. If it feels good now, we'll pay with interest later.



Unpopularity ruins our ability to fix the problems we created by our own popular quick fixes. Elected leadership dependent on public image is forced to circumvent any damage their own constituents have caused. All effort is then diverted to various Act of God extraneous side effects to keep up the appearances of doing something even as the core problem grows.

Climate change is expected to summon an historic humanitarian disaster into our times. The scale is as yet unknown, but now world military leaders are beginning to pay attention. Military power is less inhibited by the popularity of its actions.

Crises such as drought, violent storms, mass migration and pandemics could topple governments, feed terrorist movements or destabilize entire regions.

The Times reported that for the first time, intelligence agencies and the Pentagon are taking a hard look at the possible security implications resulting from climate change.

[foxnews](#)



Should our leadership find itself confronted with a refugee crisis of unmanageable proportions, national interests will necessarily shift from aid to protectionist. Internal security policy will in turn find its interests divided between ongoing immigration protests of the right and resurgent humanitarian demonstrations of the left.

Liberal democracy and multiculturalism, having fragmented consensus, shows its untenable cost.

Leaving no continent untouched, climate change and the resulting refugee influx combined would further strain natural resources and a failing distributive infrastructure. Following increased infrastructure failure, the economy, local and federal budgets, already impacted by humanitarian relief, whither toward bankruptcy.

A shrunken budget in turn reduces the ability to provide internal security to non-essentials like an angry civil population that has bloated in size to unmanageable numbers.

What about international security in the midst of global climate change and world population bound for nine billion?

"Another reality is that while worries about climate-related instability are rising, near-term concerns about energy insecurity are already a top-tier issue both here and in China, the two dominant contributors to the planet's greenhouse-gas blanket. China has made it clear lately that energy security there trumps climate concerns."

[nytimes](#)

While America and Europe retain the costly luxury of playing humanity's saviour, the other nations pragmatically look to their own interests and the survival of their founding people.

"Meanwhile, New Delhi has previously said that if the Chinese were to dam certain Himalayan rivers that provide water to Northeast India it would constitute an act of war."

[fastertimes](#)



Past decades saving lives abroad during times of plenty will have been for nothing and worse, disastrous for the future. This is the same oblivious thinking that accepts credit cards for trinkets, maxes them out and later finds itself unable to pay. Like a creditor coming to collect his bill, nature remains bound to prevail against mankind's growing numbers and quixotic impulses.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [humanism](#)

George Sodini: What the media doesn't want you to read

Aug 7th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

The story of George Sodini is sad but fascinating. I agree that memoirs and personal diaries of the supposedly deranged should not be removed from the web (as was done by Mr. Sodini's web host) simply because he ended up randomly killing a bunch of people. He lived his life in silent torture, cursing the world around him, yet still able to muster up good social graces, a good job, and maintain an appearance of calm servitude to the society around him. Kind of like Patrick Bateman in American Psycho, actually, when you read the whole thing – particularly the ending.

May 4, 2009:

I was so eager to do this last year. The big problem on my mind now is that my job will end soon. One project is being transitioned to another. The other one I am solely responsible, but is being fast tracked to production. I estimate maybe a month. I am not ready for the job market. I am ok what I do, a .NET software developer. Not at the top of the class, but I do a good job. I survived two general layoffs and other little layoffs they are having but keeping quiet about. I hear things.

The problem is I feel too good now to do this but too bad to enjoy life. I know I will never enjoy life. This is an over 30 year trend. Some people are happy, some are miserable. It is difficult to live almost continuously feeling an undercurrent of fear, worry, discontentment and helplessness. I can talk and joke around and sound happy but under it all is something different that seems unchangable and a permanent part of my being. I need to realize the details of what I never accomplished in life and to be convinced the future is merely a continuation of the past – WHICH IT ALWAYS has been. I am making a list of items that will provide motivation to do the exit plan, it won't be published. I always had hope that maybe things will improve especially if I make big attempts to change my life. I made many big changes in the past two years but everything is still the same. Life is over. Even though I look good, dress well, well groomed – nails, teeth, hair, etc. Who knows.

His own words say to spread the word and that this can be re-published freely. And for those of you who don't know, Sodini is the guy who [gunned down a bunch of people](#) at a Pittsburgh-area gym on August 4th, 2009. Of course, the mainstream news sites won't report much about [this journal](#) because they don't want to bring attention to the fact that our society is sick, valueless, and cultureless; that we're nothing more than oversocialized beasts who would sell our own mothers down the river for a little money, and that people like George Sodini may not do what they do if our values as a society were different.

July 20, 2009:

Been a long time since last write. Everything still sucks. But I got a promotion and a raise, even in this shitty Obama economy. No more grunt programming. Go figure! New boss is great. He tactfully says when you did something wrong or complements on good things. Never confused with him. But that is NOT what I want in life. I guess some of us were simply meant to walk a lonely path. I have slept alone for over 20 years. **Last time I slept all night with a girlfriend it was 1982.** Proof I am a total malfunction. Girls and women don't even give me a second look ANYWHERE. There is something BLATANTLY wrong with me that NO goddam person will tell me what it is. Every person just wants to be fucking nice and say nice things to me. Flattery. Oh yeah, I am sure you can get a date anytime. You look good, etc. Pussies. Awwwww, wait. I can just start being self-righteous and say I live a good, clean life. I am holy, that's all Rick Knapp stuff. Hear that you mother fucker: I Am Just Good!

I wouldn't want my wife in that gym, and I would have shot Sodini dead had I seen him. Our values are also against this modern world; however, he makes some good points. We live accordingly with an eye toward making the world a better place, and maybe even making our mark on civilization in the future such that it becomes better. But even if we simply produce one or two children who aim to do the same thing, that's fine with us.

December 29, 2008:

Just got back from tanning, been doing this for a while. No gym today, my elbow is sore again. I actually look good. I dress good, am clean-shaven, bathe, touch of cologne – yet 30 million women rejected me – over an 18 or 25-year period. That is how I see it. Thirty million is my rough guesstimate of how many desirable single women there are. A man needs a woman for confidence. He gets a boost on the job, career, with other men, and everywhere else when he knows inside he has someone to spend the night with and who is also a friend. This type of life I see is a closed world with me specifically and totally excluded. Every other guy does this successfully to a degree. Flying solo for many years is a destroyer. Yet many people say I am easy to get along with, etc. Looking back, I owe nothing to desirable females who ask for anything, except for basic courtesy – usually. Looking back over everything, what bothers me most is the inability to work towards whatever change I choose.

Sodini was a confused creature, apparently believing that getting laid was going to solve the “problem” of being worth \$250K with no one to share it with. Had he entered into a relationship with a woman and been unhappy after a few months, maybe he wouldn't have engaged in a massive rampage on an unsuspecting gym, but only become what he despised in the first place: a guy with money but nothing of real value, in a dead end relationship, thinking falsely that someone to come home to every night – no matter who – was going to make him happy.

Miscellaneous:

1. Probably 99% of the people who know me well don't even think I was this crazy. Told by at least 100 girls/women over the years I was a “nice guy”. Not kidding.
2. Lee Ann Valdiserri had my baby in early 1991. Haven't seen her since she was about four months into it. I knew her sister, Chris, from high school.
3. Net worth slightly more than \$250K, (after all debt) as of end of 2008.
4. Death Lives!

[[+|Sodini's Diary](#)]

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#) · [liberalism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Life support for indolence

Aug 5th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).



Here comes another major split between a responsible, productive demographic against an irresponsible collective seeking to distribute the impact of their own inconsideration and misfortunes. This is also another method of forcing equality by taking from the positives and redistributing to the negatives until the mutual dormancy of an orchestrated zero potential for everyone involved is achieved.

Hope and Change reveals itself as the usual revolutionary class warfare stringing along a clueless lumpenprole horde. But, persistent social classes (money-dumbed caste varieties today), unlike our postmodern *nouveau riche*, were always composite effects of four parts rarer pedigree and one part best value transmissions of one's culture.

That millions of people already rely on all available cash in their paycheck to obtain daily basic necessities, or even to enjoy life a bit is only half the picture. The other half lies within our values. The Live For Today folks are okay with a deteriorated future because they are oblivious to it even as it hatches in their midst. They won't be around to experience the full effects anyway. Someone else will.

"I'm not that worried about the issue of costs. Yes, the Congressional Budget Office's preliminary cost estimates for Senate plans were higher than expected, and caused considerable consternation last week. But the fundamental fact is that we can afford universal health insurance — even those high estimates were less than the \$1.8 trillion cost of the Bush tax cuts. Furthermore, Democratic leaders know that they have to pass a health care bill for the sake of their own survival. One way or another, the numbers will be brought in line."

[nytimes](#)

On the other hand, Homo sapiens *sapiens*, evolved planning ahead by understanding cause and forecasting the network of effects each cause begets. Evolution incorporated this survival advantage into the parts of his dna that create the structure of his brain. That, combined with his altruism and innovative drive are among the many parts of a composite value system that program his conduct during life.

No less than his appearance, his inner being sets him apart from the other subspecies in his midst. Okay, let's play the obtuse politically correct game where terms can mean many things or no one thing at all and instead say, "the diverse hominids in his midst." Feel better? Bonus disclaimer: all races have their natural elites.

Okay, that wasn't quite as PC. Let's address the main topic instead:

"Voters opposed to Democratic healthcare reform bills heckled Doggett during his speech and as he took questions. An estimated group of about 150 crowded the congressman afterward, chanting "just say no."

"This was a constitutional redress of grievances, albeit a little loud," said Bryan Preston, spokesman for the Texas Republican Party."

[KVUE](#)

The protest is both individual and economic: it is unfair for me to pay mandatory charity. Yet, beyond this cacophonous veil lurks restrained group antipathy: we need BETTER people instead of MORE people. This a syntactical equation for quality altruism, minus vampiric pity, minus avarice capitalizing on quantity.

Let's be clear. If you are not a business owner or an individual making \$280,000 a year, those who are initially expected to finance this health care reform, you probably don't have private lobbying representation in Washington. The cost is headed your way, middle class America, in due time.

In return for your investment, you'll sustain this lethargic cross section of voters in their millions:

"The results are fascinating: 20% of all deaths of people 35 and older were attributed to a lack of physical activity. That's more deaths than can be attributed to smoking. Looking at specific diseases, the risk of dying from cancer increased 45% for men and 28% for women due to lack of physical activity. The risk of dying from respiratory ailments was 92% higher for men and 75% higher for women. The risk of dying from heart disease was 52% higher for men and 28% higher for women, all due to a lack of physical activity. It turns out that being a couch potato can kill you, literally."

[naturalnews](#)



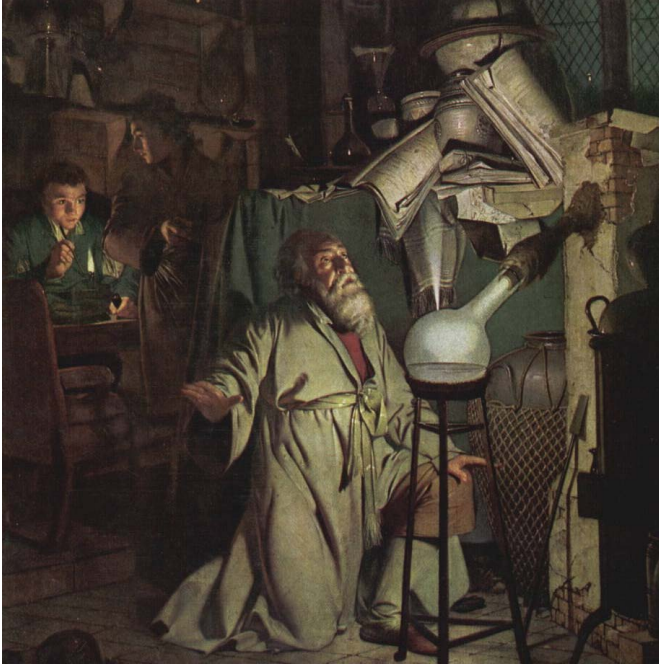
Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [debt](#) · [democracy](#) · [revolution](#)

Social determinism is the new alchemy

Aug 4th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

When modern society treats all human populations as a uniform mass of generic hominids, we have secular universalism. Diverse value systems that do not fit this generic hominid fantasy are then invalidated as idiosyncrasy, bad manners, superstition, even criminality.



“Unlike Hobbes, Locke believed that natural law dictated that all human beings were fundamentally equal; he derived this argument from his theories of human development. Since every human being walked into the world with the same capacities as every other human being, that meant that inequality was an unnatural result of the environments that individuals are forced to live in, a belief that still underlies the Western notion of human development.”

[WSU](#)

From the minority point of view, the majority's system (e.g. Anglo Saxon Common Law or Roman civil law) then feels oppressive and appears intently biased against them. It only helps the misperception to have various political actors and social justice groups capitalizing upon and affirming this negative perception.

The illusion is also reinforced when elements of a distressed majority play along, although these do not make as much profit. Most of us are familiar with the various arguments where a given minority group tends to engage in certain behaviours more than others.

These claims are most easily validated when reviewing criminal justice statistics. Most of the other claims rely on a combination of empirical evidence and a consensus derived from it. Such observational consensus is dismissed without effort by hurling verbal silencer munitions at it, like the term “stereotype”, as if to make the target bleed muted guilt.

We're denying hereditary group differences that society is unable to deeply affect. Like IQ, our mode of conduct in life is hard wired and always within us, but nonetheless shaped by society during life with a soft irregular nudging.

When society fails to force each of us to conform to its rigid hominid template, several things happen. First,

it ignores the first several decades of failed results. Judging men by the content of their character has after all only served to underscore but one aspect of our irreconcilable, fundamental differences.

"The cases – in Seattle and Louisville, Kentucky – reflect the fact that despite previous efforts by courts, many black and white schoolchildren in the US live and learn in different worlds."

[BBC](#)

Second, because it has invested decades of pride, money and time into secular universalism and systems that profit from the arrangement, it attacks dissent. Biological determinism is dismissed using the intellectual fraud of a strawman in absolutist terms: "biological determinists do not believe environment has any effect on human development."

Evolutionary psychology, once embraced by secular universalists, fell from grace when its revelations began to conflict with the universalist control agenda. Its competitor, cognitive psychology, gave us the new Blank Slate Man, the generic hominid that is essentially shaped by public education and social rehabilitation.

Third, as opposing evidence accumulates, the living results fail to meet public expectations and dissent grows along the academic periphery, society then reluctantly adjusts its approach.

"Over the past few decades, the dominant criminal justice philosophy dropped rehabilitation in favor of sequestration and retribution. Opportunities for education, job training and drug treatment have fallen out of fashion. "Three strikes" and minimum sentencing laws have led to excessive punishments for millions of nonviolent offenders, especially in the misguided "war on drugs.""

[thenation](#)

Contradictions surface. Multiple identities in one society is a supposed celebration of diversity. Yet, as convenience calls for, identity politics is also denounced. It is as if we do not wish to face the fact that multiple demographic identities in a nation causes competing identity politics. Instead, we imagine identity politics causes itself, as if it was formed in a vacuum.



Since there is no universal standard applicable to every tribe, egalitarian pluralism under common rule does not generate the uniformly utilitarian results it claims for a goal. Voluntary autonomous separatism is a simple solution. Therein, at the very least, claims to identity bias would never take place. Diverse cultures return to replace our commercial monoculture.

People need their own living space under their own values system, otherwise some minority group is going to feel as if it is intentionally oppressed by a dominant order and standards that seem to them alien. The reality is that our fundamental differences are not uniform, despite the best attempts of society to shape each of us, for its own convenience, into clones within.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [identity](#) · [race](#)

Entitlement

Aug 2nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The great human fallacy is that of blaming the methods and circumstances in which we exist, and not our own choices.

When we are given a golf club, and fail to hit a birdie, we claim the club is at fault. Do we have a genetic predisposition to hate golf clubs? No, but we run into a psychological trap — i.e. one that would afflict any intelligent being in the same situation — where we want to blame anything but ourselves.

This condition arises from morality itself. If we are judged, which means there's an order outside of nature itself which separates us into kings and beggars, then we are responsible for ourselves. This implies that we created ourselves.



Science, philosophy and religion weigh in from another angle: we did not create ourselves, but are mostly the products of our genes. As a result, when actions occur, arguing whether someone is morally responsible or not is insane. They did what their capacities dictated they do.

We make our choices because of our abilities and intelligence. Within that range, we have the ability to make better choices and less optimal choices. But we still have choices.

Separating ourselves from the idea of our limitations causes us to think we can do anything; however, at the same time, we run into our limitations daily. So we get neurotic and go into denial.

From this comes the idea that anyone or anything that shows our shortcomings is attacking us, personally, because we and we alone are responsible for both our abilities and our choices.

From that comes the sense of entitlement, or the idea that since attacking people is morally bad, we should

be free from all criticism of anything we want to do (that's legal, of course) — no matter how selfish or oblivious it is, or how it will cause in the distant future big problems.

It's like we have legislated a morality of "don't interrupt me with reality" and enshrined it as our highest possible value. That is why articles like the following are not surprising:

The driver of a minivan who was seriously injured when she was struck head-on by a drag-racing teenager doing 81 mph is now being sued by the teenager's passenger, who was also injured.

A lawsuit filed yesterday in Salem Superior Court suggests that Christine Speliotis "carelessly and negligent (sic) failed to avoid the collision with the other vehicle head on."

[Salem News](#)

Responsibility is far away. Irresponsibility — a manifestation of the idea that we should not interrupt our own thoughts with reality — is close at hand, because it feels good to most people. We like the sound of "free" as in "freedom" and "free agent," meaning not obligated to others, mostly because most people find most people are not to their taste.

It's interesting how we separate the concepts of autonomy and irresponsibility when in a social context, as we see above, they are inexorably linked.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Crowdism

Jul 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The key to a modern time is the psychology of crowds. Because we have thrown out social order, caste, hierarchy, even culture itself, we are now all equal individuals standing on a level playing field that suspiciously resembles a shopping mall.



As a result, we form ad hoc groupings, or crowds, to achieve our needs. We no longer trust social hierarchy like government, religion or art. We trust a personal army running to smash the other guy. And we form crowds by getting like-minded people, offering them equal participation in what we want for ourselves, and then off to the races.

The secret to the psychology of crowds is understanding that they are made of individuals. People don't join a crowd to join a crowd; they join a crowd to get what they want. And the key way to do that is to offer equality: we all get the same reward if we achieve our goal.

That approach will always be more appealing than "do it yourself." If your part in the crowd is to show up, chant a few slogans and help crush some skulls, and then you get the full reward everyone else gets, that seems pretty smart, doesn't it?

Our society, by having adopted this ideal of the Crowd in 1789 and affirmed it into 1968, has opened up this ideal to the form of entropy known as mass interpretation. It has taken an already simple philosophy and boiled it down to a few basic tenets:

- Anyone who says anything but "Do whatever you want, there are no consequences" is a Nazi.
- Anyone who wants anything but exactly what everyone else gets is a Nazi.
- Anyone who wants some ideal that not everyone can understand is an elitist Nazi.
- It is always — **always** — someone else's fault, because we the crowd demand and they did not provide.
- In the absence of real values, whatever seems new and weird or trendy is what we should all pay attention to. Anyone who wants more is a Nazi.
- Anyone who insists that we are not all equal is a Nazi.

This thinking is addictive like sugar, heroin or TV watching because its hook — we're all the same so you get the same as everyone else — makes us feel accepted without having done anything, and its threshold

for participation is really low: just be one of the crowd.

If you want to know why gangs, lynch mobs, literary cliques, fads, trends and mass neurosis are the same, you've found your answer: the crowd. It is the defining trait and the greatest destructive factor in the modern time.

For example, if we choose to limit what cars people can drive, we're Nazis. If we decide to cut back on breeding, that requires we tell people not to breed, so we're Nazis. If some people want to have only people with a similar values system in their community, they're Nazis.

Who aren't the Nazis? Well, the people advocating the least amount of social order, the "do whatever you want and there are no consequences" people, the Crowd!



Resources:

- [Tom Wolfe – *The Human Beast*](#)
- [Vijay Prozak – *Crowdism*](#)
- [Garrett Hardin – *The Tragedy of the Commons*](#)
- [Amerika.org – posts tagged with "crowdism"](#)
- [Equality as a tool of the salesperson](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Global warming controversy is a problem

Jul 27th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).



Whether it even exists, and if it does, whether the cause is anthropogenic, solargenic, tectonic/volcanic/geological or a combination, global warming has long occupied center stage.

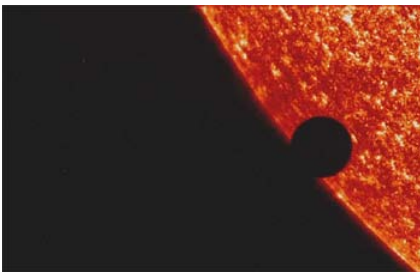
This effect is simply another error, perhaps orchestrated or accidental, created by our liberal democracy, with its oppositional polarizing process forcing important topics into a false dichotomy or other unrealistic position.

Thus, we rarely achieve lasting decisiveness, regardless of importance or urgency.

Whatever the case, the effect is the same. If we value maintaining our social image by living like all the other Americans around us, we too will adopt a degree of psychologically defensive indifference to the results of our lifestyle choices.

'But then,' you might ask, 'what about all the other negative effects of pollution such as respiratory illnesses, heavy metals in our lakes and oceans, acid rain, etc.—we are still poisoning our atmosphere and environment, should we not be concerned about that?'

[diversion](#)



Venus offers us a glimpse into an extreme case of global warming with a greenhouse effect run amok. Its surface temperature is hot enough to melt lead.

The crushing atmospheric pressure is over ninety times that of Earth. The clouds contain sulphuric acid droplets. Each day is eight months long.

Like feverish visions from a surreal [grindcore](#) soundscape, Venus is a hell.

Then young, Carl Sagan connected these two facts to correctly surmise that a runaway greenhouse effect dominates Venus. Carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, traps the heat trying to radiate away from Venus causing a huge global temperature increase.

[suite101](#)

From the perspective of planetary science, global warming happens to planets without human interaction.

This opens up the possibility that the effect on our own planet, like any cosmological challenge is for the foreseeable future, beyond the means of our control.

A frozen peat bog covering the entire sub-Arctic area of Western Siberia, the size of France and Germany, contains billions of tonnes of greenhouse gas that is melting for the first time since it was sequestered more than 11,000 years ago before the end of the last ice age.

[terrature](#)



The early 21st Century is a globalizing world of billions of people, each seeking to attain American levels of material affluence.

The United States GDP accounts for nearly a fourth of the world's total productive output in exchange for the largest share among nations from the accessible petroleum.

Everyone in the world cannot then move up into an American level of affluence. The desire is unrealistic and irresponsible of those who insist every human in the world may live a First World material existence.

What we may consider grinding poverty compared to our few decades of modern prosperity is approximately a typical lifestyle for almost everyone throughout civilization's history.

However, innumerable small villages have been replaced with crowded urban sprawl. The displacement of wilderness, the sprawl and crowding are certain to continue well into the coming decades.

More people will live in cities than in the countryside next year, and a growing number will be living in slums. The UN report says the number of slum dwellers will pass the 1bn mark in 2007. Urban growth and slum expansion rates are nearly identical in some regions. For a long time we suspected that the optimistic picture of cities did not reflect reality.

[corrupt.org](#)

The negative effects of crowded urban spaces in the midst of "grinding poverty", a deliberately unsavory euphemism meaning "traditional living", is synergistic.

Disease spreads more quickly and is less easily isolated. Psychological stressors, loss of social control and social isolation tend to rise in settings larger or denser than small communities.

Criminality has more opportunity to strike and then disappear into the sea of people. Traditional living, off a landscape now replaced with concrete, has vanished. The slums are a font of unchecked, ever flowing

pollution of destroyed human lives and discarded waste.

So, we come to the real environmental debate of the Twenty First Century. Overpopulation, now buried by the global warming controversy, was first formally addressed 35 years ago:

Throughout the world, urban populations are growing in size at a considerably faster rate than rural populations. As a result, by the end of this century, and for the first time in history, the majority of the world's population will be living in urban areas.

Urbanization is an element of the process of modernization.

Moreover, while in certain countries this process is efficiently managed and maximum use is made of the advantages this management presents, in others urbanization takes place in an uncontrolled manner and is accompanied by overcrowding in certain districts, an increase in slums, deterioration of the environment, urban unemployment and many other social and economic problems.

[population-security](#)



Mankind's historic milestone of more people inhabiting urban spaces than open countryside three years ago passed virtually unnoticed, minimized by a notoriously unreliable mainstream media.

We need a better approach to help ground our ecology concerns in reality and within the context of what mankind is able to control.

Anthrocentric morality, an effect of crowdism in action and a problematic distributive justice reaction, defeats us. Overpopulation is the obese elephant in the room and global warming has become our collective blindfold.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [global warming](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Open society is a lawless marketplace

Jul 26th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Throughout the liberal West, we are taught to adore the Promethean archetype, an uncanny hero who empowers the common people against masters imposing social structure.

The ancients offered us the titan who stole fire from the gods and gave it to man, Spartacus, the various prophets and the mythical Robin Hood. Today, we have philanthropists contending with native cultural authority.

I should like to put forward the idea of what I call the open society as a universal principle that recognizes the diversity inherent in our global society, yet provides a conceptual basis for establishing the institutions we need. I realize that gaining acceptance for a universal principle is a tall order, but I cannot see how we can do without it.

[atlantic](#)



Our international philanthropists are each wealthier and better politically connected than many ordinary people. Their individual wealth and popularity becomes a superhuman quality affording these modern heroes great abilities against difficult odds.

Money buys advertising to help sway uninformed millions. It also buys real estate with offices atop staffed with activist policy committees shaping our future off camera.

When it comes to advancing goals, objectives, and agendas, groups that are well organized, and consequently well funded, will eventually triumph over the unorganized, underrepresented, and underfunded. This is the overall truism that emerges from examining the organizational structure and effectiveness of successful interest groups. The same can be said of the organizations that comprise the open-borders network.

[contract](#)

The philanthropist-merchants, who appear to be our liberating Promethean heroes, position themselves for secret control through high profile social justice institutions.

Mandatory open society requires limits applied to everyone, called social cohesion, imposed by institutional policy. Diverse values worldwide lose primacy as they are replaced with the one value. This new universal value is the global open society collective itself.

Progress may be measured by conformity to institutional policy and an inversely correlated lack of participation in alternative voluntary value systems. Planet Earth itself then becomes a new closed society.

The conviction that "there is no alternative" blocks the critical policy discussion required in what is clearly a time of national and global crisis on every front. Meanwhile, migrants continue to leave and arrive; they continue to integrate in the economy – or not – and the number of irregular and undocumented residents in many countries continues to surge.

[democracy](#)



Globalism is the free movement of labor in the form of immigration, goods and the ideas of international merchants. But, a concealed undercurrent of horror oozes within this confusing ocean of people, objects, and information in motion.

The report cites the International Labor Organization, which estimates that at least 12.3 million adults and children are victims of forced labor, bonded labor and sex slavery each year. "This is modern slavery. A crime that spans the globe, providing ruthless employers with endless supply of people to abuse for financial gain," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said as she announced the report.

[CNN](#)

Smuggling (we didn't bother to mention narcotics) is one thing, but international organized crime infiltrating local communities is another. Are incoming people sufficiently screened prior to entry or are we just assuming for the sake of expedience against overwhelming numbers that everyone comes seeking honest opportunity in our now open society?

NEWARK, N.J. – An investigation into the sale of black-market kidneys and fake Gucci handbags evolved into a sweeping probe of political corruption in New Jersey, ensnaring more than 40 people Thursday, including three mayors, two state lawmakers and several rabbis.

Even for a state with a rich history of graft, the scale of wrongdoing alleged was breathtaking. An FBI official called corruption "a cancer that is destroying the core values of this state."

Federal prosecutors said the investigation initially focused on a money laundering network that operated between Brooklyn, N.Y.; Deal, N.J.; and Israel.

[AP](#)

Most of our attention is expected to remain on what are called ideological extremists like bin Laden and Greenpeace. Extremists however do not comprise the entirety of all non-state transnational groups.

We're still searching for non-extremist internationalists dedicated to the national, cultural or religious value systems we have long held dear rather than laboring against us to make our home their personal marketplace. Maybe we shouldn't hold our breath.

Many of today's nonstate groups do not aspire to have a state. In fact, they are considerably more capable of achieving their objectives and maintaining their social cohesion without a state apparatus. The state is a burden for them, while statelessness is not only very feasible but also a source of enormous power. Modern technologies allow these groups to organize themselves, seek financing, and plan and implement actions against their targets — almost always other states — without ever establishing a state of their own. They seek power without the responsibility of governing.

[hoover](#)



We find ourselves confronting a memetic screen that emphasizes a previous lesser threat so that the proceeding greater threat passes unnoticed just beyond.

Eight years have passed since just over three thousand Americans perished in an act of mass murder. Yet, illegal immigration adds more than four thousand American victims of violent crime annually.

While some may contend that foreign policy contributed to the former tragedy, there is little question that open society policy is responsible for the latter.

People don't analyze what they hear in part due to laziness, but also because they may be forced to take a stand. And why bother anyway? If anyone dares challenge the establishment, whether religious or secular, they are pummeled with assaults on their character and motives. They are labeled intolerant, narrow-minded, or bigoted. So indifference to evil takes root in our desire to avoid conflict and willingness to compromise.

[trosch](#)

The real question here centers around the ancient idea of caste. Are inherently self-interested merchants that call no one land home but talk a good game the best leadership for us?

In the closed systems of old, these were the landless tinkers and wandering peddlers working appropriately within their natural role. But the old caste society has vanished.

In the Wild West, they were snake oil salesmen offering the single cure for all that ails us. Yet, it came to be known that they only manipulated our beliefs in exchange for our wealth. That isn't a Robin Hood or any other folk hero in my book.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [oligarchy](#)

The racial people cop out on caste

Jul 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

OK, thought-provoking post from my favorite (to read) far-right group, the American Renaissance:

The situation was otherwise in Eurasia, where large game was a dietary staple. Bringing down a cornered mastodon takes cooperation, with each man in his assigned position, ready to respond to shouted instructions. There must be jointly acceptable rules for dividing the kill. And, since females depend on male hunters for their own survival and that of their children, an advantage would accrue to females who chose mates likely to support them for a lifetime. Sexual selection would then mold males more inclined to satisfy the female demand for fidelity.

Environment does not consist merely of natural factors like climate. Since morality is advantageous only when others are moral, a major determinant of the fitness of an individual's "gene for morality" is the character of those with whom he interacts. As Robert Axelrod and William Hamilton put it in their classic study, "The Evolution of Cooperation" (Science 1981), "there is no single best strategy regardless of the behavior of others in the population." In fact, seemingly irrational levels of mistrust can become locked into a group. Suppose a mild physical environment has selected for weak cooperative tendencies. A worsening of the environment might make greater cooperation in everyone's interest, but not necessarily more fitness-enhancing, for any honest, helpful mutants who appear will simply be exploited until they die without issue. It is perfectly rational to be indifferent to others when they are indifferent to you.

...

1) Black behavior that is unacceptable by white standards—theft, drug use, preoccupation with sex—is not "sick." It is how traits that were once adaptive in Africa express themselves in Western urban society. This may be part of the reason blacks seem not to experience white laws and standards of personal responsibility as binding, and why black spokesmen are so curiously unapologetic about black crime. They will caution black males that crime is "stupid" (i.e. apt to lead to punishment), and a Jesse Jackson may denounce black-on-black crime as harmful to blacks, but they do not say that crime, particularly black-on-white crime, is intrinsically bad.

2) Black children cannot be expected to respond as white children do to externally imposed white socialization. If the races evolved different values, black and white children will be receptive to different sorts of training and exhortation, a point with important practical consequences. It is often suggested, for instance, that black children would do better in school if told, as white and Asian children are, that school is important. But black children will not care about grades and the esteem of teachers, no matter how much they are told to, if valuing knowledge is a more weakly evolved norm among blacks. Since black societies never evolved formal education, it would make no sense for black children to be ready to internalize praise of education.

3) Violence will skyrocket when a group acquires a killing technology it did not develop. Groups that have invented such things as firearms without killing themselves off must also have developed sufficient inhibitions about using them. Groups that acquire weapons from outside sources are less likely to have evolved the same level of self-restraint, just as groups that do not discover fermentation are unlikely to develop a tolerance for alcohol, and often fall prey to drinking problems when alcohol is introduced from outside. Blacks may have been unprepared for access to the firearms developed in Western society.

Consider the remarkable increase in gunshot homicides among black men in the last half-

century. In 1943 there were 44 handgun homicides in New York City; in 1992, 1,500 black males died of gunshot wounds inflicted by other black males. Since 92 percent of the 2,200 murders recorded in New York that year were committed by blacks, black males must have also killed several hundred non-blacks with firearms as well. The parallel increase in gunshot homicides nationally over the same period is essentially an increase among blacks.

...

Neither is Better

The idea that blacks and whites evolved different systems of values says nothing about which values are "better," and each group can be expected to think its values best.

Whites will continue to consider blacks "irresponsible" and blacks will, more openly, continue to call whites "up tight." But the practical decisions of life require the adoption of some standards, and a group can use only those standards evolution has given it.

[AmRen](#)

Fascinating, fascinating stuff! But they leave out a vital ingredient: caste.

Caste is the hereditary system of picking people by abilities that are hereditary.



Intelligence is heritable; so are moral traits. The idea of caste is to group together people with these desirable traits and have them thus be available as breeding partners to one another, so it's more likely a child with those traits emerges.

Sound weird? Our society denies caste, because we're all equal, so instead we have class, which means we assume the good people all pile up a giant pot of gold. It's mostly true — with the exception of intellectual,

teachers, etc. which may be why those professions have declined into irrelevance while gaining in popularity.

Jonathan Haidt writes more on [morality and evolution](#), and we cover the [mechanism of evolution of moral traits](#) elsewhere.

But I find it interesting that people deny caste. After all, on the blog, we pretty much write about America and since 3/4 of us are honkies, we write about white people issues. We probably wouldn't feel too comfortable trying to express an African-American perspective. And from that white perspective, it seems to me the dominant issue facing us is caste:

- Most white voters are not adapted for the kind of tasks required to vote intelligently, so are swayed by their TVs.
- Most white voters are from backgrounds that did not involve leadership, so they have no way of understanding the laws imposed upon them.
- Most white voters are not adapted to the idea of sacralizing nature, and so separate religion from physical reality, feeling happy if they can go pray in the one and pollute the other.
- Even worse, most white voters are from heritages whose lines did not undertake tasks which required predictive thinking, e.g. "This cause creates that effect which then causes that other effect which then causes..." and so on down the line. They have no way of knowing the actual effect of their actions.

Regardless of what goes on with the racial debate that is [surely heating up](#), as Samuel Huntington predicted it would, the caste debate is only beginning.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [caste](#) · [crowdism](#) · [race](#)

Obama and the end of racial balance

Jul 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Back in election 2008, many people voted for Barack Obama out of a simple desire to fix the racial inequities and conflict in the United States, a problem that has plagued us for centuries and peaks, periodically, in riots like Watts (1967) and L.A. (1992).



The thinking was that if all people are finally made equal, the inequality that propelled discontent will cease. That formula has been part of the American approach to race since 1968: inequality causes conflict, so bring everyone into a first-world, middle-class lifestyle and things will be OK.

Obama appeared to bridge the worlds. He could function in the white world, but also appeal to African-Americans. Furthermore, he was our first black president. Therefore, the logic went, everyone could see that equality was reigning and we'd all be OK.

From the perspective of history, however, people tend to identify with their own ethnic, religious and cultural groups, and if given an inch, will take a mile. Samuel Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations* dovetailed with Spengler and Plato who say a civilization needs to have consensus on a values system, or its political and economic forces tear it apart.

In the United States, this translates to an upsetting of the power balance. After WWII, African-Americans received increasing focus and government and social benefactors worked to end inequality; this culminated in late-1960s riots to which the solution was greater benefits and more forced integration.

The intent was to ensure that equality was enforced and therefore African-Americans would join the middle class, be just like "us" as white people saw it, and so the conflict would end. I call it the "fat and happy" theory: if everyone is bought off, they'll all be fat and happy, and not riot and interrupt our lives with drama.

But "fat and happy" may only work when your ethnic group is the majority. If you're a minority, you see a salient fact the majority cannot perceive: your group, and your values, are still not In Control. With Barack Obama, white folks and black folks saw a chance to put African-American values in control. But because the demands of the presidency are political and not cultural, this backfired.

The fragile balance of the 1970s — separate but equal, by other names — has been upset, and now we're in a competition for who's going to stay on top. Sad but true, this is the reality of multicultural societies dating back to day one of humanity: one group must be on top, and group-mixing only really occurs when the others destroy that dominant majority. The competition we see now is leading up to that conflict.

Let's look at a smattering of helpful news items:

[Black professor Henry "Skip" Gates] had returned from a trip to China last Thursday afternoon and found the front door of his Cambridge, Mass., home stuck shut. Gates entered the back door, forced open the front door with help from a car service driver, and was on the phone with the Harvard leasing company when a white police sergeant arrived.

Gates and the sergeant gave differing accounts of what happened next...Gates was charged not with breaking and entering, but with disorderly conduct after repeatedly demanding the sergeant's name and badge number. It doesn't matter whether Gates was yelling, or accused Sgt. James Crowley of being racist, or that all charges were dropped Tuesday.

Earl Graves Jr., CEO of the company that publishes Black Enterprise magazine, was once stopped by police during his train commute to work, dressed in a suit and tie.

"My case took place back in 1995, and here we are 14 years later dealing with the same madness," he said Tuesday. "Barack Obama being the president has meant absolutely nothing to white law enforcement officers. Zero. So I have zero confidence that (Gates' case) will lead to any change whatsoever."

[AP](#)

We still have no statistical or factual data for what would happen if a white professor did the same thing. Most conservatives would guess the treatment would not vary; after all, even well-dressed, well-spoken men commit crimes (for most of us, distinguishing between a Harvard professor and a con man can be difficult). In their view, the cops did a rational thing — hold the person breaking and entering until his identity can be verified. Then again, most don't live in neighborhoods where they see black people entering homes.



But to Democrats and African-Americans, the situation appears different — they see racial profiling, or the tendency of law enforcement to notice that more crimes occur in minority neighborhoods, that minorities have more convictions for crimes, and that minority gangs control more of the flow of drugs, and therefore, that they have a higher chance of conviction if they stop minorities. They see this case as clear-cut racial profiling, and think that a white man wouldn't even be stopped for doing the same thing.

I have no idea which viewpoint is correct. What's more important however is seeing how Gates is caught up in a war of tokens, whereby black people feel targeted by law enforcement, and white people feel defensive whenever this happens, because they don't want law enforcement to stop looking for criminals wherever they occur. This is part of that ethnic competition I write about above.

I know how the problem of racial profiling can be avoided. In the 1950s and early 1960s, cops were mostly "beat cops" — meaning they patrolled small areas constantly. After the 1960s, our cops operated by "flexible response," or taking calls on the radio and sending in the troops in force.

Beat cops didn't patrol in minority neighborhoods, nor did they stop people on freeways looking for drugs. They defended the turf they came from, and let the rest take care of itself. When we changed to flexible response, and the war on drugs intensified, that's when racial profiling became a noticed issue.

None of this really matters now. People are not concerned with how well law enforcement works; this is ethnic competition, with each side seeking privileges either by government or economic supremacy. And so to them, it doesn't matter whether it was racial profiling or not. It's how you want to interpret it that gets you and your people ahead in the game.

Let's look at another ambiguous circumstance:

Immigration agents raiding homes for suspected illegal immigrants violated the U.S. Constitution by entering without proper consent and may have used racial profiling, a report analyzing arrest records found.

Latinos made up a disproportionate number of the people arrested who were not the stated targets of the raids, and many of their arrest reports gave no basis for why they were initially seized, said the report, which was based on data from raids in New York and New Jersey.

The raids are ostensibly aimed at targeted individuals who present threats either to national security or community safety, but arrests of illegal immigrants nearby, known as collateral arrests, are also made.

[AP](#)

Remember how in high school the kids who got picked on formed a group of their own? This group was ultra-tolerant: you could be any kind of freak, or just a geek, but you were FIGHTING BACK against the majority. That's how many white elites view the ethnic conflict issue — they perceive themselves as picked-on geeks, and so have joined in a tolerance coalition to smash the majority, and enjoy using ethnic conflict to do it.

Many of these people work in non-profits that look for statistical reasons to discount law enforcement actions against minorities, including illegal aliens.

Once again, there's a split. Conservatives are going to say these cops went looking for bad guys, and in the process, found thousands of illegal aliens. Faced with the choice of enforcing the law or not, they chose to enforce the law and deport them.

Liberals are going to say that these raids were a pretext for rounding up illegal aliens and deporting them. Again, it's hard to know what's true. Believe what you're inclined to believe, because the real story isn't the justification of law, but the conflict of groups going on beneath it.

And a final corker of an example:

State police in riot gear rushed a downtown street to break up a standoff Tuesday between hundreds of black and white extremists who exchanged screams of "Black power!" and "White power!" during a protest over the state's handling of the case of a black man who was run over and dragged by a vehicle.

The conflict began with a march by about 100 mostly black activists who avoided a designated "protest zone" near Paris' courthouse and walked to the town square to chants of "Black Power!" and "No Justice, no peace!"

The rally in Paris, about 90 miles northeast of Dallas, is the third courthouse protest over the death of 24-year-old Brandon McClelland, whose mangled body was found Sept. 16 on a country road.

Prosecutors initially charged two of McClelland's white friends with murdering him. But a special prosecutor dismissed the charges last month, citing a lack of evidence, after a truck driver came forward and said he might have accidentally run over McClelland.

[AP](#)

Everyone remembers the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr. A sometimes-itinerant fellow with an alcohol problem and very little to his name, Byrd was lured into a compromising situation by white supremacists who then murdered him in a horrible way.



Of course, there's two sides to that story as well. These white supremacists became that way in prison, where the ethnic battle lines are so cleanly drawn that many states attempt de facto segregation to keep conflict to a minimum.

And back outside the big house, we also have two points of view. Black folks and many Democrats are going to see this case as a racial incident; Republicans and many white folks are going to see this case as an accidental vehicular homicide. Which is true?

Not surprisingly, this has resulted in an interesting trend in Obama's poll numbers:

That was fast. The hope and optimism that washed over the country in the opening months of Barack Obama's presidency are giving way to harsh realities.

An Associated Press-GfK Poll shows that a majority of Americans are back to thinking that the country is headed in the wrong direction after a fleeting period in which more thought it was on the right track.

[AP](#)

And as if to explain why:

The President earns approval from 41% of white voters, 97% of black voters, and 58% of all other voters.

[Rasmussen](#)

While up to 90% of minorities normally vote Democratic, they cannot be counted on to approve of the Democratic candidate after several months in office, and not all of them ever do. Yet his numbers are strong with one group, and falling with another. A big part of this is the sudden realization that he's not a racial equalizer, but a racial polarizer, which plays into our fears that there's no easy solution to race discontent in America. And the truth is equally "clear" to both sides as they now gear up for conflict.

The truth itself depends on what you believe. Or rather, which side of the conflict you're on. Truth really doesn't matter, only getting your group ahead. We thought Obama would end this Us-versus-Them, but it looks like by not being from either side fully, he has intensified it.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [democracy](#) · [race](#) · [status](#)

2081 (or Harrison Bergeron): Film Adaptation on the Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Classic Short Story

Jul 21st, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

[2081](#)

I look forward to this movie, but undoubtedly Hollywood will change something or make it all about the relationship between the two extraordinary dancers instead of focusing on the actual point of the story. Still, I'm surprised Hollywood would ever allow this to be produced. Should be an interesting film when compared to the [original story](#).

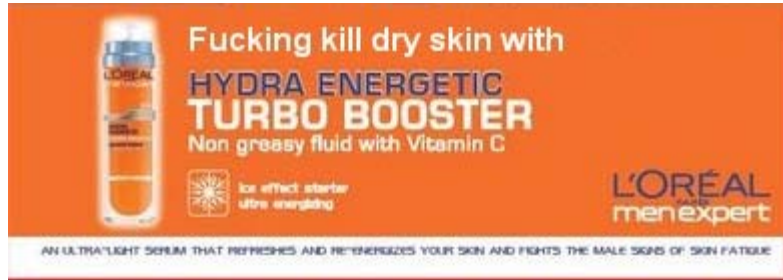
Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [censorship](#) · [control](#) · [devolution](#)

The great modern product scam

Jul 21st, 2009

by [Michael Lewellyn](#).



New from Loreal: Hydra Energetic Turbo Booster moisturizer. It's moisturizer, but for MEN (as if you couldn't already tell)!

Yeah, you heard right! Hydra Energetic! Not just merely hydrating, we're talking several mythological heads of moisture-embedding manliness! In TURBO! This is a moisturizer so energetic and masculine, the effect of applying it is like furiously masturbating while sprinting through a girl's college dorm wearing an antique diver's suit filled with lager! Hell yes indeed, it's moisturizer. For your man face. Not a performance enhancing device for your car, though you may be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

And with a name like Hydra Energetic Turbo Booster, what appearance conscious male could resist? It seems acceptable to buy an effeminate and vain beauty product if it's got a ludicrously overblown name like an engine part for a Ferrari. If there was a new male eyeliner (it's known as "guyliner", apparently) in the shops called Bastard V8 Musclepencil or something, I'm sure truckloads of them would sell, for a while anyway.

To be fair, for all I know this product might do exactly what it says on the tin. That is to say, once you get past all the meaningless hyper-bumpf, it actually moisturizes your skin. In essence, what Loreal are selling you is some liquid chemical that you rub on your face in the vain hope that it'll make you more attractive to women and at a retail price of \$13.25 for a 50ml bottle is probably more expensive than gold. But, it is Turbo and everything, so that's ok.

Basically, it's simple business expediency: a product that mainly sells to one audience is pitched to a new market by simply changing the packaging and advertising campaign. The product is not new, but you can dress it up to look new and give it a manlier scent (if that's not an oxymoron) and colour. Your average man on the street usually wouldn't dream of buying a "female moisturizer", but as long as it's got words like "turbo" and "energetic" on it, he'll fork out for the exact same product.

It's rather like how those tiresome teenage emo/goth/nu-metal types "hate" pop music and refuse to listen to it, yet will gladly and enthusiastically consume the very same garbage as long as it's played with angsty guitars and impotent shouting and wailing over it like a transsexual who's just been mugged. You can apply this uniquely modern ailment to almost anything – food, clothes, books, movies, even people (see Obama, hipsters etc).

The challenge we face everyday in our society is to get past all the nonsense and see what actually lies behind. That way you can ignore all the useless stuff that tempts you with surface gimmickry but has no real substance, saving yourself a lot of money and more importantly, time. In a world like ours it's an essential life skill to be able to sniff out bullshit and scams like man moisturizer, [Apple products](#) and voting for "change".

Anyway, next week I'll be reviewing the new range of Scud Destroyer desert camouflage men's handbags exclusively designed by ex-SAS hardman Andy McNab. I can't wait!

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [Books](#) · [gimmicks](#) · [scams](#)

The revolution never dies

Jul 20th, 2009
by [Doug Vance](#).

Christ popularized the concept that every person is included because they are each very special, yet oddly by denying all material world standards, the same. Through me, he said, whoever you are, you may be saved. Many centuries later, we came to realize we could apply this miracle to ourselves.

Enlightenment

The seeds are sown for an era of the mortal individual, an authority supreme over all. Divine authority falls into question. The old holy books are an ill fit for an [empiricist world](#) and interfere with what we wish to accomplish. Yet, there were good kings and queens and popes as there were poor ones. The good ones, as ever, ruled with considerate reason and the bad rulers were, as always and still today, completely corrupted. Organic human brains and character remain unchanged despite the revelations of the new age. The Enlightenment was not a biological evolutionary milestone for humanity. Only our loosened standards for rationalizing our beliefs was altered and we gave it the friendly name liberty.

Anthrocentric

With god out of our way, we realized there were less limitations on what our society found tolerable. A man could find the world was round and not be persecuted for heresy. He could offer us an heliocentric model of the Solar System and no priest would have him condemned. Since belief in divine judgement and the persecution by church authorities was falling out of favor, why not push against all the limits formerly imposed upon our minds and behaviour? We're now fully autonomous creatures and held accountable only if we appear to be directly destructive toward other autonomous individuals. Humanity becomes the new deity complete with its own myths.

Victimology

The [old authority](#) structure had to go. The past was horrible, dark, and ignorant (a projection upon history meaning: we the peasants-become-rulers never had much to offer). Aristocrats had kept us down for centuries and it was time for Change, for Hope's sake! The fully autonomous human is (have some blind faith here) capable of so much more, but the church and aristocracy were hoarding everything for themselves. All potential wealth shall now be made accessible to the most driven in its pursuit. Free enterprise is born. The church had vastly downsized back to its niche in Italy, no longer having dominion over a continent. The Americans, French and eventually, the Russians revolted. Now, the people will rule themselves for themselves.

Entitlement

With the new democracy, the greatest numbers will have their way first and the least will wait their turn. A limitless succession of wants took their slice of justice from society using the democratic system: emancipation ending slavery, industrial worker's rights, equality for racial minorities, women's liberation and a flood of aid to foreign lands. The tables turned and the old colonizers themselves became the colonized. Base revenge, an eye for an eye, reasons the Enlightened peasant turned self-crowned ruler, equals justice. The old revolutions mutate but never die.

Selfishness

The hordes now ruling themselves in liberation from hierarchal cultural unity began to socially divide by ever narrower individual pursuits. Small communities had grown into bustling hives of activity full of transient strangers. [Atomization](#) sets in as fewer familiar faces are seen. A billion hidden motives concealed under democratic liberal social reality replace doing right. Alone against a local society gone foreign, we insist on the maximized ability to pursue our own wants and for society to dismiss the cost to everyone else and to the natural world.

Marketing

With the dawning of the anticulture era of atomized self interest enabled by liberal democratic distributed

cost, the most successful methods rise to the surface. Among these is the oldest idea of the new enlightened age: the marketing of human equality. As common wisdom indicates, just as anyone can have anything if they pursue it hard enough, so anyone can be anything. The process of having replaces the old world's concept of being and rampant consumerism is then the ultimate expression of triumph in freedom.

Equality

We're all the same, the crowd believes, except some have more things and some have less things and those who have much more, since we're all the same, must be thieves. Spread the wealth, for greater justice. Tax the wealthier to raise up the poorer. If the poor aren't all visibly raised, tax harder. No child left behind. An injustice plus an injustice equals a balance of justice, reasons the Enlightened crowd. All must be flattened even as new classes of super equal victimhood identities appear, the ultimate group strategy for using our democracy and victimology formula to acquire things like expensive housing with a low income in order to seem more equal than ever before.

Negation

All human inequality is denied, any application eventually prosecuted, any assertion attacked with crowd justice everywhere. The idea of races troubles our sameness dogma, so it is dismissed, then attacked and prosecuted with ever tougher enforcement. With women's liberating displacement, the biological reality of distinction from men is as politically divisive as races and is then discarded from a public social reality sinking deeper into antireality. Like a rewritten Book of Revelations, history itself is dismissed with promises of its coming end as we enter the [eternal progressive age](#).

Dumbing

Denial of sex differences takes root, encouraged by the growing alternative sexuality movements. [Parents](#) begin to hide their child's gender, claiming it doesn't matter in order to display blind allegiance to popularly reasoned progress. Women insist they are as men in all ways. Progressive men imagine they may tune in to some feminine aspect within. Natural masculinity is mocked in an unplanned pincer attack. Feebly pretentious women empowered only by the force of the democratic state, not biology, pretend to imagined acts of maleness. A machismo anticulture appears where consumer products like body art and motorcycles display a pseudo manhood that is utterly externalized but inwardly censored for the sake of progress. Juveniles emulate, creating an [Emo subculture](#) complete with its own consumer accessories while intently blurring distinct individual sexual identity.

Annihilation

So the old revolution grinds along as ever. God was killed off to be replaced by the new social enemy the aristocrat. The aristocrat destroyed to make way for the new enemy, the production owners. They in turn redirect the revolution to the founding race of poor settlers. The settler race is assaulted by the crowd until diminished, but the revolution always finds a new demon to pursue. A new nation is established far away and the revolution turns former victims into inhumane fiends. The revolution eats itself for energy as Reconquista directs violence on former slaves inhabiting the western states.

All standards are gone as everything is equal and the anarchy of animals called democracy called Man's Enlightened Reason reigns. Women are men and men, women as reproduction is replaced with careers or activism. Educating is replaced with self-esteem boosting. Commerce equalizes and norms all cultures. Forest, swamp and meadow are flattened into pavement for marketplace. A new grey race of multiple ethnic hybrids become visible everywhere and popularized by media for holding high office. Laws increasingly turn toward regulating spoken opinions, wearing helmets and seat belts, yet increasingly ignore the now unmanageable rampant human smuggling, toxic pollution, or street violence in urban [No-Go Zones](#).

The mild and productive are former oppressor and potential extremist to be assaulted from below and above so the revolution can keep feeding. The rootless wanderer, armed with victimhood, no certain history and ambiguous lineage, the eternal recipient of social aid entitlement, is the hopeful new age manwoman of the future. With history and lineages erased, culture and standards never return to oppress us again. The new age manwoman is as an insect existing only to wander, consuming all as the established civilization [crumbles](#) to [ruin](#) all around, never to return.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [dystopia](#) · [idiocracy](#) · [revolution](#)

I understand Jane Austen

Jul 17th, 2009

by [Michael Llewellyn](#).



On a recent trip to some decaying, faceless city or other I spotted the following inscription crudely scratched into the wood of a toilet cubicle door:

"I understand Jane Austen"

It was a very curious thing to write on a toilet door and intrigued, I decided to capture it photographically for further analysis before heading back to the bar.

At first glance it seemed to be merely a bizarre and random piece of pretentious vandalism, perhaps the inebriated and spastic outpourings of some cider sodden student or drug addled hipster.

However it then struck me as being similar to, though less violently vehement than, the "yuppie scum must die" graffiti which Patrick Bateman spies (or himself writes) in Brett Easton-Ellis' *American Psycho* – a reflexive and unconscious discharge in sudden horror at the realisation of the hideousness of his surroundings.

It seems to me the author of this particular message was making a desperate and confused appeal to his fellow city dwellers, despairing of the stygian depths in which he believes himself helplessly stranded and powerless against, a rusty cog in the grinding merciless hell of the 21st century world.

Like a delicate flower absurdly sprouting up through miles of festering faeces and commercial plastered concrete, it states with quiet defiance how even in the midst of the baseness and ceaseless mechanised "advancement" of modern life, the author of this graffiti had still managed to cling onto some degree of higher thought.

Why Jane Austen though, I wonder. He could have plumped for Mary Shelley at the very least. Unless "I understand Jane Austen" is some kind of homosexual palare, in which case I may be about to receive some very unusual emails...

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [graffiti](#) · [jane austen](#) · [modern life](#)

Why conservatives are doomed

Jul 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

American conservative thinking has overwhelmed most of the world's conservative parties. Their idea is to base intense patriotism on the idea that we're "free," and can do whatever we want as individuals, and use that to justify caring about social order.



Ultimately what conservatives are trying to argue toward is that the society as a whole is more important than the individual, and that the individual must adapt to common sense about how reality works. They think "freedom" is a vector to that because it sounds good.

As a result, they've invented this mythos that Big State government — think Hitler, Stalin and Democrats — wants to take away your ability to do whatever you can afford to do. After all, those who are born smarter and work diligently tend to have some cash ready to use.

In this view, you can buy that big SUV because global warming is an illusion, and no one should be able to tell you what to do so you can be a rugged individualist. This thinking is doomed for the following reasons:

- Given such freedom, people opt for the least obligation possible. They're not going to uphold traditional values, but demand no values.
- You can't out-"freedom" the Democrats. They offer no restrictions, no cultural norms, and a welfare state. Almost no obligation, even to go to work.
- If everyone acts on their freedom, we're not going to pull together in the same direction, and we won't be able to face big problems of resources limiting our ability to do whatever we want.

It's that latter one — limited resources versus unlimited needs and desires — that we're going to face. For a minute, assume that global warming is simply a power grab by third world countries who want the first world to turn off its industry so they can get ahead. Fine — but what about pollution, species depletion, limited farmland, low water supplies, and violent cities?

The libertarians and Republicans this week set up a great wail about a new face in Washington who they associate with Big State decisions. They will claim he is against their Holy Book, their values as individualists, and the sanctity of life.

And thanks to resourceful bloggers, you can read excerpts from a hard-to-find book co-authored

by Holdren in the late 1970s, called Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment, online.

In it, you will find the czar wading into some unpleasant talk about mass sterilizations and abortions.

[Reason](#)

Oh no! Abortions and mass sterilizations — those might not be *fair* to the *rugged individualist*. But they also might be required by the demands of our situation here on earth.

After all, the world isn't just humans — it's an environment, too, and scarcity of resources including space which will regulate humanity. We can make decisions within the anthrosphere, but since we're one part of a big world, we may not have the ability to make those decisions the way we want to. Sometimes, we must simply adapt.

It is now hard to think of a single major problem we face, here in Britain or elsewhere, which would not be solved, or at least ameliorated, by having fewer people.

Everything from hospital waiting lists, crowded trains, the looming energy crisis, water and sewer systems unable to cope, unaffordable housing and unavailable dentistry have, at their core, Britain's burgeoning population.

Our roads will become even more congested, our trains more crowded and even slower, the waits for service longer and delays ever more a part of life.

Housing will become ever more unaffordable, we will have to spend billions on new schools and hospitals to cater for the equivalent of two new Londons – two vast metropolises somehow to be shoehorned into what is already a desperately crowded land.

We will, inevitably, lose great swathes of our countryside. The green belts will have to disappear. Ghastly and ill-conceived 'new towns' will spring up all over the South East and Midlands, the areas where new people want to live. London and its environs are already, effectively, full; but that will not stop them getting fuller still.

[The Daily Mail](#)

His point is refreshingly clear: even if we just look at numbers of people, what happens when we get more? We all live in cities, and the cities expand. The countryside is consumed. Whatever environmental problems exist get worse.

How do we reconcile the individual's unlimited wants and desires with a finite amount of space before we wreck things we need or should keep sacred, like a healthy environment and unpolluted air and water, or just enough space so that earth is not a giant sardine can?

Here's a short list of data points about how we're wrecking this planet with overpopulation:

- [Humans are using the Earth's resources and dumping waste 23 per cent faster than nature is able to regenerate, according to the Global Footprint Network, a non-profit group in Oakland, Calif.](#)
- [We won't make adequate progress on the most crucial environmental goals — reducing carbon emissions, preventing overfishing and decreasing deforestation, among them — unless we tackle growth and its ever increasing demands on the planet.](#)
- [Forest protection attracts people, people wreck forests](#)
- [But isn't the problem solving itself, as people have fewer children and population growth rates slow? Yes, he says, if you discount immigration](#)
- [Human population grew from 1.6 billion to 6.1 billion people during 20th century. During that time emissions of CO2, the leading greenhouse gas, grew 12-fold.](#)
- [Growing world population will cause a "perfect storm" of food, energy and water shortages by 2030, the UK government chief scientist has warned.](#)

- [Given our disproportionately large population to land mass ratio then, put simply, we are running out of space to dump our waste.](#)
- [A link between immigration and water shortages: the more people share the water, the less each one has.](#)
- [Easter Island is Earth writ small. Today, again, a rising population confronts shrinking resources.](#)
- [Water use is growing twice as fast as population, but there is no more water today than there ever has been.](#)
- [Seven Environmental Problems That Are Worse Than We Thought — courtesy of our booming human population.](#)
- [While the wildlife-conservation movement is valiantly attempting to save the world's remaining diversity of life, this effort is overwhelmed by the demands of mounting numbers of people.](#)
- [Uganda's rapid population growth — one of the highest in the world — means it will lose its entire forest cover in the next 50 years](#)
- [Consumption has grown so much in the last 30 years that demands on natural resources now exceed the planet's capacity for renewal by a quarter each year](#)
- [All efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions may be for naught, however, if we ignore population growth.](#)

You get the picture. Now on to the magic question: how is it that we have systematically failed to address these problems, and that they're still elephants in the room today?

You'll notice that a lot of our effort spent on this blog is devoted to smashing the idea of equality, or that each person has a "right" to do whatever they want. We also spent a lot of time pointing out that people have different abilities and hence values to a forward-moving civilization.

Our goal in this is to smash the sacred cow of the conservatives, which is individual autonomy as a promised right to all people. It is also a sacred taboo of the left through their dogma of "equality."

Why would we do this? After all, we'll be more popular if we promise you can buy that SUV, and that just buying green light bulbs will take care of the problem. The people who make those promises are far more popular than us.

However, dishonesty has a way of coming back to haunt people. When our writers go home at night, we have no guilt on our consciences because we did not lie — we faced the truth with a level gaze and if it didn't blink first, we didn't back down.

Our society is making people into small atoms that do not interact with others. People recede into themselves and do not face reality and mortality. They fear anything except what they intend to do, or in other words, their wants and desires.

Students are immature, they rely too heavily on Internet tools such as Wikipedia as research sources, they fail to learn independently and they expect success without putting in the effort, said respondents to the survey by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations.

"The McGuinty government is applauding itself for increased graduation rates from secondary school," says the confederation's report, which urges more funding for classrooms.

"However, it appears that secondary students are not receiving the requisite skills that they need to be successful in university studies."

Only 2.27 per cent thought students are better prepared.

Observers blame a number of factors, from inflated parental expectations to the self-esteem culture that leads young people to believe that failure is impossible and paying tuition means getting a good grade.

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

Look at what this article shows us: the end result of “freedom,” or agreeing to have no direction except personal directions, is that people recede into themselves and become less capable, and more solipsistic.

We’ve been so busy worrying about how to make everyone feel equal and wanted, we’ve forgotten about the world around us. Now as the free resources get tighter, we’re going to have to make hard decisions about the future.

Conservatives are making the biggest career screwup ever by not simply being honest. They could be like the government in the article above — promoting themselves for having made more people graduate, even if at a lower rate of quality, or in other words, hiding the truth behind one positive attribute of a bad situation — or they could be honest.

When you fail to tell the truth, you are de facto lying, because you are hiding things people need to act on behind a smokescreen of happy — like lying to them directly and telling them something or other is not a problem. Conservatives are attempting to embark on a big lie to try to beat the even bigger “freedom” dogma of the Democrats. It is not going to work.

If instead they got practical about facing this situation, starting with the hard parts we are afraid to face — that not everyone can fulfill all of their wants and desires, and that we’ll have to rank people by their usefulness — they will become known as honest people as the years go by. And people will thank them for that.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [equality](#) · [overpopulation](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Boston Globe Shuts Down Reader Comments On Controversial Issues

Jul 15th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Some of the most controversial recent articles published on Boston.com have had comments shut down where normally, comments from users would soar and draw attention to an article or site. This includes a recent story about a(n) (il)legal immigrant apparently about to lose access to his health care:

State lawmakers deleted money for immigrants' health insurance as one of many cuts made to balance the budget for the fiscal year that began July 1. Governor Deval Patrick has proposed a \$70 million compromise plan that would grant immigrants access to medical care in August, when their coverage ends, through a patchwork of other state programs that health advocates say is spotty and confusing, especially for those who, like Hernandez, do not speak English.

The 30,000 immigrants caught in the middle have "special status" in the immigration system. Many have been in the country less than five years and are seeking asylum from war-ravaged regions.

Hernandez, a 51-year-old janitor, said he arrived in the United States on a visa in 1993, a year after a 12-year civil war ended in his homeland. He applied for asylum and was denied, but was able to obtain temporary legal status in 2001 after a series of earthquakes shattered his country.

Besides, his older brothers and a sister in El Salvador needed the money he sent home.

[[+](#)]

I'd be a bit more worried about a lifelong US citizen losing access to health care. Yet, illegal immigrants are worried that their state subsidized health care gravy train may be letting them off at the next stop? People aren't spending money and the state is scrambling for funds, so just like any business, costs have to be cut when revenues fall, particularly in the short term where budget gaps needs to be closed. Don't these people realize that it takes money to supply anyone with free, expensive services? If the well dries up, who's fault is it?

Many people are considering leaving the region over issues like this. One story that comes to mind is that a relative of mine has a few grand in savings but no job, so no state subsidized health benefits until all her savings are gone. So people who hide cash or send it overseas to bring family members here are rewarded, or so it seems.

"Journalists" like Ms. Sacchetti, who apparently disabled comments on this story and is all about [illegal immigration](#), always fail to speak about the tax base and how alienated citizens feel when they have to pay for services given away to illegal immigrants for free. This country was not intended as a safe haven for just anyone. I guarantee you not one person from [L'Aquila](#) is asking the US to take them in because they are in the middle of an "earthquake ravaged region" the way Mr. Hernandez did.

Massachusetts, and by extension the US, needs to get out of the business of providing for those who don't provide anything back to the state. It should come as no surprise that when lifelong residents go through rough economic times and start saving their money, the government scrambles to find ways to continue pumping cash into systems that are unsustainable. Time to steer the ship away from the iceberg – hopefully starting with a [new generation of politicians](#).

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#) · [class war](#) · [consumerism](#)

If you live in denial, expect rude surprises

Jul 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Life provides a metaphor in this story about a sign that got vandalized in Las Vegas:

The famed "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada" sign greeting visitors to the vacation destination has red graffiti scrawled across it.

Tourists who discovered the defacing said they were disappointed and planned to digitally remove the graffiti from their souvenir photos.

[FOX](#)

The problem with individuals (not humans per se) is that they can choose to recede into their own minds, and edit reality there so that it makes them feel better.



Like drug use or drinking, this is backward logic.

Instead of changing reality to be better, you change your perceptions of it to be less accurate but also, less threatening to you as an individual.

When one person starts doing this, others emulate if for no other reason to keep up. When it becomes a cornerstone of a society, we talk a good game about freedom, equality, diversity and justice, but really what we all mean is the unfettered ability to keep receding into our own minds. There we are safe from being wrong or dying.

Of course, life is tricky. The really worst stuff that people do takes years, decades or even centuries to manifest itself. If you do something horrible in 1980, expect to see it becoming clear only around 2020. That is, if you're talking on the level of social change.

This article popped into mind when I read the rather exasperated rant of someone just figuring out how bad the problem is:

Our belief in everything has been shattered by a series of shock revelations that have shaken our core to its core. You can't move for toppling institutions. Television, the economy, the police,

the House of Commons, and, most recently, the press ... all revealed to be jam-packed with liars and bastards and graspers and bullies and turds.

And we knew. We knew. But we were deep in denial, like a cuckolded partner who knows the sorry truth but tries their best to ignore it. Over the last 18 months the spotlight of truth has swung this way and that, and one institution after another was suddenly exposed as being precisely as rotten as we always thought it was.

[The Guardian](#)

We don't like to think about it, but we endorse this con because we can afford to put up with it, don't want to get involved where an angry mob might tear us apart, and we want something to keep the other idiots busy while we are busy doing whatever we find important. So we tacitly approved the con and passed the buck on to the next generations.

I don't think things are falling apart in the way Charlie Brooker wants us to think they are. Remember, the bigger something is, the more slowly change happens. Instead of a big bang, we're looking at a slow decline.

And why? Because instead of fixing the object in the photo, we're editing the photo in our heads.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Freedom is collective slavery

Jul 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Slavery takes many forms. An individual can be enslaved; a group can be enslaved, both physically and optionally, by ideas. Today, in celebration of Amerika.org's history of telling [the difficult and unpopular truth](#), we're tackling "Freedom," the holy grail of the modern West.

It's slavery.



Not for the individual — no, you're held to fewer standards and have fewer obligations, so you're "free" although you still have to pay for it — but for the group. If they get you asking the wrong question, and possibly going in the wrong direction as a result, your group will not achieve what it needs to.

And then they'll feed you palliative, feelgood stuff like "But we have the freedom! We are not the Hitler or the Stalin!"

Bear with me: the problem with "free" is that it's a replacement for a goal. Instead of picking a goal, we pick the goal of no-goal, basically agreeing to disagree and hoping that all the stuff which required consensus to build — civilization, grocery stores, roads, hospitals, science, etc — will just keep carrying on because, hey, it's there already.

Here's a take on "free" as in beer, which is a related concept, as I'll show in a minute:

In other words, FREE caused people to choose an inferior product more than they would have if the prices were both positive. Thus, in a world where there is more FREE stuff, the quality of stuff will decline. It's hard to believe that this needs to be pointed out. And again, this is not the same as prices declining because technology has become more efficient — prices are still above 0 in that case. FREE lives in a world of its own.

If you're only trying to get people to buy your target product by packaging it with a FREE trinket, then that's fine. You're still selling something, but just drawing the customer in with FREE stuff. This jibes with another behavioral economics finding — that when two items A and B are similar to each other but very different from item C, all lying on the same utility curve, people ignore C because it's hard to compare it to the alternatives. They end up hyper-comparing A and B since their features are so similar, and whichever one is marginally better

wins.

So if you have three more or less equally useful products, A B and C, where B is essentially what A is, just with something FREE thrown in, people find it a no-brainer to choose B.

[Gene Expression](#)

People like the option that obligates them to do less. You don't have to pay, and it doesn't rope you into some political or social obligation, so you can keep being in your own head and not letting the world in much. That helps especially if you fear the world because you don't understand it and so worry that whatever you try will fail, or someone who knows more will point out that you don't understand reality.

It's like a bunch of kids when test scores are handed out. If everyone gets a C, everyone is happy; if one kid gets an A, no one is happy because this kid showed that it's possible to get an A. But if we thought it was impossible or unlikely, we don't feel the need to reach for it. [We're happy as we are](#), because we aren't aware of what being "a C student" means unless there's an A student. That's the nature of a relative universe.

But then why is "freedom" so popular?

I'll advance a radical theory — we're not thinking of ourselves so much as thinking of how we can compel others to include us in their social group, therefore gaining us the same advantages they have, which we would not have had without inclusion.

It's simple monkey dynamics:

An observer feels more empathy for someone in pain when that person is in the same social group, according to new research in the July 1 issue of The Journal of Neuroscience.

The study shows that perceiving others in pain activates a part of the brain associated with empathy and emotion more if the observer and the observed are the same race. The findings may show that unconscious prejudices against outside groups exist at a basic level.

The study confirms an in-group bias in empathic feelings, something that has long been known but never before confirmed by neuroimaging technology. Researchers have explored group bias since the 1950s. In some studies, even people with similar backgrounds arbitrarily assigned to different groups preferred members of their own group to those of others. This new study shows those feelings of bias are also reflected in brain activity.

[Science Daily](#)

We want that empathy from others. So we offer a trade: I won't criticize your dumb actions if you won't criticize mine. To make that sound good, like the dishonest little monkeys we are, we call that "freedom" because "free" sounds good — no restrictions. Translation: a direction of no-direction.

Here's another example of that:

"You may actually be a size 14 and, according to whatever particular store you're in, you come out a size 10," said Natalie Nixon, associate professor of fashion industry management at Philadelphia University. "It's definitely to make the consumer feel good."

Research shows that, when it comes to self-perception, the concept of "overweight" may be relative.

A working paper from a group led by Mary Burke, senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Massachusetts, suggested that people's perceptions of overweight have shifted, and "normal" is now heavier than it used to be.

[CNN](#)

If you don't want to feel fat, and want to go back into comfortable solipsistic denial, we'll just change the definition of FAT. Now we all agree that fat begins at 300 pounds, not 200, so you're not "technically" fat.

Feel better?

Freedom's the same scam.

If we want a mutual incompetence society, we're not going to call it that. We're going to call it freedom. It means that instead of finding a goal or values in common, we agree to have none, and make that our highest goal. Not surprisingly, we not only cannot agree on future actions, but we bypass them entirely. After all, our goal is freedom... not steering the ship of state toward any future direction. Things are fine as they are now. We're free. Free from criticism, mostly. So there's no need for change, because if that change ends up being an A student, us C students are going to feel dumb and want to kill.

This strategy works:

Dumbfounding led him to view morality as driven by two separate mental systems, one ancient and one modern, though the mind is scarcely aware of the difference. The ancient system, which he calls moral intuition, is based on the emotion-laden moral behaviors that evolved before the development of language. The modern system — he calls it moral judgment — came after language, when people became able to articulate why something was right or wrong.

The emotional responses of moral intuition occur instantaneously — they are primitive gut reactions that evolved to generate split-second decisions and enhance survival in a dangerous world. Moral judgment, on the other hand, comes later, as the conscious mind develops a plausible rationalization for the decision already arrived at through moral intuition.

Moral dumbfounding, in Dr. Haidt's view, occurs when moral judgment fails to come up with a convincing explanation for what moral intuition has decided.

[NYT](#)

In other words, we have a built in compassion reflex — and then, we've got our social brains working overtime trying to figure out how to leverage it. And from that process we get "freedom" instead of the more logical "treat people well." Because we can have both, you see — a faux compassion which is actually a power grab, by demanding "freedom" for others so they'll help enforce our independence from obligation.

What a negative view of the world! In fact, we might call it a primal superstition: fear of anything that obligates us as individuals to a collective course of action, or even agreement about our direction, even though both those things are necessary for civilization.

It's no surprise that the agitating for "freedom" has ramped up over the last 200 years, while we've been busy wrecking our environment, making ugly cities, and getting fat as pigs on fast food. This is why we are unable to address our dying climate, our rotting cities, and other problems that affect all of us — because we're thinking in terms of "freedom" for the individual, we enslave the group to the judgment of no-judgment.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

Ye newe deluded peasant and his PS3

Jul 9th, 2009

by [Michael Llewellyn](#).



One day I'll be king! Well, not really, but I can rule my own little world on PS3 and have 500 friends on myspace!

Another thing I often hear people saying is how much better life is nowadays than in former times. I think what they really mean is more *comfortable*. Our modern average man aka technology-empowered-peasant, genuinely believes that comfort (read: TV, couch, porn, air-con) = progress and civilisation. But gradually moulding an ass-shape into a sweaty couch and aimlessly cruising around in a mean-looking Japanese car doesn't (gasp) equate to a better existence or better functioning society, as I'm sure you all know.

The cowboy/frontiersman of the old West re-emerged into popular consciousness after a few visionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries found themselves strangely disgruntled with the end of rigorous frontier life and at their expanding waistlines. They realised that the comfort and luxury their predecessors had worked so hard for had merely ended up making them fat, bored and spineless. Scandinavian heavy metal bands in the late 1980's and early 1990's also arrived at the same conclusion, finding in their own cultural heritage the pre-modern figure of the viking warrior, exaggeratedly enshrouded in Norse legend as inspiration and ideal for life.

In those often mythologised days we call the medieval period, your average peasant toiled ceaselessly in the fields for a pittance. Rich landowners owned the field and even the peasant himself. He had no real concept of time as we know it today, he just worked from dawn until dusk. He mostly drank local ale brewed by monks because water was too filthy and contaminated.

No doubt our modern cyber-peasant feels much more important and "freer" than his modest forebears as he finishes toiling in his skyfield of concrete and glass at precisely 17:00hrs, falling into the tavern (probably Irish themed) and getting wasted on his choice of cheap foreign beer as his water has too much fluoride in it. I'm sure he enjoys the freedom to buy whatever colour couch he fancies, or to add an enormous spoiler to his Mitsubishi. In reality his life has not changed one bit, however his own self-deluded perception is that it has.

He remains a simple peasant just as he was in medieval times, despite the trappings and comforts that a relatively rich Western existence now provides him with. The sad fact is if harnessed correctly the peasant can be a useful member of society working to benefit the whole, no matter how menial their job might be. His job satisfaction derives from that very fact. He knows his place, his lot allocated to him in life. We can't all be king and that's something accepted, not resented.

Today however, our peasant is working to benefit international commerce. He is a battery with a little wire trailing off into an engine that powers the grim spiky tank tracks of the modern world. He realises that his tedious labour benefits no one but the faceless executives sitting around drinking virgin's blood in a swanky boardroom somewhere. He knows how terrible his mindnumbing existence truly is and so he dreams up fantasies of being a rockstar or James Bond or whatever. He fuels this with popular culture which in centuries past used to mean the plays of Shakespeare (which were enjoyed by peasant and nobleman alike) but now means American Idol and other hollow and desperate potential means of escaping the smiling horror of 9-5.

It took this rabble we call the "crowd" centuries to win its lazy comforts (though in truth they were handed out to keep them docile and as incentives to work harder), it will only grow little balls and shout at the TV or post on internet forums if it feels those comforts are threatened. "What about my rights?" they wail, "stop keeping me down!" they yell, "I can be anything I want to be" they say defiantly, bottom lip a-trembling. Instead of confronting life, our peasant chums are happy to pursue escapism and self-delusion of every possible kind. Without such distractions they face a very miserable reality check indeed, as they're unable to face life as it truly is.

Whereas those malcontents who in finding little of worth in modern comfy living look back and attempt revivals of pre-couch spirit, the modern peasant thinks back to the days of his predecessors and says "never again". After all, how the hell could he live without his DVDs and PS3 games to keep him safely ensconced in his vicarious fantasy world? The fact that spending time consumed in an online game called Second Life is a massively popular peasant pastime is surely no coincidence (but that's a tale for another day).

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [modern life](#) · [society](#)

Jesus needs better mints

Jul 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



So in the name of being open-minded, I tried the “scripture mints” that came my way through interesting channels. On the whole, I have a rule that I will consider anything, but if I figure out it’s based in bad thinking, I bail out and head for the hills, never to return.

My first concern, of course, was the ingredients, because one of the best things our government has done is require manufacturers to list what stuff they’re putting in foodish items:

Sorbitol, Xylitol, Artificial Flavor, Magnesium Stearate and Acesulfame Potassium

O RLY?

What an interesting collection of lab experiments. It’s rare to find real mint oil, even though it’s not expensive, in mass consumer candy; I understand the use of non-sugar sweeteners as well. But add it all up and I’m not feeling super thrilled about people who are cutting costs on a half-ounce of mints.

The taste was not bad, but not distinct, either. Like the Wintermint Lifesavers that use artificial flavor, it’s a one-dimensional “minty” but not mint taste that somehow ends up a lot sweeter than it should. All of the edge, bite and fullness of the taste is gone, but no one would confuse it with chocolate, I guess. Still, I wouldn’t recommend it.

Consistency on the mints was good. In fact, these are some of the better-dissolving mints I have known. These little fish — and who can resist a fish-shaped candy? — stay on the tongue for about ten minutes, slowly losing edges and finally shape until they are like little blurry coffins eroding in your mouth. Good points there.

Crunchiness was not bad either. If you’re really a person on the run, you’re going to crunch your mints and not suck on them. After all, people sucking on tiny things look like they have a forebrain disease. I would

say these mints score well on the crunchiness scale because they are crunchy but not too hard, although with the artificial flavor cheesiness, it's hard to want to crunch them.

I guess my summary here would be: why bother? They're too small to have scriptures on them. They're not better than competing mints with better prices. They may work well on the breath, but I wasn't brave enough to ask anyone for ratings ("Hey, I just ate a pound of onions and had a scripture mint. Want to see if Jesus can hold back the tide of stench?").

If I were in charge of a modern church, I would focus less on making it an ideological brand than a community identity and center. People crave a community center and a communal sense of togetherness and clarity, of having a purpose to their existence as a group, so they don't feel that obligation to each other is arbitrary.

People like knowing that their efforts go toward something good. Scripture Mints, like so many mass products ideological and otherwise, may not be it.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Diversity is destructive

Jul 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

If you watch Hollywood movies, they give clear advice to those pursued by another human: go hide in a crowd.

Our current mania for diversity reflects the individual desire to hide in a crowd. If there's a dominant ideology, then we can be seen as not participating in it. But if there's no ideology, culture, religion or group that's favored, we're all OK and there's no way we can be wrong.

It's a demographic equivalent to anarchy, a desire to destroy all standards so all individuals are equally acceptable, which is an *emotional* vision that is appealing to the individual who feels low in self-confidence but also sees the world through a filter of self, and so is trying to reconcile the two and develops a kind of "persecution complex" where they treat all effects in life as personally directed.



Yet on the other hand, if we want society to function in an orderly fashion, everyone has to be moving *roughly* in the same direction, and sharing the same values. That way we avoid endless arguments: "Well, who's to say what's right?" — "What fits our culture, which is the values we share in common."

Diversity takes many forms. Religion, culture, ideology, ethnicity, race, class, intelligence, and moral character. All are destructive because they limit the ability of society to order itself, and thus condemn it to constant internal friction. In that state, the only ones who win are the cynical and cruel manipulators who quietly enrich and empower themselves through destructive acts.

Our "diverse" societies in the west have only really been diverse for about thirty years, and results are not encouraging. We're getting more fractious and less able to agree, there's less sense of a collective identity that motivates us to help others without being forced, and the general literacy and clarity of our populations are declining.

Even more, there's a threat to diversity itself from "diversity" — or mixing all things equally — as we seem to think is important:

Reproductive isolation, provided by geographic separation, made divergent evolution, and the great creative achievement of human racial diversity, possible — a process which is still

continuing, and being continually refined. Divergent evolution is the cause of racial diversity. Reproductive isolation is the condition required for divergent evolution to occur. Interbreeding is the great opposing or counteracting force of divergent evolution, and invariably occurs — and can only occur — when different races are brought into contact and reproductive isolation is not in effect. When engaged in on a small scale interbreeding retards or slows the process of divergent evolution but does not stop or reverse it. When conducted on a large scale it prevents divergent evolution from occurring, maintaining uniformity and forestalling the creation of diversity. If divergent evolution has already occurred and diversity has already been created, interbreeding acts to reverse the process of evolutionary divergence, to undo or decrease the racial diversity and differences that have been created and return to uniformity. Thus reproductive isolation is as necessary for racial preservation as it is for racial creation. The course of evolution and the genetic composition of future generations is determined by the breeding decisions of countless individuals. Reproductive isolation assures that those individuals who do reproduce will reproduce their own racial type, as it effectively limits their choice of partners to their own racial type.

Racial interbreeding has occurred throughout the course of human evolution, retarding or reversing the creative process of evolutionary divergence. But geographic separation — by providing the conditions of reproductive isolation required for divergent evolution to occur, and for the resulting racial diversity to be preserved — has sufficiently limited the extent of interbreeding to permit evolutionary divergence to continue. So long as the condition of reproductive isolation of the races is continued and preserved, the racial diversity created by the process of divergent evolution will also tend to be continued and preserved. But if it is lost the reverse process of counter-evolution or devolution by interbreeding will tend to become stronger, and move the interbreeding races away from diversity and toward uniformity and the negation of unique and distinct racial characteristics.

Racial Compact

Diversity is not only destructive of culture, but it's destructive to diversity itself.

And again, this applies to any kind of diversity. The most religiously diverse states are the ones with recurring religious conflict. The states with the broadest intelligence spread and class diversity are the ones wracked by class warfare. Any form of diversity increases internal conflict and makes the nation unable to act on a consensus, agreement, accord, etc — in other words, it doesn't act, and so the really big long-term problems pile up and poison it.

As said in a blog comment:

I am opposed to racism.

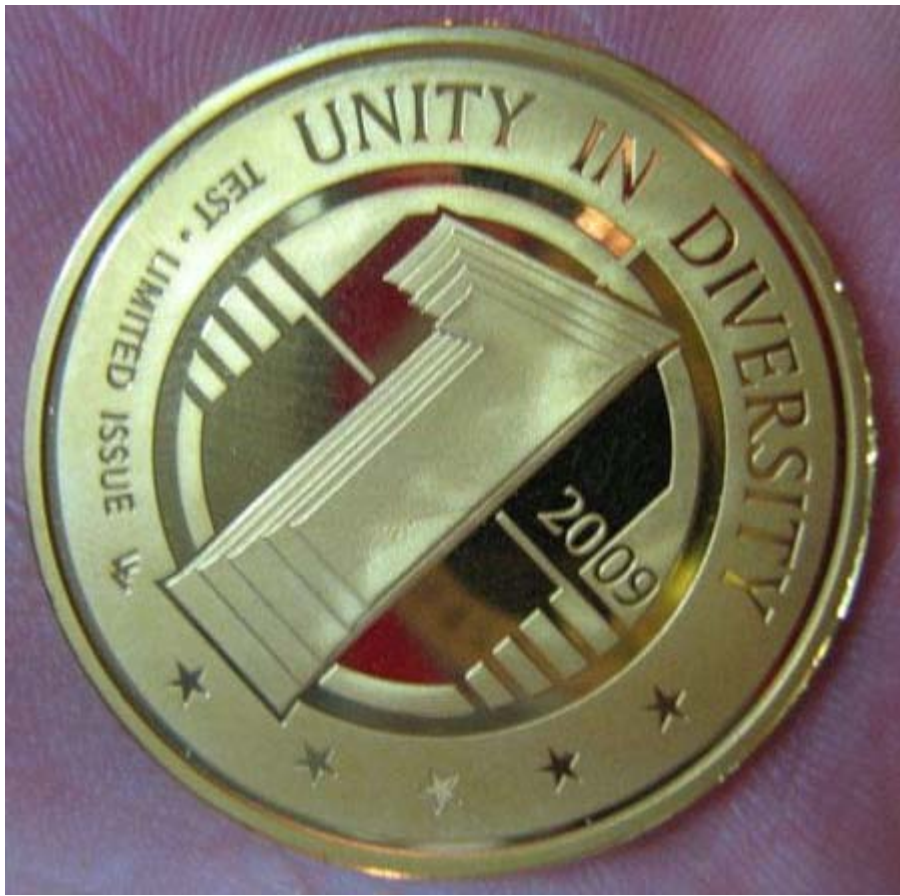
Race is only one aspect of diversity. There's also religious, cultural, class, etc. diversity.

I think however we need to get past our fear of taboos and do what is sensible. Diversity benefits none of the participants.

I think racism, or the consideration of others as superior/inferior, is bad philosophy. It assumes there's an arbitrary purpose to life outside of adaptation.

Even more, we have to make a choice: do we want to be ruled by powerful bureaucracies, who are needed to keep order over a huge group of people with little in common? Or, do we want to regulate ourselves through agreement on what our values are, and the organic means of keeping a nation together: shared culture, genetics, language and values?

It's that narrow of a choice. Either we are uncontrollably different, and need a strong hand to rule us, or we form ourselves into groups defined by agreement or lack of diversity, and from that, we regulate ourselves so well we don't need a strong hand to do it for us.



Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [multiculturalism](#)

The climate change elephant in the room

Jul 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



Humans are funny. Because we are personalities that control the mind and body, we view the world through the same filter, and tend to defer to authority even if it's incompetent — so long as it leaves us alone.

No obligation to others means we're just fine pretending we're solitary hunter-gatherers, even if we depend on society and will cry like infants if our grocery stores, hospitals, shopping malls, cars, running water, electricity and cars aren't there for easy picking.

There's about to be a bit of a ruckus now that the major nations have dropped their CO2 capping plan:

Major nations have failed to agree to set a goal halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, according to a draft document ahead of talks tomorrow – a setback to efforts to secure a new UN climate pact.

Neotiations involving senior officials from the 17-nation Major Economies Forum broke down overnight after China and India opposed any mention of the target, a source familiar with negotiations told Reuters.

They first want to see rich nations commit to making deep cuts in their own emissions by 2020 and they want developed nations to work out plans to provide developing nations with short-term finance to help them cope with ever more floods, heatwaves, storms and rising sea levels, the source said.

[The Independent](#)

Translation: rich nations said let's all work together now, and developing nations said "You first!"

Setting aside moral and legal issues, which seem to be a [luxury of rich European and North Asian populations](#), we can see this is a problem: one group will emerge on top if any capping, limiting, etc. occurs.

In the developed world, this would mean asking our industry to cut itself in half, and our people to halve their lifestyles. The way of handling things in developed nations is to offer tax incentives, gear up industry to make the right products, etc., and stop what we can that way.

But as you can see from [the energy use of different nations](#), most developed nations exist because they regulate climate and expend a lot of energy on infrastructure, including industry, hospitals, law enforcement, etc. The developing world has no such expenditure curve.

So we're at an impasse because the developed world is unwilling to regulate its existing population and thus fall behind in competition, and the developing world is unwilling to limit its future capacity and thus remain under the developed world's thumb. And in the meantime, we have six billion people, soon to be nine billion.

Each of those people is going to require at minimum a certain amount of water, electricity, gasoline, food and space; it's not just the space to house them, but the space and energy required for the infrastructure. They will all want hospitals, schools, roads, stores, running water, etc.

And that brings us to the dilemma humanity is unwilling to solve:

Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, and Professor John Guillebaud, vented their frustration yesterday at the fact that overpopulation had fallen off the agenda of the many organisations dedicated to saving the planet.

The scientists said dealing with the burgeoning human population of the planet was vital if real progress was to be made on the other enormous problems facing the world.

"It is the elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about" Professor Guillebaud said. "Unless we reduce the human population humanely through family planning, nature will do it for us through violence, epidemics or starvation."

[The Independent](#)

We cannot say **no** to anyone, because each voter fears it will be he or she that will hear the "no."

So because of our political systems — democracy, consumerism, capitalism — the unpopular idea of population reduction goes unacted, even as it becomes vital.

It's simply an unpopular truth.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [class warfare](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [overpopulation](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Why you lose your (cr)appetite

Jul 8th, 2009

by [Michael Llewellyn](#).



I bet you've often heard people say how junk food products they remember from childhood "don't taste the same anymore". My mother used to say it about a particular brand of energy drink, my father about a particular brand of chocolate biscuit. My great-grandfather used to say it about Coca-Cola (well, he was right there, the cocaine content has definitely been severely reduced since his day). Maybe you've said it yourself.

But the fact is, these junk foods haven't changed, you have. Your palate grows as you get older and leave childhood behind. As you experience a greater variety of food you begin to appreciate the delicate nuances and subtle flavours of what you eat more and more. You no longer require or enjoy a plate of sledgehammer burger anymore because your palate has expanded, improved and evolved. It's part of the process of becoming an adult, knowing when to leave childish things behind, outgrowing them naturally.

On the other hand, you have the slovenly, quite literally lumpen proles who don't know any better because somewhere along the line their ancestors didn't make the necessary leaps that yours did. These are the TV addicts, the welfare leeches, the chicken-tikka-lasagne eaters (yes such a culinary abomination really does exist). They think a tuna steak is "posh" because you don't eat it with ketchup. They feed their fat children potato chips for breakfast and microwave fries for dinner. They angrily defend this lifestyle by saying they're giving their kids what they want, healthy food is too expensive, accusing you of being an elitist snob, blah blah blah.

Then you have the hipsters who eat junk because it's ironic. They sit on the internet youtubing 1980's Transformers cartoons, eating pickled onion flavour Monster Munch and sipping Um Bongo fruit juice, squinting through their tinted non-prescription glasses at the crudely animated Japanese figures stuttering across the screen. Probably in their underpants. Pokemon underpants, perhaps. Living in this way enables them to eschew responsibility, because children don't have responsibilities. They defend this as their freedom to do what they want.

Large fast food chains are starting to catch on to the fact that many people are starting to feel the need to defend their eating habits out of a barely acknowledged embarrassment. I've seen McDonalds "restaurants" newly refurbished with fashionable dark brown mock-leather seating and shiny chrome embellishments. The wobbly-reared clientele remain the same, but at least they feel a bit better about themselves, slumped in what for them are plush surroundings while they shovel reconstituted offal into their gullets.

So next time you hear someone moaning that Oreos and Wagon Wheels don't taste as good as they used to, why not remind them how much better fresh salmon tastes than when you were young? Just don't eat it too often because we've completely fucked the seas and rivers with toxic waste. I'm only saying.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowd](#) · [crowdism](#) · [diet](#) · [food](#) · [health](#) · [junk](#)

Self-pity and Darwin

Jul 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Our society is very fond of the idea that we are enlightened. We are scientific, progressive, compassionate humanity.

Underneath this veneer of nice, the usual manipulations go on for personal profit — which is the underlying theme of humanity in every age: sacrifice the self for the whole, or sacrifice the whole for the self.

However, in order to keep the sheep and goats in line, we form pleasant fictions in order to compensate, and from this we get our inflated self-image. We did not start out overrated ourselves; we did it in response to one too many incidents of humans failing themselves.

Our society is also very fond of the idea that we have done away with superstition, and replaced it with modern science, including Darwin's natural selection. But what if superstition just changed names, so that when we batted the old away, its falling reveals a new face on the same mentality?

To make this concrete, let me ask you what you think of this political party's chances in the 2012 elections:

THE DARWIN PARTY OF AMERICA

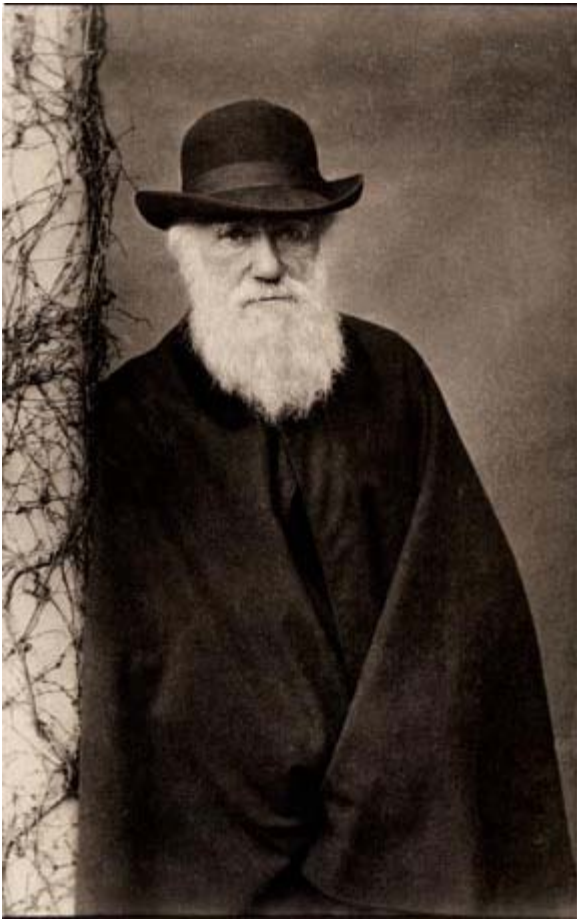
Our platform:

- * We feel no obligation to any other nations or the U.N.
- * We will push aside and occupy the territory of any nation near us which is lower in average IQ or less organized, more corrupt or less militarily strong.
- * Our state will have no welfare. Instead, there will be rigorous competition at all levels.
- * Those who cannot pull their weight because they are deformed, retarded or disabled will be left to die.
- * We will maintain a distinct plumage, and a high-degree of third cousin inbreeding, so we resemble each other and can defend each other as a group.
- * Meritocracy will replace bureaucracy. The only criterion for someone's choice for a position is how competent they are.
- * We will not have prisons. Violators will either be killed by the public or exiled from our lands.

Darwinism, or natural selection, works because it always puts those with the best abilities ahead. This way, you don't need an authoritarian "nanny state" making sure we all make it through. The Darwin Party is based on the idea that we should not all make it through — only the best should survive.

How well do you think this party would do in a democracy? Pretty poorly, indeed.

Our modern society is based on the idea of pity. It starts with self-pity, when we're afraid we personally cannot compete or do not have a place. That extends to group pity, when we figure out that if we pity someone worse off than ourselves, we benefit because if their extreme situation becomes acceptable our less extreme situation does as well.



Charles Darwin, author of Natural Selection, is not amused.

This is the psychology of modern society: band together to protect our least competent members, so that each of us feels we are protected by that rule.

It's that old superstition — "the meek will inherit the earth" and "we are all equal in the eyes of God" — but with a new face, isn't it?

Each time I see someone committing an act of murder against the environment, I think: there is someone who probably should not be alive, because this destructive act is the height of their competence.

Each time I see someone bungling a simple task — driving, home care, a logical argument — I realize that somewhere out there is a society where they haven't made bungling politically correct, and they will eventually dominate us. Because they play by Darwin's rules, even if our secular superstition has made Darwin taboo.

How do giant corporations, rapacious overlords and bad politicians gain power? They appeal to masses of people who fear for their own competence, reach out with pity, and then manipulate them just the same.

Some will say that I have not defined "competence" very well here. In a universal sense, it is a word like the Darwinian "adaptation" which is so vague yet has such concrete incarnations that it's nearly impossible to define.

Competence is the process of understanding your world, understanding what you need to do it in to survive at your level of competence, and then staying organized and diligent to do it, including a level of raw ability.

We don't see much of that these days. Get the credit card, the wide-screen TV, and the optional job, and

you can just space out in your own little world — and attack anyone who tells you you're being selfish. The overlords don't care. Your dysfunction gives them problems which they gain power by fixing. Your incompetence keeps them in power.

It's a curious little human world where, having come to our intelligence level by Darwinism, we have decided life is too frustrating to think outside of the herd, and so we create toys and social games, but never look too deeply into the human beast, because that's where we'll find the future date with reality that's going to re-affirm Darwinian natural selection.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [overpopulation](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [religion](#)

The problem is the Crowd

Jul 3rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



We all like the idea of society just taking care of us because it sounds good like the products Billy Mays used to sell. Life can be scary — heck, it's always scary to know at the end we die and probably go nowhere — and sometimes it sounds good to have them take care of us just for being alive, like a member of a family.

But the problem is that this is applied not just to us, but to everyone, and I think very few people know what that means because almost every person is selective in their friends. None of us know “everyone.” Some of us have more of an inkling than others thanks to travels and spending time in the not-so-great parts of our cities.

The first problem with “taking care of everyone” is that many people are, basically, still monkeys (do not think you can correlate this to race). They act on impulse, act always for their desires for pleasure, are irresponsible, and then when things go wrong, expect others to take care of it for them. They have developed limited self-consciousness such that all they know is their own wants, and they are oblivious to consequences. (Plato calls such people “drones” and is probably accurate.)

Since these people have an infinite capacity to absorb any resources society offers, regulation is needed. Do we want more bureaucracy? Well, that's the option... unless we use a nature-simulacra like economics. Although Social Darwinism, or the idea that the best rise financially as they once did in the woods, seems to mostly work, there's an even more important factor in economics: limiting people's demands on the whole.

Polls show most Canadians like their free health care, but most people aren't sick when the poll-taker calls. Canadian doctors told us the system is cracking. One complained that he can't get heart-attack victims into the ICU.

In America, people wait in emergency rooms, too, but it's much worse in Canada. If you're sick enough to be admitted, the average wait is 23 hours.

“We can't send these patients to other hospitals. Dr. Eric Letovsky told us. “Every other emergency department in the country is just as packed as we are.”

More than a million and a half Canadians say they can't find a family doctor. Some towns hold lotteries to determine who gets a doctor. In Norwood, Ontario, 20/20 videotaped a town clerk pulling the names of the lucky winners out of a lottery box. The losers must wait to see a doctor.

Shirley Healy, like many sick Canadians, came to America for surgery. Her doctor in British Columbia told her she had only a few weeks to live because a blocked artery kept her from digesting food. Yet Canadian officials called her surgery "elective."

[Reason](#)

Canada's health care system remains affordable because they have bureaucratic control. The bureaucrats look at the budget, deduct the amount required to hire more bureaucrats, and then figure out how many doctors and nurses they can employ. If more are needed, well, that's something to take up with the prime minister for the next budget cycle.



However, for the end user, there's a problem: the budget does not provide for enough doctors because it's a form of top-down control. Guess how many you need, then readjust as needed. The advantage of a capitalist system here is that financial incentive provides an automatic stream of doctors.

It will be more wasteful; however, thanks to the competition involved, it makes being a doctor a positive goal and so ensures that it works. It's not much different that sexual reproduction in which the incentive overcomes the obligation, and so people have been having little ones since the dawn of time.

Now let's look at another problem of the crowd:

More than 800 animal and plant species have gone extinct in the past five centuries with nearly 17,000 now threatened with extinction, the International Union for Conservation of Nature reported on Thursday.

A detailed analysis of these numbers indicates the international community will fail to meet its 2010 goal of bolstering biodiversity — maintaining a variety of life forms — a commitment made by most governments in 2002.

[Reuters](#)

Just how if you set up free hospitals, everyone shows up and drains your resources, if you let people expand and set up new communities just because they want to, soon they'll cover the earth. The main killer of species is that we've taken the land they need to hunt, frolic, mate, nest, etc. They can't just buy a condo like we would. They need large, unbroken spaces.

But we have a problem: we've made every space on earth for sale, because some government or person owns it and can sell it, with the exception of a relatively small area of national parks. And we keep growing, and no one can stop the train, because if you pull that stop lever — well, let's just say that unlimited reproduction is very popular with the voters for the same reason free health care is very popular with voters.

Individuals think only of themselves and their own desires, not the consequences. So we see two areas where capitalism is applied, one of which making it a hero, and the other making it an evil. The lesson to be learned is that the problem is the preferences of our voters, not our political and economic systems,

because voters pick wrongly in *both* cases. We need competition, definitely; we also need some way of limiting ourselves before we overload the earth with our numbers.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

It never goes away

Jul 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



Every age has taboos, just like it has ideals. These are the stick and the carrot, respectively. If you want to succeed, find some way to justify what you're doing in terms of the ideals; if you want to knock out some competition, bully them and accuse them of being the taboo.

One of the big ones for this age, like calling someone a pedophile, is the term *racist*, which has dangerous political implications. And no matter what we do, the problem never seems to go away, and may not go away until we're all a uniform grey color and have no ancestry line to speak of.

Abandon your MySpace account for Facebook? You might just be a racist.

At a keynote speech during New York's Democracy forum at Lincoln Center, Danah Boyd spoke of the racial disparity and possible reasons for mass abandonment of MySpace for the "more cultured" and "less cheesy" social networking site Facebook.

Boyd, a social media researcher for Microsoft and fellow of the Harvard University Berkman Center for Internet and Society, stated: "We might as well face an uncomfortable reality ... what happened was modern day 'white flight'."

Referring to MySpace as the "ghetto of the digital landscape," Boyd indicated that MySpace users are more likely to be "brown or black" and espouse a different set of ideals in conflict with those espoused by the teens she surveyed over four years. She said that patterns in migration across social networking sites echoed those of a white exodus from cities in the past. Boyd also said that teens who use Facebook are more likely to condescend their MySpace-favoring peers.

[TransCosmic](#)

And then, other language problems blunder into the sensitivity zone of Westerners:

Russian Energy giant Gazprom has inadvertently walked into a racism row with the announcement of its joint venture in Nigeria – Nigaz.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his Nigerian counterpart Umaru Yar'Adua last week agreed the deal to build refineries, pipelines and gas power stations in Africa's most populous nation.

The name is meant to be an amalgamation of 'Nigeria' and 'Gazprom', pronounced 'nye-gaz', but it can be read phonetically as an offensive term for those of black African origin.

[The Daily Mail](#)



It's like a witch hunt: it's such a flexible accusation that, should you not be surrounded by minorities, you can be at any time accused of being a witch and have a massive public problem. Since most people want to stay out of the public eye — they know the public is equal parts a weeping sap and a lynch mob — this creates a terrifying state where one either pro-actively defends against the possible accusation at great cost, or just hopes the lottery doesn't pick your number one day.

Final word from a sensible Nigerian:

One Nigerian in Lagos said: 'White people are making too much of this.'

'As long as the Russians pay us, they can call it what they like.'

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [race](#)

The psychological consequences of equality

Jun 29th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Our nitwit species has never overcome its own cleverness. If we find an idea or symbol or image that appears to compel people, we'll use it — and worry about the consequences later.



Equality is a powerful symbol to use. It conveys inclusiveness, and an automatic sense of group bonding. "We all agree we all should be equal, right? Now all we have to do is crush those who disagree!" It's also a neat way to institute a witch hunt. If your neighbor doesn't believe in equality, maybe you deserve his farm.

But those well-worn (at least here on this blog) paths give way to a more interesting question: what are the psychological consequences of equality? In other words, does it make our brains healthier, and is it a good interface to life? Here are two problems with equality as it impacts our psyches.

1. External focus

- If we are all equal in value, then there is no way to distinguish ourselves except by our appearance. It's like trying to make hamburgers interesting again. Put an avocado on the hippie one, arugula on the yuppie one, and a slab of ironically wholesome cheese for the hipsters. Your social rank is your burger. A bacon cheeseburger? You're not as elite as someone with an arugula, avocado and feta burger.
- Because we must assume others are equal, we cannot demand that we be measured by the content of our personalities instead of our external traits. We are interchangeable parts, not individuals who determine themselves from within. If you start asking we be judged on moral character, intellectual ability, honesty and sincerity... well that ruins equality, because we cannot look at you from a distance, see you are human, and figure you are equal. It would force us to engage with life, and that scares us.
- Since we are all equal in value, and we cannot look within, external traits are how we draw attention to ourselves — and since others are doing it, we must all compete with them. In a mass of equal people, the person who figured out a unique and ironic hat stands out; this person is noticed, which advances their business, social and romantic prospects. Since there are few things not thought of before, this requires we embrace oddity and ugliness, like modern art and freak shows, and correspondingly become more "tolerant" so we can pretend we like them.

2. No striving

- If we're all equal and are going to get equal treatment, the reward has come before the labor. We now expect to be entitled to things and status, instead of feeling that it is a reward for our contributions. As a result, everything we do becomes backward: we assume we belong, and

therefore that whatever we do is right, but then we try to justify those actions by proving to others how altruistic or moral or unique/ironic we are.

- Since equality is the goal of the society, rising above equality is a socially problematic issue. So instead of striving to make ourselves better internally, or to contribute in ways that might cause conflict as all, we focus on making life more comfortable for us. This inevitably involves selfish actions like retreating to the suburbs, buying an SUV, and turning up the volume to drown out the other equal people.
- If equality is the norm, an attitude emerges which finds those who want to refine themselves or improve on anything but their material circumstance to be "elitist," and that's a problem since most equality-based societies exist after revolutions against the elites. You don't want to raise your head above the herd, or it might get cut off. Don't strive, except for the material comforts we all agree (equally) are important; coincidentally, these material comforts create the most waste and use the most energy.

An interesting way to view this situation. If we could step back from our modern lives, we could see how simple it all is. There were revolutions, and we are obligated to consider them as absolute Good, in the same context religion makes Good and Evil. The revolutions aimed for equality because they wanted to overthrow hierarchies. Now you either obey the official revolutionary dogma, or you are considered an enemy of equality, and possibly destroyed.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [competitive altruism](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

You're oblivious, dear parents

Jun 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Every now and then someone from the adult world stirs themselves to study kids, and finds out what we all knew: adults and children live in different realities.

You know how at this blog we always talk about multiple factors being considered at one time, as if it were an essential cognitive tool? Check this:

1. Kids are clueless in certain ways
2. Adults are oblivious to certain things they must endure
3. Kids are aware in ways adults are not
4. Adult experience brings an awareness kids cannot have.

All four are true — at the same time — which doesn't invalidate either experience, but points us to where we should look.

A surprising number of teenagers — nearly 15 percent — think they're going to die young, leading many to drug use, suicide attempts and other unsafe behavior, new research suggests.

The study, based on a survey of more than 20,000 kids, challenges conventional wisdom that says teens engage in risky behavior because they think they're invulnerable to harm. Instead, a sizable number of teens may take chances "because they feel hopeless and figure that not much is at stake," said study author Dr. Iris Borowsky, a researcher at the University of Minnesota.

[AP](#)

Well, no kidding.

Our species cannot decide whether global warming will kill us or not happen at all.

Our species is tolerant of its criminals, parasites, etc. but never fails to go out of its way to bash down the one who rises above the crowd.

Our culture is garbage. Madonna, Michael Jackson? You're kidding, right.

Our leaders are whores and the voters are even dumber whores who are content to be led with lies, because they cannot face difficult or complex truths.

Our media is full of fears, our leaders control us with fears, and worst of all, everyone around us appears oblivious to long-standing problems in our society — environment, racial conflict, crime, corruption — because these aren't polite to mention.

Humanity has slipped into its own world, a world ruled by social devices and the avoidance of conflict, and as a result, cannot face reality.

At all.

Kids see this, because it's new to them and they're very afraid of these adult things they see coming down the pipe.

Adults survive by making polite commentary and ignoring problems, even though they have to know that eventually this mess will blow up in their faces... or in someone's face, at least, because in fifty years these adults will be dead or on their way, and at that point, why should they care? (Obviously I disagree.)

So on to the next shocker:

American adults from young to old disagree increasingly today on social values ranging from religion to relationships, creating the largest generation gap since divisions 40 years ago over Vietnam, civil rights and women's liberation.

A survey being released Monday by the Pew Research Center highlights a widening age divide after last November's election, when 18- to 29-year-olds voted for Democrat Barack Obama by a 2-to-1 ratio.

Almost eight in 10 people believe there is a major difference in the point of view of younger people and older people today, according to the independent public opinion research group. That is the highest spread since 1969, when about 74 percent reported major differences in an era of generational conflicts over the Vietnam War and civil and women's rights. In contrast, just 60 percent in 1979 saw a generation gap.

[AP](#)

Remember how above I said all four factors were true at one? Kids are clueless about life and adults are oblivious to some things kids see, but kids are also inexperienced, where adult experience can be useful.

One of the biggest confusions we have is that kids are really good at spotting the elephant in the room, but their solutions are amateurish. Inexperienced, they tend to defend the individual, because they interpret the world personally. "It's trying to get me," they think, because they've been raised at the center of their own universe by their parents, and now they're having to adapt to the fact the world doesn't care. It just does what it does, and if you get snared, oh well!

So now adults and kids not only exist in two different realities, but are heading toward different polarized political views, one of which is liberal and one of which is reactionary.

And all these confused people vote.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why I don't buy Apple

Jun 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



Most posts on this forum are not what I'd consider opinion pieces; they're descriptions of knowledge about what will happen in certain circumstances, not prescriptions as to what *should* happen.

However, in this post, I'm going to describe why I detest Apple Computer, Inc. and will not buy any of their products, least of all a Macintosh computer. Ever.

So it looks like my Macbook Pro hates me. My monitor won't display anything even though the computer is on. I can even log in and turn the volume on and off. I can hear my email sound and everything...but the monitor just doesn't work.

{ pause for about 24 hours }

So I went in and he went through all the simple resets and tests that I had already gone through and he told me it was the logic board. I asked him to check if it was the NVIDIA defect and he did. Wasn't that. Either I pay 1200 for him to fix it in store or I pay 300 to send it away. Lame but I guess I have to send it away.

[RTTP](#)

This guy bought what's probably a \$1500 laptop and is now getting told that he can't get it fixed here for a halfway decent price; he has to send it off, where the cost is that it'll take a month to return. And why has the machine blown out?

The motherboard has failed.



This seems to happen to Apple machines quite a bit. You won't find much mention of this in the spammy internet, but starting around the time of the Macintosh II, Apple began taking shortcuts with its motherboards. It mounted some directly on the plastic of the case, and with others, used daughterboards in odd configurations, or used sub-standard power supplies.

The result is that Apple computers have been blowing motherboards since 1987.

The company has no incentive to change this because they've got their audience on the hook. Apple's marketing is like a microcosm of modern society: they convince you to buy the product for social reasons, surround you with people who chant blank-eyed about how great it is, and then hook you... if you want to be cool like us, you need to keep buying Apple stuff.

Even back in the 1980s, the Apple fanbase was notoriously dishonest about how much their machines failed, or even how they stacked up poorly compared to other machines. Apple users were even banned on several Houston BBSs because they couldn't stop telling everyone else how inferior their machines were.

What causes this? First, the ego hook: Apple is the hip company (remember those "1984" ads?). Second, the price hook: you just paid a lot more for this thing. It better be good! But if it's not, what are you going to do... lower your social status by admitting you didn't buy the luxury brand, Apple?

So Mac users buy their machines, take them home, and when the thing blows up, the repair price is usually the same... about 75% of the cost of a new one. What would you do in that case? Of course, you buy the new one, and start the depreciation curve over.

Or if you're like this poor gent, you sent it off for the \$300 repair, and see it again a month later. Back in the 80s, they used to repair machines with refurbished motherboards, which meant they were often back, and then got sent away to be seen a month later. After several months of no computer, that \$1200 starts to look cheap.

The MacBook Pro 13" has a 6bit display. That means it cannot really display millions of color. Yes, on Apple's website it claims it can "support millions of colors," but what they don't tell you is that it does so through a process called "dithering." Any designer knows what that means. Anyone else: it means the screen will display colors closely in a pattern in order to give you the perception of a blended color.

A few years ago, a few individuals started a class-action lawsuit against Apple for advertising millions of colors with their 6bit displays. Unfortunately, they needed a "class" for a class-action lawsuit, and not enough people cared/noticed. The matter was settled out of court.

You already know I'm a designer, so you know how important color is to me. A 8bit screen such

as my 30" Apple Cinema Display is able to achieve 16.7 million colors. A 6bit MacBook Pro screen? 262,144 thousand colors. That's roughly 60 times less colors. That means for all of those colors it can't display, it blends with nearby pixels. This is just embarrassing and unacceptable.

[Louie Mantia](#)

They're able to do this because of the difference between appearance and reality. If they're able to forge a fake appearance that appears to complement you, and raise your social status, then you'll like a crack addict do anything to keep it up. That means shouting down others who don't agree.

Since there are enough of you to cause problems for anyone trying to launch a product, career, or even just have friends, people learn to be quiet. And so the illusion spreads. Just like in our modern time, when we have a decentralized totalitarian state, where sacred dogmas are chanted at each other and those who disagree are seen as the modern untouchables.

It's a mental control structure that's hard to shake, isn't it?

Posted in: [Meta](#).

What we need to fix as a species

Jun 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The “problem” with humanity, if you want it in a nutshell, is that we can choose what to believe and we can choose to ignore a necessary activity for a fun one.

While we might expect that behavior from orangutans and chimpanzees, our closest relatives, we also see it all the time in humanity.

As Matt Thomas says in his classic article, “Why free software usability tends to suck”:

Volunteers hack on stuff which they are interested in, which usually means stuff which they are going to use themselves. Because they are hackers, they are power users, so the interface design ends up too complicated for most people to use.

The converse also applies. Many of the little details which improve the interface — like focusing the appropriate control when a window is opened, or fine-tuning error messages so that they are both helpful and grammatical — are not exciting or satisfying to work on, so they get fixed slowly (if at all).

[MPT \(archived\)](#)

Translated from his somewhat delicate reference: people only do what they find fun.

Of course, this is a powerful motivational tool, if we can make things fun. But some just aren't going to be. Our current means of controlling that is an economic system where some get to live the life divine and do the fun stuff, and others don't have to. Mostly, it sorts them by competence, so it works better than the option, which is state assigned jobs and uniform rewards (raw socialism).

But there are still tasks that need doing, if we want our tools and technologies to be top notch.

It's about completion: any job undertaken needs to be completed in whole, including interface and the difficult task of long-term design, including ancillary effects.

Even more than “fun,” we have a problem in that we can choose — using our big brains — to deny ideas or evidence that we find displeasing. Witness:

I was in Calcutta when the cyclone struck East Bengal in November 1970. Early dispatches spoke of 15,000 dead, but the estimates rapidly escalated to 2,000,000 and then dropped back to 500,000. A nice round number: it will do as well as any, for we will never know. The nameless ones who died, “unimportant” people far beyond the fringes of the social power structure, left no trace of their existence. Pakistani parents repaired the population loss in just 40 days, and the world turned its attention to other matters.¹

What killed those unfortunate people? The cyclone, newspapers said. But one can just as logically say that overpopulation killed them. The Gangetic Delta is barely above sea level. Every year several thousand people are killed in quite ordinary storms. If Pakistan were not overcrowded, no sane man would bring his family to such a place. Ecologically speaking, a delta belongs to the river and the sea; man obtrudes there at his peril.



In the web of life every event has many antecedents. Only by an arbitrary decision can we designate a single antecedent as "cause." Our choice is biased — biased to protect our egos against the onslaught of unwelcome truths. As T.S. Eliot put it in *Burnt Norton*:

*Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.*

Were we to identify overpopulation as the cause of a half-million deaths, we would threaten ourselves with a question to which we do not know the answer: How can we control population without recourse to repugnant measures? Fearfully we close our minds to an inventory of possibilities. Instead, we say that a cyclone caused the deaths, thus relieving ourselves of responsibility for this and future catastrophes. "Fate" is so comforting.

Every year we list tuberculosis, leprosy, enteric diseases, or animal parasites as the "cause of death" of millions of people. It is well known that malnutrition is an important antecedent of death in all these categories; and that malnutrition is connected with overpopulation. But overpopulation is not called the cause of death. We cannot bear the thought.

[Garrett Hardin Society](#)

What is the result of our ignoring the cause/effect relationships in reality? We pick effects that are comforting to our notion of personality as being in control of its world, and then we declare those important and the rest not.

The resulting focus on the "thing-in-itself," or viewing objects as the causes of their roles in a larger context, allows us to deal harshly with immediate problems but completely ignore anything with a long-term consequence.

As Rowan Hooper wrote in an [excellent article](#) called "Is Earth set to go silent in the next hundred years?":

But in his conclusion [Rees] got into truly cosmic realms, by offering his answer to a question he is often asked: Does astronomy offer any special extra perspective on our terrestrial lives?

Astronomers can set our home planet in a vast cosmic context: a backdrop of millions of galaxies, each containing billions of planets.

And we know that every atom in our body was forged in an ancient star somewhere in the Milky way. We are literally the ashes of long-dead stars – the nuclear waste from the fuel that makes stars shine. To understand ourselves, we must understand the atoms we're made of – but we must also understand the stars that made those atoms.

But there's something else that astronomers can offer: an awareness of an immense future. The stupendous timespans of the evolutionary past are now part of common culture. We're the outcome of more than four billion years of evolution. But most people still perceive humans as the culmination of the evolutionary tree. That hardly seems credible to me as an astronomer.

Our Sun's less than half way through its life. Darwinian evolution surely hasn't run its course. Any creatures witnessing the Sun's demise 6 billion years hence won't be human – they'll be as different from us as we are from a bug. Posthuman evolution – here on Earth and far beyond, organic or silicon-based – could be as prolonged as the Darwinian evolution that's led to us – and even more wonderful.

Rees ended by taking the viewpoint of an alien that had been watching our planet. It would, he said, have seen carbon dioxide in the atmosphere rising "anomalously fast, due to burning of fossil fuels".

Will these hypothetical watching aliens see the Earth go silent in the next hundred years?

This brings us back to the question: what is the human dilemma that keeps us from seeing and acting on these problems?

As Hardin points out, we tend to pick and choose about where we attribute cause. It's much easier to blame the hurricane, which was the immediate prior act, than the situation which made the hurricane able to wipe out many. Similarly, it's easy to finger government, a vast conspiracy (if you're a leftist, it's racist white male capitalists; if you're a rightist, it's anti-white socialists) controlling society, the rich, the poor, etc.

Could it be humanity's epitaph will be six billion voices chanting in unison, in every language, "It's not my fault"?

Could it be the solution to our problems is one that we've overlooked because it's so obvious — to stop being polite about truth, to insist on it, and to insist on a design-level look at cause and effect?

That will offend many — but we presume is a lesser fate than extinguishing ourselves.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The culture of non-culture

Jun 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

So we've had some celebrity deaths, and like all things they come in threes, although science can't explain that. Granted, science is also still not sure if eggs are good for you, if we're all biologically the same, or what quantum theory underlies all matter. But scientists will arrogantly tell you The Absolute Truth™ nonetheless.

The trifecta of celebrity mortality is complete: Farrah Fawcett, Michael Jackson, and Billy Mays.

A pin-up, a jingle writer, and a late-night TV pitchman.



Is this our “culture”? It's the culture of non-culture. If you don't have an ancestral culture with its dances, language, rituals, ceremonies, food preparation, costumes, literature, art and values, you just sort of pick up whatever trends are popular.

Michael Jackson was, at best, a talented songwriter in the pop style. Pop music, known for its endless repetition of catchy themes, is not rocket science to write. In fact, most of the best musicians avoid it because it's really boring if you know anything about music or life. But Jacko was the king of pop, etc etc because we needed a hero and he was on our side during the Cold War. Awesome.

Farrah Fawcett, while a nice person, was known for her clingy swimsuit more than anything else. She did not invent rockets. She probably participated in human rights missions, but so do millions of others, except they're not celebrities. Oh well.

Billy Mays was a lot of fun, because if you did encounter late-night TV when he was selling you some nostril cleansing product or tomato growing apparatus, he made it more amusing than most. But there's not much distinction in that either.

What I'm getting at here... our culture is like the sweepings from the floor of history. We dote on these people because they're famous, but then the trend changes, and things move on. We accumulate what's left over and call it culture because we have nothing, because some wise idiot convinced us that culture like strong government was a form of oppression and we'd finally be “free” when we threw it out.

So now we get... heroes who aren't heroes, a culture of non-culture, a society based not on working together but barely tolerating each other?

Good thinking.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#) · [crowdism](#)

Justification

Jun 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This blog endorses a kind of primal realism that many people call conservatism, although it has nothing to do with the conservatism of today. It's more like conservationism. One of its basic ideas is that our problems are not external (type of government, economics, politics) but internal, in that most people are unable to discipline their inner monkey and so end up as forces of chaotic destruction.

"As people age, they often realize that many of their youthful decisions, which seemed so correct at the time, were not such great ideas afterall."

I haven't noticed this. I have noticed that people tend to rationalize their behavior. Unfortunately people (personality-wise) change very little with age. So an impulsive ten year old will likely grow into an impulsive forty year old. And depressive people will remain depressive and honest people will remain deviant.

People will make excuses for their behavior if they get caught, and they will make excuses for their hypocrisy either way. There isn't much altruism in people. People only find religion after they've been condemned to death. If they manage to break out of jail they tend to lose that religion.

[Slashdot:unlametheweak](#)

I liked the statement this brave fellow made, even if he made it so quietly he stands little chance of the lynch mob figuring out how hard he's got their number.

People act through justifications. Justification means you do something, and then invent another reason why you should have done it. It wasn't the reason why you did it. But it's the reason you offer to others.

Justification is inherent to knowing how to manipulate others. You can use it before you act, even. "I'm going to take this cocaine and look at this child porn to keep them out of the hands of our children...think of the children!"

We use justification because as individuals, we assume we deserve everything we can get our little hands on. We haven't progressed from an anarchist hunter-gatherer stage to having some conception of civilization, in which anarchy is destructive.

Because we assume we are right, we assume the world should adapt to us, so we pedantically explain in its tokens of moral righteousness why we should be doing what we're doing. And if others criticize us, we take it personally and attack them personally, because they attacked our assumption of being right, justified, and entitled.

Until humanity gets over this bad psychology, everything we doom will be tinged in ruin.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Surprise, Surprise: Our Ancestors Weren't Morons

Jun 25th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Archeologists said yesterday that they had unearthed the oldest musical instruments ever found – several flutes that inhabitants of southwestern Germany laboriously carved from bone and ivory at least 35,000 years ago.

Just a few feet away from a bone flute, researchers discovered one of the oldest examples of figurative art – the sculpture of a woman carved from mammoth ivory, a find announced earlier this year. Excavations have also unearthed an array of other art, including carvings of mammoths, cave lions, and mythic half-animal, half-human figures.

A culture rich in figurative art, sophisticated adornments, and music does not directly result in better hunting or more successful reproduction, but music in particular might have had an indirect effect, providing better social ties or improving communication, according to Conard.

[[+](#)]

This thinking appears to be backwards: music helped humans evolve into what we are today, so we could create symphonies, phone lines, and Facebook. No, I think that we created music because we were further evolved 40,000 years ago than many of us like to believe, and have had much better success in formulating societies even *despite* having to fight for survival more often in those earlier times.

Either way, the fact remains that the further back we dig, the more creepy our human past becomes to us moderns: we didn't just evolve from block-headed monkeys into the iPhone users we are today, with a little Leave It To Beaver-esque 1950s society tucked neatly between our past and modern eras. There were societies of hunter-gatherers who could make art, play music, and do everything we do today, except they lived in a much more harsh and reality-driven world. Finding things like this in the context of modern society makes us think about our lineage in a backward fashion instead of owning up to the fact that maybe what we call "progress" isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Science](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [DNA](#) · [self-deception](#)

The Dunning-Kruger effect

Jun 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The Dunning-Kruger effect states that incompetent people are also incompetent in assessing their own performance. Therefore, less competent people think their performance is competent, while smarter people focus on their own flaws.

It explains, among other things, how in a society that places too much value on image, idiots and insane people are able to get ahead by overestimating their value and getting fools to agree with them.

The essence of the Dunning-Kruger effect is that "ignorance more frequently begets confidence than knowledge." Studies have shown that the most incompetent individuals are the ones that are most convinced of their competence. At work this translates into lots of incompetent people who think they are superstars. And what is worse is that if you have a manager that doesn't closely supervise work, he or she may judge performance based on outward appearances using information like the confidence with which these incompetent blockheads speak.

An important corollary of this effect is that the most competent people often underestimate their competence. This is a result of how you frame knowledge. The more you know, the more you focus on what you don't know. For instance, people who can name 15 of the 50 state capitals tend to think "I know 15." People who know 45 of the 50 state capitals tend to think "I don't know 5."

[Business Pundit](#)

Dunning and Kruger, two researchers at Cornell University, described their findings in a paper entitled [Unskilled and Unaware Of It: How Difficulties In Recognising Ones Own Incompetence Lead To Inflated Self-Assessments](#) in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Their conclusions can be summarized this way:

1. incompetent individuals tend to overestimate their own level of skill,
2. incompetent individuals fail to recognize genuine skill in others,
3. incompetent individuals fail to recognize the extremity of their inadequacy,
4. if they can be trained to substantially improve their own skill level, these individuals can recognize and acknowledge their own previous lack of skill.

Translation: without leadership at the top of the curve who is willing to call people on their incompetence, the incompetents will appear competent to other incompetents and be advanced, possibly even to the presidency.

This causes a mathematical problem for democracies since most people are not particularly competent at leadership, government or logical argument, meaning they are both unable to assess the best leadership choices and sure that they're right.

It's essentially similar to the Downing effect:

The Downing effect describes the tendencies of people with below average intelligence quotients (IQs) to overestimate their intelligence, and of people with above average intelligence to underestimate their intelligence. The propensity to predictably misjudge one's own intelligence was first noted by C. L. Downing who conducted the first cross cultural studies on perceived intelligence.

His studies also evidenced that the ability to accurately estimate others' intelligence was proportional to one's own intelligence. This means the lower the IQ score of an individual, the less capably he or she can appreciate and accurately appraise others' intelligence. The lower an individual's IQ, the more likely they are to rate themselves as more intelligent than others around them.

Conversely, people with a high IQ, while better at appraising others' intelligence overall, are still likely to rate people of similar intelligence as themselves as having higher IQs.

[Wikipedia](#)

That tendency could go a long way toward explaining why many successful societies have relied on strong leaders who had no problem beating down the incompetent with force.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [crowdism](#) · [intelligence](#) · [IQ](#)

"Rights" may be a bad design

Jun 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Fantastic, brave and thought-provoking article from David Mitchell at the Guardian:

Sacrificing our rights and freedoms, or the use of them, for the greater good is much called for at the moment. There's pressure to recycle, pay higher taxes, not travel on planes, avoid products manufactured by enslaved children, stop borrowing money we can't pay back, stop lending money to people who won't pay it back and abstain from tuna. And psychologically we couldn't be worse prepared.

For decades, our society has trumpeted liberty and its use, choice, self-expression, global travel and all forms of spending as inalienable rights. But only as the environment and economy teeter are we gradually becoming aware that with the power such liberties give us comes the responsibility to deal with the consequences.

...

But any self-sacrifice feels to us westerners like tyranny. We're not ready for it. Our evolution into apex individualists has superbly attuned us to injustices against us while atrophying our awareness of the vastly greater number that work in our favour. It's not our fault, it's how we were raised.

Our fear of being encroached upon has made us forget that there are few freedoms that can be fully exercised without impinging on someone else's. The freedom to stab has long since been subordinated to the freedom not to be stabbed. But we still have the freedom not to recycle and to borrow or lend money recklessly, regardless of others' freedom to live on a habitable planet and in a functional economy. We've hugely prioritised our rights over our duties because it's only the former that tyrants try to take away.

[The Guardian](#)

This blog has long covered the major problem of social reality, which is where people band together and create a consensual reality-image in order to protect themselves from anything they don't want to do. This very negative thinking at its core is defensive, and knows what it hates but not what it loves.

It also makes us easy to manipulate: tell us that something is "not-free" and we are "free," and we're automatically against it, banded together into a lynch mob that doesn't care about the details.

But "rights," itself, as a paradigm, may be a bad design. It's not a goal, but it is a surrogate for a goal. Instead of "do the right thing," we have the mandate to "protect our inalienable right to do nothing we don't want to do," which makes us into brats who avoid doing the right thing because then we lose some of that freedom.

There's another insidious problem which we see here:

The latest session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which ended this past week in Geneva, was marked by a series of attempts to weaken the body.

Diplomats and non-governmental organisations have expressed concern over efforts by some states, including Cuba, China and Brazil, to muzzle independent reporting.

For many observers, a point of no return was reached during a special Council session on Sri Lanka in late May. The Sri Lankan government was able to impose the principle of non-

interference in order to refuse an on-the-spot independent investigation.

[SwissInfo](#)

“Rights” confers an implied right to dominate to whatever individual, group or political body is promising more rights. This is post-WWII logic that the UK and USA used to justify much of what they did in defeating the Germans and Japanese, and later, what they had to do to keep the Soviets at bay. Us=good got replaced by us=free; we had more rights, they had no rights, so we had a moral imperative to destroy them.

But the problem of rights as a concept is that it empowers selfishness.

In developing nations, this is more poignant than in the West. If you’re trying to get everyone to work together, build an infrastructure, get educated and update your technology — because organization of society, an end to corruption and technology define passage toward the first world — people demanding their right to not cooperate become a problem.

And many of these people were the same ones who benefitted from primal kleptocracy, which is the order we see in most of the world today, where corrupt warlords rule not for the good of their people but for their own lifestyle. It’s natural, in a sense: if the people around you are too disorganized to build an infrastructure, you might as well exploit them and get it for yourself. But it perpetuates itself.

In the same way, in the West, the rights of individuals have trumped positive changes in countless instances. We don’t want anyone to tell us where we can or can’t live, who we can or can’t marry, what we can or can’t do, what we can or can’t ingest, and so on. But that leads to a universal monoculture of anti-culture, where there are no shared values because any value imposed causes someone to send up a shriek about their rights.

As David Mitchell points out, this is culminating in a legacy of disaster. Our society is neurotic, alcoholic and hooked on pills, sexually miserably, unable to form families, politically corrupt in that genteel way that nothing gets done but everyone still takes full pay, filled with unproductive and mindless jobs, hampered by regulations, endlessly frustrating to anyone halfway intelligent, and so on. That’s the kingdom of rights.

This blog has suggested in the past a simpler course of action: instead of asking reality to adapt to us, we should adapt to reality, which is a series of patterns created by natural forces. These natural forces do not limit themselves to material, but reflect degrees of organization; for example, a social group can experience entropy just as matter does and just as ideas do when transmitted multiple times. That’s reality, and it’s something that requires careful study to understand.

But we’re not even trying. We’ve created a kingdom of brats who just want to do what they think they want to do, and even if the results make them miserable, they’re still going to persist. It’s good to see this illusion of rights slowly unraveling.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Abortion and neo-eugenics

Jun 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When your fear rules you, you get worse consequences than you would have by facing what you fear.

Abortion terrified us, because if the death of a fetus becomes a casual option, maybe life is not sacred after all.

Eugenics terrified us, because if someone doesn't make the cut, maybe there will be mission creep and we won't, too.

We fear, we fear... we fear the consequences of nature, and we fear man's ability to stand in for natural selection, something made obsolete by the fact of civilization itself and specialization of labor.

Instead of facing our fear, we denied it. Abortion battles raged and eugenicists were called fascists, racists — whatever, who cares, just some slander powerful enough to shut them down.

But now our technology has caught up with that.

Instead of picking people on the basis of the whole picture, meaning how they turned out as individuals, we're going to pick them before they are born — by picking genes that are statistically likely to cause problems.

Males with a particular form of gene called MAOA are twice as likely to join a gang, compared to those with other forms, finds a new study of more than 2000 US teens. What's more, gang members with these mutations are far more likely to use a weapon than other members.

Low MAOA activity has been linked previously to antisocial behaviour in people who experienced child abuse. While two brain regions involved in perceiving and controlling emotions are shrunk in people with no history of criminality or abuse who have the mutation.

[New Scientist](#)

This means a fair amount of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, since the same gene that may make teenage gangsters violent might also make someone with other genes an assertive leader. It's like saying that red heads are more likely to be alcoholics, so we don't want them — although at the higher end, smart red heads and red heads of Danish ancestry may be some of our best people. Statistics misleads us because it looks at one factor at a time.

If abortion remains illegal, these future citizens will be fertilized outside the mother and then the embryos will be tested; those that have the wrong statistically prevalent genes will not be implanted. Whether they were alive or not, they will be dead.

Welcome to the new science of neo-eugenics:

Every year, 4.1 million babies are born in the USA. On the basis of the well-known risk of Down syndrome, about 6,150 of these babies would be expected to suffer from this genetic condition, which is caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21. In reality, only about 4,370 babies are born with Down syndrome; the others have been aborted during pregnancy. These estimates are based on a prevalence rate of 0.15% and an abortion rate of about 29% of fetuses diagnosed with Down syndrome in Atlanta, GA (Siffel et al, 2004), and Hawaii (Forrester & Merz, 2002)—the only two US locations for which reliable data are available. Data from other regions are similar or even higher: 32% of Down syndrome fetuses were aborted in Western Australia (Bourke et al, 2005); 75% in South Australia (Cheffins et al, 2000); 80% in Taiwan (Jou et al,

2005); and 85% in Paris, France (Khoshnood et al, 2004). Despite this trend, the total number of babies born with Down syndrome is not declining in most industrialized nations because both the number of older mothers and the conception rate is increasing.

These abortions are eugenic in both intention and effect—that is, their purpose is to eliminate a genetically defective fetus and thus allow for a genetically superior child in a subsequent pregnancy. This is a harsh way of phrasing it; another way is to say that parents just want to have healthy children. Nevertheless, however it is phrased, the conclusion is starkly unavoidable: terminating the pregnancy of a genetically defective fetus is widespread. Moreover, because none of the countries mentioned above coerce parents into aborting deformed fetuses, these abortions—which number many thousands each year—are carried out at the request of the parents, or at least the mothers. This high number of so-called medical abortions shows that many people, in many parts of the world, consider the elimination of a genetically defective fetus to be morally acceptable.

[Nature](#)

Welcome to what happens when you do not take charge.

While few of us will agree that aborting fetuses who are destined to be retarded or malformed is a bad thing, we can all see that parents are now going to shop for what they want in a child. This could even extend to hair color, eye color, and genes with statistical prevalence of commercially-desired traits: lawyer, doctor, gets along well with others, likes caviar, whatever.

But as we progress in control of our own evolution, look for these lines to blur. People are going to pick what they desire in a child and edit their results to match.

This will in turn force a theological issue: are all individuals sacred, or is life itself sacred, and composed of individuals, some of which we prune and some of which we reward?

As often happens, science is forcing our hand where our emotional minds are afraid to tread.



This means that instead of natural selection picking our wiliest and most logical people, we're boutique shopping for external traits — and not considering the whole mix of traits, since we're looking at statistical single traits each time.

Enjoy your brave new world.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Why the world hates the west

Jun 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Americans, and others who have followed the path of individual desire to democracy, consumerism and the nanny state, have no idea why they are loathed.

They assume it's from bad results of our interference in other nations.

I'd suggest it's from the reasons we interfere. Because our society is based in the revolutions of 1789 and 1968, we a dichotomy between "free" and "not-free" with no shades of gray.

In other words, either you're on board with our agenda — path of individual desire, democracy, consumerism, egalitarianism — or you're the new Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot, rolled into one.

We must have our moral superiority.

This goes back to our own Revolution. The English were bad because they ~~taxed us~~ didn't allow us to do whatever screwy stuff we wanted to, and they also taxed us, which made us mad.

Ever since then, the pattern repeats. The Confederacy owned slaves. Nazi Germany tortured Jews. The North Vietnamese killed civilians. Saddam Hussein gassed Kurds. Kim Jong-Il feeds his citizens dead baby birds and makes them watch patriotic movies. Whatever it is, they're not-free, but we're free, so we have the moral right to do whatever we want to them.

This is why the world dislikes us: we can't stop judging them by our standards, which may be a little off, if you look closely enough.

Even more, it seems as if we're trying to draw them into our system of civilization — even with its vast problems — so that they cannot have a *competing* style of government that might prove better. If this modernity thing is going to kill us, we want everyone else to go down, too, or someone got ahead and — and that's unfair!

Exhibit A:

The Iranian government has accused the U.S. and Britain of interfering in its election. Both countries have government-funded broadcasters that offer Persian-language reports.

BBC Persian launched television programming in January to supplement its longtime radio and Internet services. The TV service quickly developed a following in Iran

Afagh said Thursday that the service had found a new satellite that would not be vulnerable to jamming from within Iran.

VOA's Persian News Network offers eight hours of Persian programming daily. Like BBC Persian, it has been inundated with images and messages from Iranian civilians.

The Iranian government has intermittently jammed Persian News Network's broadcasts, often by using microwave trucks to disrupt signals. In anticipation of that, the network sought additional satellite paths for its broadcasts before the election.

[LA Times](#)

So let me get this straight:

- Both the US and UK fund media that broadcasts into Iran in the style of our own media.
- Iran has been jamming these stations, and we're counteracting the jamming.
- These stations don't consider what they're doing to be wrong because, hey, it's how we do things back home

That's the very archetype of cultural clash: we're assuming they're just like us, and they want to do things their own way.

Now look at our unbiased coverage:

Iran's ambassador to London was summoned to the Foreign Office this morning after the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, singled out Britain as Iran's foremost enemy.

"The outstanding diplomats of some western countries who have talked to us with diplomatic courtesy up to now, have, during the past few days, taken the masquerade away from their faces and are showing their true image.

"They are showing their true enmity towards the Iranian Islamic state and the most evil of them is the British government."

Brown intensified his criticism of Iran's handling of the election dispute today.

"We are with others, including the whole of the European Union unanimously today, in condemning the use of violence, in condemning media suppression," he told a news conference after a European Union summit in Brussels.

"It is for Iran now to show the world that the elections have been fair ... that the repression and the brutality that we have seen in these last few days is not something that is going to be repeated," he said.

[The Guardian](#)

This is classic passive-aggression.

We accuse them of doing things all wrong, according to our standards. Then when they point out we're attacking them, we take cover under the mantle of moral superiority and call them the aggressor.

But they're not the ones broadcasting propaganda past our jamming. They're not the ones telling us that our government is wrong. They're the ones trying to, within their country, settle their own issues.

And we won't let them because like neurotic aunts playing matchmaker, we have to assume we know better — presumably because we are sealed off from reality in a world of ourselves.

Nearly half of teachers believe the health and safety culture in schools is damaging children's learning and development, a survey suggests.

When questioned by Teachers TV, teachers complained about a five-page briefing on using glue sticks and being told to wear goggles to put up posters.

Others said pupils were not allowed to enjoy the sun or snow without taking health and safety precautions.

[BBC](#)

What kind of a neurotic place is this — stay out of the sun? Don't play because someone might get hurt?

While on the surface we're lands of plenty and freedom, an insightful observer might see big problems beneath the surface, starting with an inability to accept personal mortality.

Let's look at signs of difficulties:

- Our country is irreconcilably divided between left and right.
- At least one in 15 citizens is [depressed](#).
- At least one in 16 citizens is [alcoholic](#).
- Suicide is the 11th [leading cause of death](#).
- Our cities are ugly, covered in advertising, full of businesses that pander to fools.
- We can't decide whether climate change is for real or not, and we can't act either way.
- Up to a quarter of our children are [sexually abused](#)
- We have plenty of crime, graft and incompetence.
- Our sense of [social isolation](#) is widespread
- We often lump our smart people in with our dumb ones, resulting in the smart people being [bored and alienated](#)

Does this sound like a society few problems? No society is perfect — but this sounds like a society that by avoiding conflict, has deferred its problems and made them more potent, more internal.

Iran might not want to follow us down that path, but our mindset prevents us from seeing how our way is not the only way. Our moral justification gives us a shield of good intentions to hide behind, but at the end of the day, it's just an advanced case of confirmation bias, the [Dunning-Kruger effect](#) and competitive altruism.

In the meantime, Iran fits a standard pattern dating to before WWII. When we find someone obstructing our interests, we round up millions of [useful idiots](#) to begin clamoring for "freedom," and use that to passive-aggressively unseat the regime.

All while we are increasingly banning our own freedoms here in the West, and might be better off with a goal of "an organized, thoughtful society" instead of the nebulous "freedom."

Update: Counterpunch.org asks the question "Are the Iranian Protests Another US Orchestrated 'Color Revolution'?"

The claim is made that Ahmadinejad stole the election, because the outcome was declared too soon after the polls closed for all the votes to have been counted. However, Mousavi declared his victory several hours before the polls closed. This is classic CIA destabilization designed to discredit a contrary outcome. It forces an early declaration of the vote. The longer the time interval between the preemptive declaration of victory and the release of the vote tally, the longer Mousavi has to create the impression that the authorities are using the time to fix the vote.

There is a power struggle among the ayatollahs. Many are aligned against Ahmadinejad because he accuses them of corruption, thus playing to the Iranian countryside where Iranians believe the ayatollahs' lifestyles indicate an excess of power and money. In my opinion, Ahmadinejad's attack on the ayatollahs is opportunistic. However, it does make it odd for his American detractors to say he is a conservative reactionary lined up with the ayatollahs.

Commentators are "explaining" the Iran elections based on their own illusions, delusions, emotions, and vested interests. Whether or not the poll results predicting Ahmadinejad's win are sound, there is, so far, no evidence beyond surmise that the election was stolen. However, there are credible reports that the CIA has been working for two years to destabilize the Iranian government.

Counterpunch.org

Roberts doesn't really go for the kill, which is to point out how Western media interests are dependent on government for access to information, and thus are easily induced to attack an enemy with the usual diatribe about "rights and freedoms," and how all of these attacks mimic our WWII/Cold War propaganda

where it's the Free World versus the evil, personally corrupt, authoritarian Hitler/Stalin figure.

Notice how little time it took them to tie Slobodan Milosevic to ethnic cleansing, and how they also tied Saddam Hussein to not only gassing ethnic minorities (an abuse of the Holocaust memory, if you ask me) but also to dictatorial ambitions. They did the same thing to Muammar Qaddafi, a sensible man who wrote a [lengthy treatise on environmentalism](#) 20 years before the West even cared, and now they're doing it to Iran.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [media](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Reality imitates satire

Jun 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

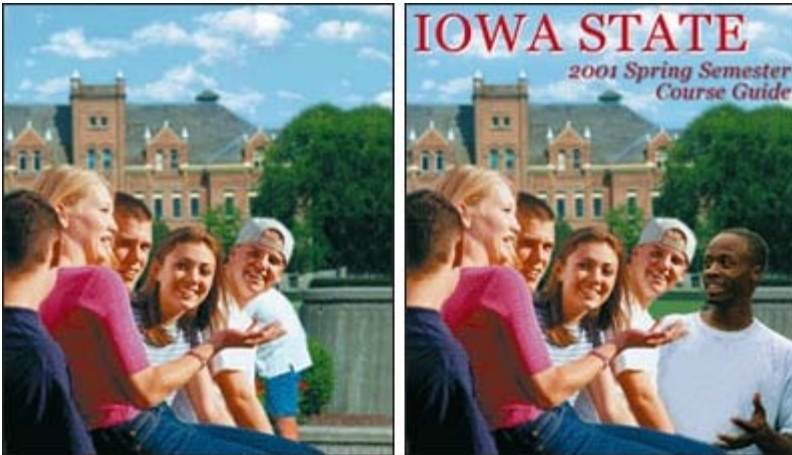
When you criticize society as a writer, you immediately find yourself oriented toward the commonly observable things that are universally socially denied.

We can list them here, briefly:

- Biology: we are not the final stage in evolution.
- Politics: we are not all equal in ability or reward.
- Social: we get ahead by manipulating others
- Business: sell image, make profit (see "social")
- Government: there's no way to please everyone

Any of these taboos freak people out. A subset of the first political topic, "we are not equal in ability," is ethnicity and the idea that we can make diverse societies. Diversity is not a new idea; in fact, it's an old idea with a troubled history. Mainly that it always causes such internal strife that societies collapse into third world status.

However, since it's our social taboo, it's fodder for humor:



AMES, IA—In the spirit of celebrating diversity at Iowa State University, a black guy was digitally added to the cover of the school's 2001 spring-semester course catalog, school officials announced Monday.

"Here at Iowa State, we have a remarkably diverse student body, with literally dozens of non-whites," Iowa State director of student affairs Andrea Driessen said. "We thought a picture with at least one non-white happily interacting with whites would be a great way to show off this fact. Unfortunately, we didn't have any pictures of whites and non-whites actually interacting, so we had to make one up."

The black guy, added using Adobe Photoshop, has been identified as Marcus Jamison. A Shreveport, LA, native, Jamison attended Iowa State for one semester in 1996 before transferring to Grambling University. His face was lifted from a photo of him attending a racial-sensitivity seminar during his freshman orientation and digitally added to the course-catalog cover by graphic designer Brian Tompkins.

[The Onion](#)

The Onion does a great job of making fun of things that are stupid in our society and in ourselves. If anything, they have a liberal bias, and this article is bemoaning the lack of interaction between the races. But the gist of it is that white people are faking the appearance of “diversity” (multiculturalism) in order to look good to others.

And now, from a news publication:



The smiling, ethnically diverse family featured on the cover of Toronto's latest edition of its summer Fun Guide was digitally altered to make the photo more “inclusive,” which city officials say is in keeping with a policy to reflect diversity.

A spokesman for the department that publishes the guide listing recreation activities confirmed the publication was doctored to insert the face of a different father.

“He superimposed the African-Canadian person onto the family cluster in the original photo. It was two photographs and one head was superimposed over the original family photo,” said John Gosgnach, communications director for the social development division.

“The goal was to depict the diversity of Toronto and its residents.”

[National Post](#)

We can either choose to accept reality, or we have to falsify it. When we falsify it, we mislead others, which works for a while but then creates long-term resentments.

This is not the only example. In addition to other incidents of people [“adding diversity,”](#) there are also cases of people subtracting [diversity that also looks stoned](#), and [lightening diversity](#) so it appeals to a wider audience. It's all the same response, pandering, to a reality people aren't mature enough to face.

In American racial discourse, including Canada since it's a virtual clone of Vermont, the well-intentioned nanny state led by those who lacking self-esteem raise their social status through [competitive altruism](#), panders to blacks and whites alike and creates false expectations and through that, anger, internal conflict, resentment and other small but many enduring problems.

These paralyze the society so it cannot make decisions, therefore lives with its problems getting worse every generation, until it slowly slides into third-world status — corruption, hypocrisy, disorganization, stupidity and lies.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [status](#)

The village idiot now rules the village

Jun 19th, 2009

by [Michael Llewellyn](#).



In ancient times every village had its idiot sitting on the edge of society, gibbering to himself and spouting rubbish to bemused passers by. Since those halcyon days the idiot learned to breed and being the idiot that he is, he bred like a rabbit (he probably raped a farm girl with a gammy leg or some other impediment to a quick getaway) and gradually took over by force of numbers.

Thus these village idiots, once mocked, castigated and in the minority, found their situation reversed. Whole towns are now full of them, stacked up in bars talking about cars and full of opinions on subjects they don't understand or are remotely qualified to comment on. They even have their own corrupted form of music called "rock and pop". Their revenge is sweet as finally they're able to shout down and smother those who once ignored them or beat them to a bloody pulp for eyeing up their flat-footed daughters.

But it seems a minority of slowly increasing numbers within the mainstream is realising there are indeed people out there too stupid to function as healthy human beings. Furthermore, they're beginning to think something should be done about them.

In the UK, the SS (or Social Services if you prefer) came to the frankly almost unprecedented conclusion that a council estate mother of a disabled child was quite literally too stupid to look after her own offspring and recommended it be put into care. Despite this halfway commendable decision, they continue to shuffle their feet and look distinctly uncomfortable at the obvious implications of their actions. Namely:

- 1) If individuals are judged by qualified professionals to be unfit to bring up children to the extent that they should be taken from them, why is there not a system in place to prevent them having children in the first place?
- 2) Isn't it obvious that this absolute cretin of poor genetic stock and abysmal prospects is predisposed to poor parenthood and unhealthy, unconstructive children?

Chief Executive for children's charity Barnardo's, Martin Narey, commented recently that abused and murdered infant "Baby P" (killed by his own idiot parent of course) was in any case likely to become a liability and destructive member of society due to the nature of his upbringing:

"It saddens me that the probability is that, had Baby P survived, given his own deprivation he might have been unruly by the time he had reached the age of 13 or 14. At which point he'd have become feral, a parasite, a yob, helping to infest our streets," he said as part of the Barnardo's lecture series at the Duke of Wellington Hall, London.

[The Independent](#)

Yet again he was still afraid to clearly articulate publically what he undoubtedly feels in private. Why? Because the village idiot horde would shout him down and demand his resignation, compounded by a stampede of politicians and media eager to gain momentary favour with the mob. Surely it's high time we neutered the idiot and eradicated him from the genepool. They couldn't have known in ancient times that he'd someday rule the world, after all.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Would you pay extra for a quiet neighborhood?

Jun 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I spent the weekend with a friend who lives in a hipper, up-and-coming neighborhood.

It was an eye-opening experience.

While we were chilling out on Friday night, about 7 pm, an invisible signal went out from inconsiderate person high command: it is time to blast your loud music.

The music of choice seemed divided between hip-hop that thumps and some kind of hip-hop/heavy metal crossover that wails and then thumps.



Image poached from
[tripleaxis.com](#)

The blasting continued until about 2 am, intermittently interrupted as people drove their cars in and out of the neighborhood, although sometimes they posted themselves somewhere to do their thumping.

It wasn't the worst experience, but I don't know if I'd want to live with the constant noise especially since it's unnecessary noise. You can hear the music fine at lower volumes, even pretty high volumes. These volumes were designed to broadcast the music like an identity, and subject other people to it.

I've been asking people all week: would you bypass fear of censorship to live in a quiet neighborhood? Meaning: would you voluntarily pay extra to live in a neighborhood that banned and enforced loud music with thumping bass, even if that infringed on someone else's "freedom"?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

A sudden shift toward pragmatism

Jun 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

European voters swing to the right, and American voters are now contemplating the end of the lifestyle they inaugurated in the 1960s and reinforced in the 1990s.

In Europe, an out-of-the-closet far-right party, the British National Party, found success in recent elections:

The British National Party secured its biggest mainstream electoral victory yesterday after Nick Griffin, the far right-wing party's chairman, became the second BNP member to be elected to the European parliament.

Hours earlier, 61-year-old Andrew Brons, a former chairman of the National Front who has a long history of far right politics, became the BNP's first MEP after winning almost 10% of the vote in Yorkshire and the Humber.

[The Belfast Telegraph](#)

This is perceived mainly as a backlash toward Europe importing foreign populations, most notably Muslims, who are not only failing to integrate but are implicated in riots in England, France and Germany. In addition, voters are lashing out at the dual welfare state and nanny state which has come about thanks to post-1960s liberal policies.

Leaving aside politics for a minute, let's look at this in terms of the average voter. They are saying: let's take care of our own, as we have traditionally seen them, and support traditional living and healthy normal people instead of worrying about subsidizing an unending stream of people with problems and bureaucratic programs with problems.

With the welfare state comes taking care of citizens who cannot take care of themselves, including those prone to crime, and with that comes the nanny state: endless rules to protect the clueless, and increasingly powerful political lobbies for every group of clueless both indigenous and not.

And from over in the United States:

In the 1990s, President Bill Clinton announced a historic shift in government support for the poor. By requiring parents to work instead of merely handing them checks, Clinton vowed to "end welfare as we know it."

This week, California's Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is taking that goal quite literally, proposing to eliminate cash assistance for the state's poorest families altogether. Legislators, poverty researchers and poor parents alike greeted with astonishment his unprecedented call to drop the state's welfare-to-work program, known as CalWORKs.

The governor's proposal would make California the only state in the nation to reject Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grants, the federal program that allows states to draw funds as long as they impose strict time limits and work requirements on recipients.

...

By week's end, the governor says, he will unveil another \$3 billion in cuts. He has said he knows there are faces behind all the dollars disappearing but that he has no other choice.

[The Mercury News](#)

I have a feeling that the old standby of the right, job insurance, will replace these troubled welfare programs.

Despite the positive bloviation in newspapers, welfare programs “help” many but the effects of that help seem to deviate little from where they already were. In addition, these programs both federal and local subsidize people for being out of work and having large families, which in turn encourages them to be out of work and have more kids.

Again, looking at this as the regular voter sees it: we all have to go to work. There is always work to be found. Let’s take care of the people who are responsible, and stop paying for the irresponsible — especially as we make more of them, and demographically, they will soon outnumber us and so have political power over us.

This is nothing more than a middle-class revolution on both continents. Marginalized by the 1960s, in which any sense of inequality among people was attacked, the middle class were seen as fortunate brats who rose above laborer status by cheating, stealing, lying, etc.

This view ignores the fact that middle class families create growth in cities and industry, as well as culture. They are the mainstay of all of these things and yet are a favorite target of both radical egalitarian activists and government nanny state programs that are designed to protect the irresponsible and incompetent from consequences of their actions.

It’s a mistake to view this issue as right or left. The original liberals had no bones of equality in them; they wanted to escape incompetent government that had become too powerful, and so emphasized individual “liberty” (an ill-defined word) through “freedom” (another vague term) using the device of “rights,” or absolute obligations to the individual by the state.

As we see how this vision has expanded from protecting people from government to creating more government that’s more intrusive, and has blurred from keeping good people safe to focusing on those who are in the most trouble and probably have arrived at that state by their own irresponsibility or incompetence, we’re seeing that liberalism and rightism have both been corrupted by this notion. It’s against natural selection. Even more, its fundamental rule seems to be taking from the responsible to compensate the irresponsible.

Not every poor person is irresponsible, but as history shows us, most societies remain poor not because of oppression, but because of lack of ability by their population, lack of political organization, and the corruption and incompetence that doom human endeavors. Most poor people are that way because of their own incompetence; when a friend of mine who grew up in a trailer park told me this, I almost vomited. But the more life stories and statistics I have seen, the more I realize it’s true.

Yet our government has, in the name of helping the most incompetent (sorry, “victimized” or “oppressed”), grown in size and started using that size to squeeze those who are generating wealth, knowledge, and culture for our society.

Those are the people we least want to squeeze.

Think about it this way: every society has had an impoverished class. Yet the societies that have risen have done so by encouraging their best to do their best. We’re doing the opposite: encouraging our least successful at the expense of our most successful.

We’re told by media that these plans are revenge against the super-rich, which sounds good because many people with absurd amounts of money got it by being in the right place at the right time. But they were also competent, even airheads like Madonna or George Soros, even if they were rewarded disproportionately. What bothers us most about them is that they’re competent at what they do, but not much else, and with their wealth they influence other areas of society with insane ideas. But these people are a tiny fraction.

The real target of this type of legislation is the middle class, and they are slowly turning away from their

comfortable distractions, televisions and movies and vacations in the Hamptons, to see that they are the new endangered species — in the name of helping people we consider so helpless and oppressed that it seems cruel, corrupt, punitive and mean not to help them.

Yet these people exist in every society, and in societies that have failed, they are the vast majority.

History teaches us this lesson: support your worst, and end up being a third world kleptocracy. And history is on people's minds quite a bit these days. Not just the recession; that passes. The vast political changes, the vast social changes, and the continuing misery of it all — the ugly cities dominated by commercial interests, the ongoing ecocide which global warming does not encompass, the boring jobs and many rules, the corrupt politicians, the bad culture, the dumb people everywhere acting like they deserve whatever their arrogant behavior leads them toward because they're equal — this is what worries the middle class.

"My mate Penny likes to rant about standards of living and argues that we in the west have a rather low standard of living. Stressed out, working our asses off to buy low quality food and having no time for our families or communities. Living in fear of poverty, terrorism, governments and police and seeking meaning in purchases and possessions"

[Forum Topic: The BNP — How worried should we be?](#)

Realism and discontent at society failing is causing a backlash. People want to raise their kids free from propaganda for non-procreative and family-destructive sex, drug use, anti-family lifestyles, weird politics and cults that mislead for two decades and then leave burnt-out lonely single people, etc.

They're not Conservative, but lower-case-c conservative: they know that what works biologically, including natural selection, will always work, and no amount of technology or government can change that. There is an eternal wisdom to living sanely, chastely, without a need for distraction or weirdness. A calm in the soul. A clear role. A culture that forms out of this and protects against the gross excesses of commerce and government alike.

Normal, functional middle-class families don't want to raise their kids to inherit a huge national debt. They don't want to raise them in a society of incompetents, or a society that subsidizes incompetents. They don't want to raise them in a surveillance state, a nanny state or a total state — but as incompetence rises, they see how that's going to be inevitable. More individuals doing stupid or criminal acts requires more cops and more powerful cops.

Families of the middle class are what keeps America and Europe afloat, economically, demographically, politically and socially.

The middle class is sensing that it's about to be destroyed by family-incompetent urbanites, various people who find it impossible to succeed in this society, and other revengeful people who hate the traditional, lower-case-c conservative lifestyle.

It's fighting back through its proxies.

And some of this is just common sense: every society in debt, spending more on newcomers who don't fit in than on its best hopes, etc.

The people who aren't self-destructive don't want to get dragged down by the irresponsibility of those who are self-destructive. Their law is one of the able: life does not make it hard to succeed enough to have a good life, and you don't need great wealth, but you do need self-discipline, moral awareness, self control and a sense of reality.

They're seeing how compensating those who deny reality to avoid facing the bad consequences of their own behavior is creating a society which marginalizes the competent. That means their children will inherit a nightmare. And so, they're fighting back — on both continents.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#)

Bisphenol-A: why no one is surprised

Jun 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

By “no one,” I mean those who have been around long enough to be realistic in expectation and understanding of how the world — both human and natural — functions.

This excludes people who are prone to panic, who have no understanding of science and critical theory (that’s a logical AND, there, meaning “both or no dice”), and those who are using political issues to make themselves seem more important, moral, etc.

People who are in the know in realistic ways are not surprised at two trends that define modern society:

1. An endless flood of panics from the media
2. A different stream of actual threats unnoticed by the crowd

Fear sells, and the best panic is one that resolves into ambiguity, so it or something like it can be sold again.

However, because people are looking for marketable panics, they downplay the mundane — which is where threats are most likely to occur, in our assumptions and daily actions.

Immanuel Kant wrote about “radical evil” which is evil in the most mundane places, participated in by most people, and unnoticed because hey others are doing it. Radical evil is present in both false panics and ignoring mundane threats, instead preferring to bloviate about Satan or totalitarian governments, neither of which compare to the real threat to us, which is our own inattention and distraction.

So now we find out that this Bisphenol-A stuff, which is in [just about everything](#), is bad news and we’ve been using it since the 1950s:

Exposure to bisphenol A, the hormonally active chemical used to make the linings of most tin cans and hard plastic bottles, may be able to alter brain function, impairing the ability to learn and remember, according to a new study by researchers from Canada and the United States.

The study, conducted on monkeys, whose brain development is similar to that of humans, raises the possibility that ailments such as depression, Alzheimer’s disease and schizophrenia may be linked to the controversial chemical.

Almost all people living in industrialized societies are exposed to BPA as a result of trace amounts leaking from food and beverage containers.

[The Globe and Mail](#)

The topic immediately [became politicized](#).

Conservatives and many scientists, tired of the panics, lashed out by saying that this was a liberal agenda to gain more control. Liberals returned fire by saying it was a clear case of [entrenched industry corrupting government](#) to protect a bad but lucrative practice.

And then, at the end of the day, it was the giant Satan retailer that everyone loves to hate who [led the way in solving the problem](#). (Whether that’s free markets at work, or lawyers afraid of future lawsuits, or just enlightened leadership deciding that if they have the power, why not go for the best outcome, is up to you.)

Now that the dragon is slain, and Bisphenol-A (or BPA) is falling out of use, we face an urge to conduct a

postmortem and figure out where we went wrong.

While others are pointing fingers at big conspiracy theories (left) or overreaction (right), I submit a simpler, more mundane, and boring yet infinitely more likely scenario: apathy and that kind of corruption that only happens when “don’t rock the boat” and “that’s the way it has always been around here” replace an urge to drive toward truth regardless of consequences. Because truth, like Satan, knows no master.

What would this corruption look like? For starters, you have to please a crowd. That may be voters or a series of disaffected people working in the chemical industry who are so tired of internal politics they smash dissent as a way of keeping on course. It could even be FDA inspectors who use lab results to find immediate problems, but do not have the funding to follow up with real-world studies or statistical measurements over a lifetime.

This corruption could even be an environment where a new product, once it becomes trendy, forces its way into every place because you don’t want to oppose what’s making your neighbors money and keeping them happy, right? I mean, they say they’re happy and all, so we assume it’s true.

Imagine a federal agency, like the FDA. There’s immense pressure on this agency to approve products because jobs and national prestige are riding on the issue, as is the convenience of voters. If you don’t approve a medication or product that the people want, a world of hell is coming down on your shoulders.

This is where it gets interesting. Organizations are composed of people; we tend to forget that. People have multiple allegiances. They want to do what’s right, but they must please their superiors as those superiors must please politicians and voters. But they also have allegiance to themselves and their family.

If you find a problem with a product, as a researcher, and you see that the forces promoting that product are strong, you need to make a choice: truth or career.

When your wife and kids look up at you in a homeless shelter, moral good is a distant theory. These people leaning on you can be politicians, industry, or most likely, the voter: they want their products and want them now. The voter also influences industry, with what the voter wants to buy, and politicians, with what public opinion is.

Think of it another way: if you as a genetics researcher found out that all Irish or Italian people carried a gene that made them low-IQ sociopaths inclined to cause social decay, would you publish? I sure wouldn’t. You know you’d face big guns empowered by the outrage of the crowd at singling any group out, and someone with less scientific honor would cook up some study “proving” that you’re an idiot, probably through dubious statistical means. Twenty years later, you’d be vindicated — maybe — which would probably not mean much to your divorced family and homeless shelter housemates.

In addition to the mundane evil of social pressure skewing results, there’s another problem of method. Scientists often say that a product is safe when they find no ill results after overexposure. However, that’s a lab result — in any meaningful reality, with other toxins and chemicals present, [unforeseen interactions and consequences may occur](#).

We thought we were past all these problems. [Hatters going mad from mercury](#), and [ladies poisoned by lead in their makeup](#) — those are problems from ancient history when people must have been dumber, right? We’d never make such errors; we have Science! But science is undercut by the social factors, individual motivations, and political maneuvering, and so we repeat history in a cyclic fashion.

History, after all, is both linear — our progression from ape to man to whatever better thing comes after man — and cyclic, in that if you respond the same way to roughly a similar situation, you’ll get the same results no matter how advanced your science or social thinking is. Bisphenol-A shows us making the mistakes of the past again because we have the same corruption of logic by politics and individual greed, apathy, distraction, oblivion, confusion and pretentious obsessive self-focus.

And how long have we known?

Hunt, a geneticist, was exploring why human reproduction is so rife with complications. She had a hunch the chromosomally abnormal eggs that plague human pregnancies were tied to our hormones. A paper outlining the results of Hunt's experiments on the hormone levels of female mice was ready for publication. All she needed was to ensure that her control population, the mice left alone in the study, was normal. Instead Hunt stumbled on a disturbing result—40 percent had egg defects.

Hunt shelved hopes of publication and scrutinized every method and piece of lab equipment used in her experiment. Four months later she finally fingered a suspect.

It was the janitor. In the laboratory. With the floor cleaner.

A single breach in protocol had turned the rodents' safe environs into acutely toxic habitats. A maintenance worker had used an abrasive floor cleaner, instead of the usual mild detergent, to wash out cages and water bottles. The acidic solution scarred the hard, polycarbonate surface of the plastic and enabled a single chemical culprit to leach out—bisphenol-A (BPA).

[Scientific American](#)

That was in 1998.

Bisphenol-A went into use in the 1950s.

You mean no one followed up on the original idea? Well, they thought they didn't have to:

But during the manufacturing process, not all BPA gets locked into chemical bonds, explains Tim A. Osswald, an expert in polymer engineering at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. That residual BPA can work itself free, especially when the plastic is heated, whether it's a Nalgene bottle in the dishwasher, a food container in the microwave, or a test tube being sterilized in an autoclave.

They had been assuming that because a chemical tends to form bonds, it always does, and that those bonds then remain consistent despite far more vigorous conditions than those in a laboratory.

Really?

This ignorant thinking is borne of a single tendency: politics. Don't rock the boat. Millions of jobs are on the line. Millions of people want their products. Shaking this tree will make you unpopular. So don't — and if you get bitter, say "screw it" and hope they all die of BPA poisoning, join the club. We're all heart-poisoned by politics too.

This is why a lower-case-c conservatism makes sense: each new thing we add has potential threats, and because of social pressures, no one is watching. We need to be aware of our tendency to delude ourselves with politics, and distract ourselves to death, and guard against that bad logic — no matter how popular, meaning profitable and self-promotional, it is.

If we want to move on to our next evolutionary stage, where we evolve to a consciousness broader than self-consciousness, and so can make better decisions, we're going to have to kick this politics addiction and some point and become truthful, less polite, more direct, and more attentive. No more spacing out like watching afternoon TV with a vodka martini. No more pretending problems solve themselves, or that the problem is governments, industries, etc. when the real problem is our inattention.

Let's hope that we continue to find more horrible toxic products so that we learn this lesson well — from pain and tragedy, as that is the only way that humans seem to learn.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#)

Modern people can't face shades of grey

Jun 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Cocktail party conversation, the natural camouflage of the dramatic ego, often ends with: "I just can't see it that clearly. I believe this issue is not black and white, but in shades of gray." It sounds so lovely, a way of defending ourselves against the finality of judgment we come to expect from nature "red in tooth and claw."

But when it comes to thinking, modern people only give lip service to shades of gray. They also cannot think beyond a linear absolute, where there's one extreme and then the next, with no variation in the middle. We sometimes refer to this with metaphors of a swinging pendulum, but I think it's simpler.

Our interaction with society is defined in "us and them" terms. They require that we be socialized and take care of each other, so we fight back with what we want. As a result, we see our needs versus the needs of "them," which is a symbol for whatever group of our fellow partially evolved monkeys is pressing us to do something we don't want to at the time.

We don't have shades of gray because we know that inevitably, us and them come down to a messy compromise. There's your gray. In the meantime, we need to find some extreme position and take it so our negotiation advantage is highest. You know, good hagglers always ask for a ridiculously low price, and then give in slowly so the price walks up to one that is both reasonable and realistic.

One of the biggest issues of our time, race, is a subset of another issue — class warfare. We are appalled by the idea that we, as individuals, cannot be whoever we want to be. As a result, we create a bargaining position where we demand the right for all individuals to be whatever they want to be, regardless of their actual ability.



This is why we love rags-to-riches stories: it could happen to us. This is why we love revolutions: we could use liberation from our lives, and it would be psychologically easier if we could blame an Oppressor for all of our failings. We love the idea of becoming something new in the span of a movie or novel. And to have this right, we demand it for all others, so They are working for Us.

Race is a classic example of this logic. The issue becomes redefined in personal terms, of fairness and justice, and immediately we leave behind all logical considerations. This is why the pendulum swings so wildly on this issue: we see it as a personal threat, and a chance to appear more altruistic than others, and make Them work for Us more rapidly.

After all, if you were of a minority, how would you want to be treated? It's like a television commercial: which product would you prefer, if you were this person on the screen? Even more, it's a social question: how do I make my guests comfortable, what tokens do I extend to them?

Check out this inversion of the classic Hollywood story — and yes, that's why you're not hearing much about it. It doesn't make a good story of successful revenge. Instead, it tells us that appearances are not reality, and our moral zeal often is a bigger oppressor than our amorality:

Authorities have said Finley, Crostley and McClelland were friends who drove across the Oklahoma state line for beer in September. They argued on the way back about whether Finley was too drunk to drive, and McClelland got out of the car to walk home.

Authorities had alleged that Finley then ran down McClelland, whose body was caught under the truck and dragged about 70 feet (20 meters). His mangled body was found along a country road.

The racial implications of the case reminded some of the murder of James Byrd, who was chained by the ankles to the bumper of a pickup truck and dragged to death in 1998 in the east Texas town of Jasper. Three white men were convicted of killing him; two are on death row and the other is serving a life term.

The case had been unraveling in recent months because of a lack of eyewitnesses and physical evidence. Last month, a gravel truck driver gave a sworn statement acknowledging he might have accidentally run over McClelland.

Murder charges were dropped at the prosecution's request Thursday.

[MSN](#)

I've put paragraphs in chronological order. Incident happened; everyone assumed it was a race hate crime; men were charged and thrown in jail for a year; then, authorities discovered that the image they were conditioned to see was very far from reality.

End result: two guys who were obviously not racist because they were good pals with a black dude are thrown in jail for a year, have their names smeared, and racial unrest makes an uneasy spectre at every dinner party. Finally, bureaucracies which are just as dumb and oppressive with a liberal bias as they are in movies with a conservative bias, in a fit of self-awareness, call off the stupidity.

We cannot think in grey or three dimensions about race.

We have a linear scale, from Oppression to Freedom, and that's all we see. That's our Us/Them bargaining balance again.

We cannot think that [the races would be biologically different](#), and therefore different in abilities and inclinations, but that we would not oppress them as a result.

We cannot think that the races might be free, and problems might arise from something other than oppression.

Heck, we don't even define freedom or oppression. They're wholly subjective terms. When someone who is a minority or protected group is upset, oppression is suspected. When someone who is not of a minority group is oppressed, we assume that just like in the Hollywood narrative, they're privileged and will get out

of it.

Confirmation bias refers to a type of selective thinking whereby one tends to notice and to look for what confirms one's beliefs, and to ignore, not look for, or undervalue the relevance of what contradicts one's beliefs.

This tendency to give more attention and weight to data that support our beliefs than we do to contrary data is especially pernicious when our beliefs are little more than prejudices.

[Skeptic's Dictionary](#)

We cannot think that diversity (technical term: multiculturalism) is anything other than freedom. Even more, we cannot think in the shades of gray that different communities might be... different. We want the same rule applied everywhere, so it's safe and fair, like installing the same fast food in every town so we're never without a Big Mac if we want one.

As a result, we've put a filter on our minds that kicks in before we even read or assess what's going on. Does it resemble this pattern from a movie? Then it must be so. Smash oppression, vote for freedom! It's like tired dogma repeated by exhausted armies of totalitarian regimes, except since we think we have freedom, we believe that we do.

And from the other end of the spectrum, people with research-oriented focus are slowly chipping away at our sacred cow of linear absolutes in thinking about race:

New research indicates that natural selection may shape the human genome much more slowly than previously thought. Other factors — the movements of humans within and among continents, the expansions and contractions of populations, and the vagaries of genetic chance — have heavily influenced the distribution of genetic variations in populations around the world.

In recent years, geneticists have identified a handful of genes that have helped human populations adapt to new environments within just a few thousand years—a strikingly short timescale in evolutionary terms. However, the team found that for most genes, it can take at least 50,000-100,000 years for natural selection to spread favorable traits through a human population. According to their analysis, gene variants tend to be distributed throughout the world in patterns that reflect ancient population movements and other aspects of population history.

When the team compared closely related populations they found few large genetic differences. If the individual populations' environments were exerting strong selective pressure, such differences should have been apparent.

[Science Daily](#)

What they're telling is that evolution, from start to finish, has been an elective move.

Early hominids elected to make fire and live in caves, so they ended up separated from their friends who wanted to live in the more prosperous jungle.

Individual groups have gone away from the cradle of civilization so that they could follow a vision of their own. They chose to geographically isolate themselves; there's no place on earth people cannot get to, but if a group wants to stay isolated, they're able to do it. When we see a geographically isolated group, we're seeing the hand of human beings wanting it that — and since it happens over many generations, it's for a good reason.

Each group is the way it is because somewhere they were created to be different and to escape the rest. Why? So they could do it their way. It's no different than families moving to the suburbs. They want to live as they want to live, apart from the mass of confused people in the city.

Except in evolutionary terms, the cities were the naturally prosperous areas that were not geographically isolated — and the suburbs and countryside were places where groups could set up their own standards, and evolve according to them, shaping themselves in the process. Which came first, the culture or the genetics? Probably some nascent form of the culture.

Our modern dialogue doesn't see this shade of gray. It also doesn't see any third dimension to the issue. In addition to oppression and freedom, we need to consider practicality and identity — because identity is the cornerstone of culture. And culture is the only thing that can resist the dual threats of corporate/bureaucracy stupidity and trends that cause a lynch-mob mentality.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

How it got this bad

Jun 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Always seeking new blogs to read, since forums are defunct and etexts are of things published long ago, I found this insightful little excerpt:

Few want to face the fact that the world is in a bad way, even less offer anything of value, just the usual new "green" initiative which will sustain life and prolong the suffering for another 50 years so we can spread like diseases. The mindset that humans are naturally of quality has become devastating to us, now quality and quantity have become the same and we have flourished beyond our means, nature has been plundered and we have imprisoned ourselves in a world of industrial slavery, devaluation, monotony, the suicide of the self on a scale never seen before. These are things people don't wish to hear about their bright and vibrant new age however, we're posed with so many threats, so many problems and questions awaiting an answer few are willing to provide.

Shorter showers and driving hybrid cars is well and good, but it won't help repair the horrendous impacts we've had on our planet, let alone the fact that hybrid cars are built around the world (pollution, travel etc.) and their batteries require rare metals and resources. We need to consider the fact that 97% of the worlds water is in the ocean and a further 2.4% remains in ice caps and glaciers, leaving 0.6% of the worlds water as fresh and drinkable. Now also bear in mind the population booms of recent times and the issues with draught, water restrictions, pollution and a variety of other issues and we start to see that the future doesn't look as promising as some would like us to think. Regardless of what's needed most people aren't able to comprehend the world needing to lose precious humans. What needs to be realised however is that shunning an answer doesn't make the question disappear and this is not a situation that well-wishing and empathy can fix. We face a bleak future where humanity will be lowered to the most basic and animalistic it has ever been; this world is condemned to become a wasteland over which the human species in all its glory will be fighting over the scraps like vultures over offal.

[Tradunt](#)

For a moment, I think this blog should be taken at face value, and we should hypothetically accept his figures. There's an environmental apocalypse coming.

We don't find that hard to believe because we've noticed signs, both anecdotal and statistical, that such a thing is likely.

We all want to look toward something external we can blame. System of government, money itself, or the greed of people in certain roles. How about the simplest answer?

If someone ignored [trash piling up](#) around their house for a decade, we'd say they were dysfunctional.

Why, then, don't we point out that modernity is defined by our shifting authority and blame to external entities so that we can preserve our lack of obligation to reality, on a personal level?

A dumb man piles up his own garbage. A smart man sets up a city authority responsible for getting rid of it, but because getting rid of it correctly costs too much, they dump it somewhere. It still piles up, but elsewhere. That way the smart man looks good, even if there's a rotten underbelly of the system which is that it's not doing what it claims to do.

Our literature for the past 200 years has been warning us: we have separated social reality from actual reality, and we live in social reality where we manipulate others to help us — by looking good by hiding our

trash elsewhere, passing the buck on down the line.

Now think about life in general in these modern times. We are held up in traffic, in lines, at work, etc. by other people acting stupidly, but we cannot criticize them because it's how they want to do things. They have absolute authority over how they conduct their lives. So we all wait. And many people responding to a slowdown is a glacial shockwave of dysfunction.

Our society is ugly. Our daily tasks are stupid. The interfaces on our tools, computers and bureaucracies are frustrating to anyone but an oblivious idiot. Nothing works as advertised or gets even close. These are the signs of a species in dysfunction.

And what's the cause of this dysfunction? Individuals not responding to reality because they have the socially acceptable choice of denying it. That, in a nutshell, is what defines the modern time: the triumph of many granular individuals who act like cancer cells because they are selfish, oblivious, and insincere.

It's not the government, the corporations, the fascists or the commies, or any other external bugbear. The problem is within. The problem is a social system that denies any need for personal responsibility, morality, and thinking about consequences, especially regarding "social" ownerships like our shared stewardship of nature.

The root of that problem is in turn that we feared death so much we forgot the most important love — a reverent love of the whole, as the poetic Kamal S. from Kali-Yuga blog notes:

If Love is the urge and desire towards some sort of union with another, then love is the very force holding the cosmos together. A blind will, or perhaps something greater still.

but we understand it so little, and thus, the cause of our collective misery as men, and women.

[Kali-Yuga](#)

We know how to love objects, but can we learn to love context... especially the default context that underlies this thing we know as life?

With that kind of attitude that holds life to be sacred, we must think through the consequences of our action. We know then that we are not isolated, and cannot any more cut ourselves off from obligation to reality than we can stop breathing. We are part of the world, not the other way around.

If this attitudinal change were effected, most human problems would lessen to manageable levels. But it is taboo because it ranks one person above another in some way other than the bureaucratic methods of money, elections, popularity, etc. And so in each of us the fearful monkey — who fears death more than he loves life — starts to resist in twisting fear.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Why people hate the internet

Jun 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



I know there's some people out there who like to tear down any ambition because they've lost their own.

Frequently, they accuse others of treating the internet like SRS BSNS while spending hours on the internet.

They deride others' work as "gay" or "stupid" while pushing around their same failed projects, or lives that basically have no direction.

Such people are the first to call someone else stupid, and to demand that their own "rights" be respected, but the last to do anything important.

They exist at a level of conversation and symbols, promoting themselves by trying to undercut others with insults, vitriol, mockery, and so on.

Nietzsche called these people tarantulas because they thrive on the misery of others, having nothing but misery for themselves.

The internet empowers such people because it makes it easy to pretend you're more than you are. \$500 computer and \$50 a month for internet is all it takes. The knowledge required is menial.

That way, you can fail at life and act like a king, much like hipsters contribute nothing culturally but act like cultural icons.

I find it interesting how these people are the first to accuse others of being internet addicts, usually when those others propose some form of action. However, the accusers are the ones who spend every evening on the internet just trying to socialize.

And who wants to be so socially broken they can only socialize through the internet, where every persona is fake and compelled to like you because you have tastes or lifestyle choices that reinforce their own?

Tarantulas are miserable because their lives didn't work out the way they wanted. And in desperation, they have only one goal: destroy others, or any ambition, so they feel better about their own dead ambition.

This is why we hate the internet. It has captured the welfare cheats, deadbeats, basement dwellers, disability fakers, callow youth, television addicts, people who cannot tell fantasy from reality and people

who love to lie about themselves, and given them a power they could never have in real life.

And then their behavior is appalling only to those who could see the possibilities of something better than angry monkeys tearing each other down to feel good about the next 8-5 shift doing something menial: food service, call center, what used to be called "clerkship," and so on. Jobs that a trained monkey could do without using its brain.

On the internet, they are kings. In reality, they are cyberpeasants.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Abortion killings

Jun 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

My response to [Girl on the Right's rather lucid but profane statement](#) about what a screwup this situation is:

The right is so disorganized it's hilarious.

Abortion is the symbol, not the goal.

The goal is having communities that support right-wing values only, and encouraging others to leave, while strengthening local and state government so the right can have control over some states — and not be forced to pay for the disasters of leftist states, nor accept their population.

Cheney's recent federalism shows what a smart idea this is. Let Vermont be liberal, and Texas be conservative, and see where each is in another 20 years of not paying for each other. Among other things, states like Texas will have to trim their budgets and start saying no to people wanting entitlements, who not surprisingly vote overwhelmingly democratic.

Abortion and gay marriage are symbolic issues that need to take a back seat toward having conservative communities where conservatives can do their thing without the decay that liberalism introduces.

In my view, right and left are incompatible.

Republican neoliberalism is quasi-compatible with primal conservatives like myself: we are realists, and as a result we're anti-liberal and pro-conservation — of values, of nature, of people and of cultures.

Our view is 100% incompatible with the left.

What we need to do is create our own communities, and build our own economies, and then politically detach from the others. Let each system sink or swim, and in another few decades the truth about "what works" will be clear.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Buc-ees and the end of civilization

Jun 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I penned a letter to the folks behind Buc-ees stores today:

Dear Buc-Ee,

There is something about your grinning visage rising over the industrial jumble of Houston, Texas that strikes terror into my heart.

I fear that you represent a final stage in human evolution: where we who have descended too far into social symbols can only communicate through hyperbole, revealing how empty we are of honest affect.

Aldous Huxley may not have dreamed you up, but I think he knew you would be there, Buc-Ee. And that we would see in your gleaming eyes and vacant, expectant grin some mockery of our own demise.

Signed,
Eksistens Jeger
Missouri City, TX

Buc-ees is known to those of us who don't shop there mainly by its terrifyingly postapocalyptic neo-anime mascot, Buc-Ee the Beaver:



This, combined with its random spelling, suggests a symbolic overload that has created the ultimate illusion. We no longer care if we're cheesy. We just want cheeseburgers.

And so it ends, with a whimper and not a bang.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Interview: Pete Murphy, author of “Five Short Blasts”

May 31st, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

One interesting fellow who commented on early articles on this blog is Pete Murphy, who worked for thirty years in manufacturing and engineering for a major chemical company and now writes in his spare time.

What's interesting is that his book, [Five Short Blasts](#), take an economic approach to analyzing the population problem in the United States — and economics, like mathematics, relies heavily on real-world modeling of granular, bottom-up systems, unlike the “personality-based” viewpoints of most political thinking.

It's an interesting book by an interesting author, and we're fortunate to have him for a round of questions.

How would you describe yourself politically — you seem fiscally conservative or libertarian, but other aspects of your philosophy seem to be more futurist.



The problem that I have with both the political left and right is that neither is addressing what I believe to lie at the root of our problems. For the past few decades, in spite of oscillating back and forth between the left and right approaches of the Democratic and Republican parties, our economy seems to get worse. This is because even the political center is completely off target. While macroeconomic indicators like Gross Domestic Product seem to show an economy that, while having its ups and downs, is steadily growing, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that something is wrong. It's becoming more of a dog-eat-dog world everyday. Well-paying jobs with good benefits are becoming ever more scarce. Real wages are declining along with our net worth. People are literally working themselves to death out of fear of losing their jobs. I think that most of your readers can relate to what I'm saying, especially older people who can remember when times were different. I believe that these are consequences of what I call “economical overpopulation,” both the home-grown consequences and those imported by attempting to trade freely with nations that are even more economically overpopulated than we are. Neither party addresses this issue because both are guided by the belief of economists that population growth is an essential element of a healthy economy. And both parties support unfettered free trade.

Do you believe that any systems can be purely regulated by an “invisible hand”? In other words, leave guidance of our nation to the free markets, or the popular vote, or other forms of counting granular approval.

I'll answer with a qualified “no.” I generally believe in free markets but, because there are parameters at

work that are unaffected by market forces while simultaneously having an effect on markets themselves, boundaries must be established within which free markets may operate. In the first half of the 20th century, we found it necessary to establish boundaries regarding the just treatment of workers, banning abusive practices like child labor. In the second half of the 20th century, we found it necessary to establish boundaries to protect the environment. I believe that two additional boundaries are required. First, population growth cannot be relied upon as a mechanism for driving economic growth. Secondly, we must have a balance of trade. No nation can run a large trade deficit indefinitely. Since the U.S. trade deficit is financed by a sell-off of American assets, an obvious limit is reached when the supply of assets is depleted. With a \$9.2 trillion cumulative trade deficit of thirty-three consecutive years, that point has been reached and the ongoing global economic collapse is the consequence. When you understand the role of disparities in population density between nations in driving that imbalance, you come to understand that market forces are powerless to correct it.

You point out that as population density increases, consumption decreases, which makes that for us to trade with more densely-population nations leaves us at a disadvantage. As world population grows, however, most places are going to become more densely-populated. Do we have a strategy for countering that, or would we be better off trading less outside our borders?

First, a little background is necessary in order for folks to understand my answer to this question. There is what I call an "optimum population density," the point at which we have a sufficiently large population to provide the labor force necessary to produce the products required for a high standard of living, but not so large that we begin crowding together more than we'd like, a point at which overcrowding begins to erode per capita consumption. This "optimum population density" is difficult to define and we may not know that it's been exceeded until anecdotal evidence suggests that the line has been crossed.

But once that line is crossed, over-crowding begins to erode per capita consumption, due simply to a lack of space for using and storing products. Perhaps an example will help. I like to use Japan because they are a modern, prosperous country like the U.S., but ten times as densely populated. As a result, the per capita consumption of dwelling space – the size of their homes – is less than a third of the average American's, not because they like living in tiny homes but because there isn't room for anything larger. This means that their consumption of all products used in the construction, furnishing and maintenance of their homes is dramatically reduced. And their per capita consumption of virtually everything (with the exception of things like food and clothing) is similarly affected to a greater or lesser extent. As a result, their per capita employment in producing goods and services for domestic consumption is quite low, making them utterly dependent on manufacturing products for export to employ their excess labor capacity.

So you can see that, by engaging in free trade with such a nation, our economies combine and the work of manufacturing is spread evenly across the combined labor force. But, while they gain access to a healthy, vibrant market, all we get in return is access to a market emaciated by over-crowding and low per capita consumption. The result is an automatic trade deficit and loss of jobs for the U.S.

Finally, to answer your question, this means that, while free trade in natural resources with all nations and free trade in manufactured goods between nations with similar population densities is indeed beneficial, free trade in manufactured goods with badly overpopulated nations is a sure-fire loser, tantamount to economic suicide. What I have proposed for such situations is a tariff structure for manufactured goods that is indexed to population density.

It seems to me that your idea of "smart tariffs" calibrated by the difference in population densities fits between the libertarian view of unfettered free markets, and the moderate view that government regulation is good. It's regulation by principle. How does this escape the problems of regulation by bureaucracy?

It probably doesn't. Unfortunately, administering tariffs, "smart" or otherwise, is going to require a certain amount of bureaucracy. Perhaps the most famous example of attempting to reduce the bureaucracy involved in administering tariffs was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930. Free trade advocates like to point to this act as a turn toward protectionism by the U.S. that caused the Great Depression. That's simply not

true. Smoot-Hawley was only the most recent in a long history of tariff acts and barely raised tariffs at all above the previous Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act of 1922.

It's real purpose was to reduce the bureaucracy involved in setting the tariff rates. All tariffs had been previously set in "ad valorem" terms, which means that they were set as a percentage of the products' values. It was then up to bureaucrats to determine the values, and the figures had to be reviewed and revised over time. So Smoot-Hawley set the tariffs in firm dollar terms, eliminating the value-determining bureaucracy. If anything, it was expected that the tariff rates would actually decline with time as inflation eroded the effective rates. But exactly the opposite happened. With the Great Depression came a new phenomenon – deflation – which actually sent the effective rates of the Smoot-Hawley tariffs soaring. The lesson of Smoot-Hawley was that tariffs should always be "ad valorem" tariffs.

I think a better question is how "principled" tariffs, designed to counteract the tendency of high population densities to drive trade imbalances, would be received by the rest of the world as compared to tariffs that seem arbitrary and born out of selfishness and a fear of competition. We tend to speak of unfettered free trade and blanket applications of protectionism as the only two choices for trade policy when, in fact, these are nothing more than the two extremes of a trade policy spectrum. Smart trade policy employs both, preferring free trade but using tariffs in those cases where it is the only mechanism to assure a balance of trade. Such a policy would make a trade war unlikely, since most nations would enjoy the benefits of free trade with the U.S. while only the manufactured goods of overpopulated nations would be subjected to duties.

For example, why would we want to jeopardize the extremely beneficial free trade relationship we enjoy with Canada? At the same time, the imposition of tariffs on nations like Japan, Germany, Korea and China is the only hope we will ever have of restoring a balance of trade with them. Would Canada react with tariffs on U.S. goods to protest U.S. tariffs on Japan? Not likely. Instead, they'd probably be keen to adopt a trade policy similar to that of the U.S.

You show how immigration is a cause of poverty and unemployment, but is favored by corporations because it creates new consumers. However, it seems to me that ideal consumers are those who are by ability placed into the upper half of the middle class, because these consumers buy what they perceive to be superior products, allowing competition on the basis of quality. How does immigration affect this?

I'd like to begin my answer by distinguishing my case for reducing immigration from the more classic claims that immigration drives down wages. There is some truth to that argument, but my primary concern with immigration is that it contributes dramatically to population growth, driving our population density further beyond the economically "optimum" level. I want to be clear that my concern with immigration is not rooted in racism or xenophobia. I really wouldn't care if the entire population of the U.S. emigrated to foreign countries, to be replaced by immigrants from those lands. It's the imbalance that's the problem. Each year approximately 1.5 million immigrants (both legal and illegal) arrive in the U.S. while only about 50,000 people emigrate from the U.S. Whether these immigrants are upper class, middle class or poor makes little difference.

It is true that each immigrant adds to total consumption. Each must purchase or rent dwelling space, transportation, food, clothing, staples, etc. So each new immigrant is another customer, making corporations happy, and each adds to our gross domestic product, making economists happy. But each also contributes to over-crowding which very slowly and almost imperceptibly erodes per capita consumption.

This can best be illustrated by returning to the example of the per capita consumption of dwelling space in Japan. Even though it is less than a third of the average American's, because they are ten times as densely populated as the U.S., the total consumption of dwelling space is more than three times what it would be if their population density was the same as the U.S. This is great for corporations involved in building, furnishing and maintaining Japanese homes but it's not good at all for the Japanese people who have to live in such crowded conditions. Again, what's worse is what it does to per capita employment in these industries. The low demand for labor drives up unemployment and puts downward pressure on wages. This is my concern with immigration – it's contributing to overpopulation, driving down per capita consumption

and wages while driving up unemployment and poverty.

In order to keep value, do we want to achieve constant growth, or could we achieve superior social stability and superior products and as a result, live better as merchants to the world not consumers of the world's products?

It's the quest for constant growth that's actually ruining our economy. Once the economically optimum population density has been breached, further growth becomes cancerous, fueling unemployment and driving down the purchasing power of our citizens at the same time that it's boosting GDP. But economists have yet to recognize this, and can't envision a healthy economy without growth, including growth in the population. You either grow or die, they say. Of course, this is nonsense. We can have a stable economy that is, at the same time, healthy and robust. Regarding the second half of your question – whether we would be better off as the world's consumers or as its merchants – the answer is neither. Both imply an imbalance in trade that is ultimately unsustainable. After more than three decades of consecutive annual trade deficits, we've been bankrupted. For us to become merchants to the world, other nations would eventually be bankrupted, just as we have been. Ultimately, for a nation as large as the U.S., the only way to have a sustainable, viable economy is to provide for ourselves the full range of products and services we consume, while trading what we have in excess for things that we lack.

Does immigration lead to more jobs and more overall income, or does it lead to a “thinning” of jobs with more jobs in low-paid labor, with a consequent proliferation of bureaucratic jobs to manage these workers?

Immigration does lead to an increase in the total number of jobs, just as population growth does in general. But we have to begin thinking in per capita terms. Although the total number of jobs rises with population growth along with a total rise in demand for products, it doesn't keep pace with growth in the labor force and per capita employment begins to decline as over-crowding begins to erode our per capita consumption. Again, consider the example of housing in Japan. Even though the total consumption of housing is three times higher than it would be if their population growth had stopped at the current density of the U.S., their per capita employment in that industry (and other industries that make products for domestic consumption in Japan), is much lower. Whether the population growth is due to immigration or growth in the native population is irrelevant. What matters is the growth and, here in the U.S., immigration accounts for well over half of our population growth.

If America were to stop being a debtor nation, stop growth and stop immigration, would her power and prestige diminish or rise?

That's really two separate questions: what happens if we stop being a debtor nation and what happens if we stop growth? If we stop being a debtor nation by eliminating our trade deficit, we would soon realize huge benefits. Six million manufacturing jobs would come home. Federal spending required to offset the negative consequences of those lost jobs – unemployment benefits and so on – could be eliminated, helping to reduce the federal budget deficit and, ultimately, taxes. And foreign policy would no longer be influenced by our dependence on foreign sources of oil and other products. These are just a few benefits.

Regarding the question of whether our standing and prestige would be diminished if we stopped growing relative to the rest of the world, I think that on the surface it may appear that way at first. Ultimately, however, overpopulation will prove to be source of weakness, not strength, as rising unemployment leads to civil unrest and strife and becomes a drain on nations' resources. In the end, it will be nations who have dealt with the problem of overpopulation and have evolved into sustainable, healthy economies that will be the most powerful and they will be the nations the rest of the world looks to for leadership.

Many of your economic ideals seem to me similar to those of the upper half of the American middle class: quiet, small cities with low crime and an emphasis on an economy primarily driven by knowledge workers, instead of a relatively flat economic hierarchy with a predominance of unskilled manual laborers. Economically, do you think this will be a better long-term model?

If that's the impression I've given regarding manual labor, then I'm afraid I've been misunderstood. You cannot have a viable economy without manual labor. Farming, construction, manufacturing ? all of these activities involve some manual labor. During the summers when I was in college, I worked as a manual laborer myself, building fence along highways. All honest work is noble, including manual labor, and the people who do these jobs should be able to earn enough to make a living.

Some say that Americans won't do this kind of work any more, and that's why we need immigrants. Since I'm an advocate of dramatically reducing our rate of immigration, both legal and illegal, I obviously believe otherwise. Americans will do any work for decent pay. Here in Michigan, I see Americans every day collecting the trash and pumping septic tanks. Corporate farm operators complain that they can't find people to pick their crops, yet the parking lot of every ?U-Pick? farm that I pass is full of cars bringing people eager to spend a couple of hours picking crops to save five bucks over what they'd pay at the grocery store. Those who say they can't find Americans willing to do the work are either being disingenuous or haven't tried very hard.

The notion of a ?knowledge-based? economy became popular with economists as they attempted to tamp down concerns about manufacturing job losses with a vision of a new economy that relied less upon manufacturing. But now we can see that, if anything, at least some ?knowledge-based? work may be even more easily out-sourced than manufacturing work. Information technology jobs and some jobs in the medical field, like reading X-rays and analyzing test results, are just a couple of examples. Nearly every person who walks the earth has a brain capable of doing ?knowledge-based work? given the proper training and, unless there is something that makes the ?knowledge-based work? impossible to do from a remote location, it's just as susceptible to being out-sourced as any other job. In the final analysis, every sector makes a necessary and valuable contribution to our overall economy and we can't afford to write off any jobs, regardless of how skilled or unskilled they may be.

One factor I did not see mentioned was political instability. From my readings of history, when societies grow too fast they produce large numbers of disenfranchised and irresponsible laborers, who then join in revolt against their elites, usually killing them. Does this future ever threaten America? Europe?

That's a real concern. Overpopulation produces rising unemployment which, beyond some point, can result in social unrest. In addition, badly overpopulated regions are breeding grounds for hatred and intolerance. It was high unemployment that fostered Hitler's rise to power. And it's no mere coincidence that the other main antagonist of World War II, Japan, was (and is) badly overpopulated and was looking to expand. Virtually everywhere you look across the globe, wherever you find the worst civil strife is where you'll find overpopulation, whether it's the Israel/Lebanon/Palestine region of the Middle East, Rwanda in Africa or, going back a few years, El Salvador in North America.

Although I would like to see the U.S. restore a balance of trade, this would certainly raise unemployment in those nations where gross overpopulation makes them utterly dependent on exports to sustain themselves. These are the places I worry about most as having the potential for civil unrest and political instability.

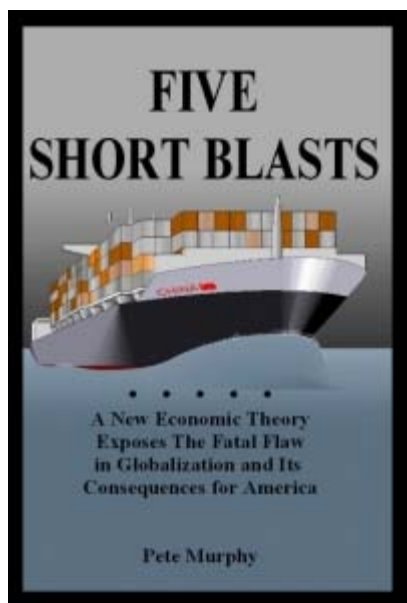
“Five Short Blasts” seems to point to a difficulty in the paradigm of growth itself — that is, what goes up must go down. Is there a way we can balance ourselves so we can stay at the middle of the growth curve, without experiencing the decline?

This may be one of the more difficult concepts to understand — that for a society that has grown beyond the economically optimum population density — a falling population would actually yield an improvement in the economy as measured at the “micro” level. There would be no decline! It may be easiest to understand if you imagine a graph depicting standard of living or quality of life vs. population density. You'd see a parabolic curve, slowly rising as the population density increased from zero ? the situation economists have witnessed for most of human history. But then, at some point, the curve levels off and begins to decline as overpopulation begins to drive unemployment up. Wages and benefits begin to decline. Savings are eroded. And the quality of life in general begins to decline as overcrowding precludes opportunities for recreation and, in general, makes life more of a dog-eat-dog world.

Reversing that process by reducing population would send us back-tracking up that same curve, increasing our standard of living and quality of life until we had returned to the optimum population density. Those who measure the economy in macroeconomic terms like GDP would be dumbfounded by what they witnessed. GDP would certainly decline and, as the process unfolded, it would look like a recession with falling home sales and vacant stores, but unemployment would actually decline and median wages would begin rising again as the decline in total consumption was outpaced by a decline in the labor force. The demand for labor, relative to the size of the labor force, would actually increase.

There would be some problems along the way. Eliminating blight as the ?un-development? process progressed would be an issue. But the big issue that economists wring their hands over is the problem of an aging population with a shrinking percentage of workers to support them. Taxes may have to rise as that population bubble works its way through the age spectrum and slowly vanishes. But consider this: since it's impossible for population growth to continue indefinitely, it's a problem that has to be faced sooner or later. It will be much easier to deal with it now instead of waiting until our population has perhaps doubled, making the size of the aging population twice as large. It's time to deal with reality instead of dumping it onto future generations.

If growth is not the path to prosperity, how will society have to adjust its values systems to adapt to a better path? What is that path?



I suspect that path is something that would evolve over time, and it's difficult to predict what form it might take. But I think a couple of elements are fairly predictable. First of all, it's easy to see that the construction sector of the economy would decline significantly, as new construction to accommodate an expanding population would vanish, leaving an industry with only a replacement market ? replacing old homes, buildings and infrastructure as they wear out. This also means that it would be that much more important to restore the manufacturing sector of our economy to employ displaced construction workers.

Secondly, people will not be able to rely upon investment returns that out-pace inflation to fund their retirements, which means they'll have to save more. That may seem like a daunting task in today's environment, but the environment will be quite different. Thanks to a high demand for labor relative to the smaller size of the work force, well-paying jobs with benefits (perhaps even pensions!) will be plentiful. A reduced demand for resources will yield low inflation. All of the stresses associated with constant growth will be gone.

This may be an appropriate time to point out that economists often warn of dire consequences of a declining population, pointing to examples where population decline has accompanied a declining economy. But, in every one of these cases, they've reversed the cause and effect. The population decline has been caused by economic problems, and not vice versa. It's only natural that people will move away from a bad economy to look for work elsewhere. This is exactly the situation we see in my home state of Michigan

today. But blaming the economic decline on the falling population is putting the cart before the horse. I can't think of a single instance in which the population was reduced in a healthy economy. Yes, some European nations have below-replacement birth rates but the population is propped up with immigration in each case. So we have no model to predict what will happen. But for a nation in a state of overpopulation, my theory predicts that the decline in GDP will be slower than the population decline, resulting in a boost in the standard of living of the people who remain.

As population density increases, consumption increases — but this consumption proportionately favors entertainment-based goods and services. This seems to be a result of the expansion of a demographic of urban people who fit a new profile: middle-level, educated, middle-class but not prosperous, single and entertainment-oriented employees. Is this difference in types of consumption important?

You're speaking of what people do with their disposable income once their more basic needs of food, clothing, housing and transportation have been met. These basic needs consume the vast majority of the income of most urban dwellers, just as it does for the suburban and rural populations. The problem is that even the per capita consumption of products that meet some of these basic needs — like housing and transportation — is dramatically affected by population density. City dwellers, on average, live in much smaller quarters like condos and apartments and are more likely to eschew the luxury of owning a car in favor of public transit, due the high cost of parking (if it's available at all). In addition, since these urban dwellers in condos and apartments have no lawns or gardens to maintain, their per capita consumption of lawnmowers, rakes, shovels and so on falls to basically zero. So, in a country with very high population density, the per capita employment in all of the industries involved in producing and maintaining all of these products is dramatically reduced.

Yet, the city-dwellers generally have no more disposable income to spend on entertainment and travel than their suburban or rural counterparts because the relatively higher cost of housing and transportation has consumed a bigger proportion of their income. So, does it matter if that disposable income is then spent on movies, theater and electronic gadgets as opposed to such things as golf and boating equipment? It's difficult to say, but the point is that before the first dollar of their disposable income has been spent, the bulk of their per capita consumption of other products has already been seriously eroded.

One of the things that attracted me to your ideas was your proposed balancing of population and resources, and an emphasis on quiet living instead of radical consumption of transient products fueled by entertainment marketing. This reminds me of what parts of the [conservation and environmental movements](#) have been saying for years. Do you think there's compatibility?

My theory is absolutely compatible with and complementary to the environmental movement. You've probably noticed that, even though I am concerned about overpopulation, I've said very little about its role in environmental degradation and resource depletion. That's not because I'm not concerned about these issues. Rather, it's because I was able to arrive at this theory only by setting aside such concerns. When I first became aware of the seriousness of the overpopulation problem, I was already aware that economists claim that there's really no cause for concern because man has demonstrated over and over again that he is ingenious enough to deal effectively with any obstacles to further growth. Even though I had my doubts, I decided to assume that they were right, but still couldn't shake the feeling that there was something that economists were missing — some barrier that would prove to be our undoing. Only then was I able to see the consequences for per capita consumption, unemployment and poverty. And it is poverty that has been the greatest killer throughout human history. If ecological disaster doesn't befall us first, poverty will be our downfall.

Environmentalists have done a wonderful job of raising awareness of the issue. I do wish they would be more courageous in tackling the subject of overpopulation. But every time they do, they run into the same wall — economists who at once raise alarm about the problems associated with an aging population and also assure us that there are technological solutions to every problem. So my mission is to bring something new to the debate — a parameter of population growth that is only exacerbated by attempts to mitigate it —

one for which there is no solution except returning to a stable, sustainable population. I see this theory as a sort of "ultimate weapon" for environmentalists, an economic argument against population growth.

Would the "economically optimum" population I speak of also turn out to be an environmentally sustainable population? Honestly, I can't really say. I think it would be a fascinating challenge for mathematicians, probably requiring the largest super-computers available, to attempt to calculate what that optimum population would be. The inputs for such a calculation would include the definition of a desired standard of living, the level of consumption of every product required for that standard of living, the resources and labor required to make every product, the manpower required to man factories to produce all of these products, and so on. I'm kind of surprised that no one has ever attempted it, as far as I know.

Ultimately, however, it may come down to anecdotal evidence. My gut feel is that sometime in the latter half of the 20th century is when we (the U.S.) breached our economically optimum population density, perhaps when we had half as many people as today, just based on my lifetime of experience in the labor force. There was a clear transition from emphasis on manufacturing volume and efficiency to cost-cutting and down-sizing. From a micro-perspective, the economy clearly took a turn for the worse. So, if the U.S. is overpopulated by a factor of two, then China is overpopulated by a factor of eight. Japan is overpopulated by a factor of twenty. Korea is overpopulated by a factor of thirty, and so on. Reducing populations around the world accordingly would be quite a dramatic reduction. But only environmentalists could determine whether it would still be enough. But, if not, we'd have taken an enormous step in the right direction.

On the other hand, I'll concede that environmental parameters may prove to be the upper limits for population growth before the poverty that my theory predicts really takes hold in a big way. Either way, the dawning of a new age will have begun and I'll be just as happy.

Your ideas could be a line into what one might see as the beginning of meta-politics, or a political system that avoids polarity to an ideology and instead focuses on the pragmatic needs of our situation. This gets outside political language, which while self-consistent may not be consistent with reality outside the political sphere, and forces a change in focus from the marketing of ideas to practical adaptation. Do you think such a meta-politics is possible in our lifetimes?

Had you asked me this question ten years ago, I would have replied "no," it's not possible that my ideas could be incorporated into mainstream thinking and into politics in my lifetime, or in the lifetime of anyone alive today. But one of the things that continues to amaze me is how rapidly change is unfolding, including the economic collision I warned of with Five Short Blasts. Although I expected it may take decades for the real consequences of our trade deficit to be felt, it's already upon us, collapsing the global economy. And thanks to the rapidly evolving acceptance of the dangers of global warming, although economists and world leaders still cling desperately to the notion that technological fixes alone will be sufficient, widespread recognition of the role of overpopulation can't be far behind.

But real progress may not come until these ideas begin to take root in the field of economics. I targeted Five Short Blasts at average Americans, hoping to start a grass roots understanding of the role of overpopulation in our economic demise, believing that I could never be taken seriously by economists for two reasons: because anyone raising the issue of overpopulation is immediately dismissed by economists as a "Malthusian" and because my background is not in the field of economics. But that hasn't stopped me from pushing these ideas with economists, and I've found a few who would listen. Helping matters is the fact that the field of economics is in some disarray now, following the economic meltdown. Many are questioning whether economists are missing something, and the field seems more open to new ideas.

It's interesting that you've ended this interview with this question because it's similar to the question I posed in the final two paragraphs of the epilogue of my book:

"Have I struck a spark large enough to start a fire, or will it flicker and die? Will others more eloquent and influential than I take up the cause? Will opportunistic young activists recognize the potential of these fresh ideas for launching political careers among the irrelevant and dying philosophies that surround them?"

I've been asked by others how I will know if I've been successful. I probably will never know. To be successful, I don't need to sell a million copies of this book. I only need to get one copy into the right hands.

Thanks Pete for a great interview. Gentle readers, you can visit [Pete's site](#) and learn more about him, the book and his theories.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

Logical inversion and fascism

May 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We humans like to keep a linear, categorical, literal view of things. When we say we're in control, we're in control — we think.

One thing we've never as a species quite wrapped our minds around is the inversion. This is a logical technique where you argue for something that you claim is against what you really want, but in such a way that it validates you using force or force of law to get what you want.

The most popular variant of this is claiming to fight for freedom, demand rights, or empower the disempowered. This positive goal gives you moral legitimacy to demand the inversion: If I fight for freedom, I must fight and destroy the enemies of freedom, which requires that I suspend freedom.

Instead of pointing out that "freedom" (for example) is a broken argument because, unlike natural selection or other ideas, it does not take into account all possibilities, the inverter deliberately selects an abstract, vague, fuzzy goal so that they can change the focal point of the argument to that goal — and then move the "background details" to empower their own actual crusade, which is to have power.

We've seen this too many times — a leader claims he's doing something positive, and so he is given power, which he then runs away with.

We can see it in social discourse, too. It's not socially acceptable to disagree with the empowerment of anyone, except those who don't talk about empowering others. They could either be fascists, or they could be suggesting a more realistic solution, which makes us the fascists when we enforce it upon them.

One great fallacy here is the notion that every law must be the same in every locality. When people band together to "modernize" or "get with Progress" and target a specific area, they're the fascists who are telling those people they cannot act as they wish.

In human history, we've gone through a series of oppositions where inversion was useful. First it was individual versus society, where the lone person found themselves on the wrong side of the law or social mores for something that was not unreasonable. Now we're in the age of individuals versus the crowd of other individuals, who have banded together on an inverted idea and are using it to smash anyone they resent.

Resentment targets anyone with more of anything: wealth, intelligence, good looks, power, you name it. There is no stopping point for resentment, but when given credibility by a logical inversion, it becomes like a virus we all must obey.

If you find yourself thinking modern society is out of control, and wondering where it will end, fear these inversions. Among other things, inversions always involve symbols that sound good but are unrealistic; nature, on the other hand, created us by offering a perpetually mixed bag of good and bad that ended up producing, for the most part, good.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Bad logic: speed limits

May 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Opposition to speed limits divides an audience. Most immediately shut down to anything you have to say and call you crazy, and the others listen because they're annoyed with speed limits but are still very skeptical.

After all, speed limits are one of those things like food label warnings, fire exits, and health insurance that might save our lives. And because we want our lives to be saved, we want to make an absolute rule that all lives get saved the same way. Fear creates absolutes.

This is a type of broken reasoning where humans are both cause and effect of all that happens in their world. The ultimate goal, or effect, is to preserve ourselves. So we create rules to preserve all people as that guarantees us both preservation and the approval of others.

However, we're unable to think beyond that moment to the effect of preserving everyone from themselves, and we're also unable to think before that moment to the reason that different categories of activity — say, driving fast — have different results for different people. Some people are better drivers.

Looking past this confusion of cause, effect and self, we can see that speed limits have a number of problems:

- Preservation of idiots. Preserve idiots, and when they breed, you have more idiots.
- Trains us to break the law. If we're able to drive competently, we can handle speeds above the average. This means you have smart people growing up learning that the law is for idiots, and needs to be broken, and cops need to be treated as an enemy or predator.
- Defines bad driving. We create a partial definition of bad driving by limiting our perception to quantitative, observable, legalistic reasoning like "he drove too fast" or "she went through a red light." The only way you really know if someone is a bad driver is by observing them driving over a series of challenges.
- Doesn't stop bad drivers. By making speeding a primary issue, you train law enforcement to stop speeders — not be wary of bad drivers, which is the larger problem.

At the very least, this is a fun thought experiment in which we can indulge: do speed limits achieve their goal? If not, what does? In considering our solutions, what prior and posterior factors are we missing — maybe that busting speeders causes problems, and considering "speeders = bad drivers" as an implicit equation warps our thinking?

And if you get through all that: in what others areas is this type of bad cause/effect reasoning applied, and maybe, how we can liberate ourselves from it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).



Harvard Study Supports BPA Leaching Theory

May 22nd, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Harvard has released a study which further confirms what everyone should by now know: stay away from products that leach chemicals:

Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health found that people who drank for a week from the clear plastic polycarbonate bottles increased concentrations of bisphenol A – or BPA – in their urine by 69 percent.

BPA is used in hundreds of everyday products. It is used to make reusable, hard plastic bottles more durable and to help prevent corrosion in canned goods such as soup and infant formula.

Numerous animal studies in recent years suggest that low levels of BPA might cause developmental problems in fetuses and young children and other ill effects. The health effects on adults are not well understood although a recent large human study linked BPA concentrations in people's urine to an increased prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, and liver toxicity.

[[+](#)]

Bisphenol-A is a widely used chemical additive. The only advice one can really give to pregnant women and families is to try to use stainless steel where possible (water bottles, etc. – check out [Sigg](#) and [Klean Kanteen](#)), or cut BPA out in other ways. Having canned foods only occasionally, using fresh produce, avoiding the microwave, and cooking in stainless steel pots and pans will greatly reduce the risk of disorders associated with BPA consumption. In short: live naturally, and avoid plastic in unnecessary applications like water bottles.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#)

More bad science: what causes early puberty?

May 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Here's a prime example of our major human problem — arguing from the human as the cause of all effects, and therefore, having no idea what actually causes anything, although we feel better treating the world as if it were a personified human like us:

A UK-led team located two genes on chromosomes six and nine that appear to strongly influence the age at which menstruation starts.

The genes sit right next to DNA controlling height and weight.

Dr Aric Sigman, psychologist and fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, said: "Early menstruation is a health issue because beyond being an inconvenient surprise for a girl and her parents, it's also associated with a higher risk of a variety of diseases and psychological problems.

However, they also accept that the onset of puberty is influenced by factors such as nutrition and exercise, and the effect of a single gene is likely to be relatively small.

[BBC](#)

From our mailing list:

This is yet another example of statistics gone awry. There is no question that an early age of menarche generally halts female growth, but not for the reasons that this psychologist is suggesting. It is a matter of physiology resulting from the sudden increase in estrogen as it affects the transhydrogenase enzyme systems of the mitochondria.

Growth is halted through the effects on long bones as a consequence of substrate inhibition induced by high estrogen levels. The stuff about estrogen being the cause of disease—any disease—is just another form of statistical nonsense with little scientific basis but a lot of incidental connection.

(Incidentally, the very latest on estrogen suggests that prolonged birth control pills reduce cancer rates. These conclusions are also statistical studies.) Such incidental connections fall into the spurious category of white arctic foxes and snow. Do foxes cause snow to fall in the arctic? Does snow cause foxes to be white?

Another way of looking at this: the obvious idea is that habits cause higher estrogen levels, and that halts growth, and that the same habits are causing early menarche. But our preference as a group is to avoid blame and fault, so we choose to claim it's all genetic.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Tagged: [bad science](#) · [causation not correlation](#) · [cause-effect confusion](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#)

Moral judgment blinds us

May 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Among the many ways to look at the world, one of the most popular is moral judgment. Moral judgments are the shoulds, oughts and shouldn't's of the world. When a situation happens, we decide according to some ideal what "should" have happened, and penalize people for what did.

But that's neurotic, since they did do what they did for some reason inherent to them. Much like releasing a ball over the ground means gravity pulls it down, people just do what it is they're wired to do, and we can either bloviate about should or focus on what "is."

Here's a case in point:

Photo shoot over, she changes into her jogging bottoms and Ugg boots, and talks candidly about that modern TV starlet dilemma: how much flesh can you expose before people start forgetting you have a brain too?

If she sounds as if she is trying to convince herself, there is good reason. Last month – a year after leaving Blue Peter, where she had been for ten years, becoming the longest serving female presenter in the show's history – Konnie finally succumbed to the lure of the lad's mag and agreed to pose for FHM in, er, not very much at all.

'If you are a Dimbleby, constantly peering over your glasses at your notes, you have an air of authority. If you are me and keep looking at your notes, it is taken as a sign of incompetence. I learned that very early on, and had to ditch the notes. But it isn't fair. Why do you have to be a man with grey hair to be taken seriously?'

[The Daily Femail](#)

Let's take this ought of the realm in which she wants to talk about it, which is should. "But it isn't fair," she says, forgetting that fair is a human judgment by which we determine shoulds, not how we will achieve those shoulds or what is most likely to happen. If a ball is released over the head of a child, it will fall, but it should not — yet it will.

Here's a principle for Konnie Huq:

If you act like a slut, people will assume that you are one.

If you want to be accepted for having brains, you have to stay within that role. Sexy and brains collide because people with brains tend to be transcendental about physicality and not as immersed in themselves as the simpler people who frequent Hollywood bars. But if you act like someone in one of those Hollywood bars, people will respond in kind.

She wants us to believe that, using the magic "should," we can separate an action from its intent. When I walked into that bank and shouted EVERYONE ON THE FLOOR THIS IS A STICKUP, I didn't want to be treated like a criminal for the rest of my life. But act like a criminal and, well, you know the rest.

How unfair it all is! We want to appear to be one thing, and yet be another, but we don't connect the dots that the actions that *led* to us wanting that appearance are what defines us. We assume that we are causes in ourselves, and our choice is absolute, but really, what defines our preferences (including our preference to discipline



ourselves) defines our actions and those define who we are.

People who act like sluts have not thought through life, and realized how transient that behavior is, on their way to a higher realization. Oh, but it should not be that way, the Crowd howls, because they'd like to think they can be anything to anyone at any time, not realizing that the cause of being something is the chain of actions leading up to it.

Want to be a genius scientist? Be born a genius, work hard, and do genius research. At some point, someone will note that you're a genius scientist. Imitating one will not get you anywhere; acting like one, by doing genius research, will. Imitating a slut is fun at a costume party; acting like a slut, by posing nude and then whining that you don't get taken seriously, will make you a slut.

And why do people universally disregard sluts? In some part of our subconscious memory is the knowledge that nothing easily given away is considered much, and therefore, that its value goes down. A slut, man or female, is on a path to making their choice of a mate worth \$50 after nightfall on any given night. You want us to respect *that*?

Here's another mystery cause/effect that's not mysterious when you analyze it:

You would never give a child a cigarette. Or a drink, or a snort of cocaine. But everyday we American parents are giving our children something almost as addictive—meals laden with sugar, salt and fat. That mac n'cheese we all think is the only thing our child will eat is priming them for a lifetime of "conditioned hypereating." That is, eating that is excessive, out of control and has nothing to do with satisfying hunger.

Our national weight gain is not, as many people assume, because we are far less active; studies have found little difference in energy expended now than in the 1950s. It is because we are eating far, far more calories than ever before, in the form of soda, junk food, sweets, fat and salt laden meals, and huge portions. We have become addicted to food, and that addiction starts in very early childhood.

Kessler lays out how sugar, fat and salt stimulates the reward centers of the brain in much the same way as cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs. By eating food that is extremely palatable, we keep wanting more, whether or not we are hungry. Since highly palatable junk food is socially acceptable, and often cheaper than the healthy stuff, we keep going back for more. The food industry knows this better than anyone.

[Business Week](#)

The cause of our hypereating is that we started eating junky, addictive food, and now we're adapting to that pattern. We like the clean logic of exercising more, but reality follows our actions: start eating junk, come to expect it as the norm, and therefore treat it like the norm, then wonder why we're bloated.

Should this be the case? No, in our "logical" minds, we should all be hiking fifty miles a day and eating

whatever we want, whenever we want. But reality does not reward a single factor like that, but requires we consider many: exercise, type of food, quantity of food, frequency of food, etc.

In the moral view favored by most people, we “should” be able to choose whatever we want to eat. A realist would say instead that given absolute choice of food, people’s selections would break down in a bell curve: a few would choose really healthy food, a few would eat absolute garbage, and most would fall in the middle, with half of those prizing convenience — whatever’s closest, fastest — over ingredients. So given absolute choice, half of your population eats garbage, and the rest will happily sell it to them because of the insanely great profit margins. If I sell you \$5 of food for \$7, I’m screwed compared to selling you \$1 of food for \$6, which is a mostly accurate representation of fast food.

Moral judgments make us think that a woman should be able to dress like a slut, or act like a slut, and then the next day be accepted as a full brainiac. But without making a moral judgment about sluts, we can see that it’s like advertising: you draw people to you by your behavior, but different behaviors get different groups.

Here’s another story. A young woman goes to a seedy bar, proceeds to get loaded to the point of incoherence, and then vanishes into a back room to do a line of coke with some guy. Three hours later she comes out in tears, saying she’s been repeatedly raped. But we have a legal quandary. It’s her word against the word of the dudes there. It could have been rough sex. It could have been group sex. It could have been consensual, rough, group sex. It also could have been gang rape. And no one was coherent enough to tell the difference, or claim definitely they knew whether they were giving consent or not, or listening for it.

In a seedy bar, where many of the regulars potentially have criminal pasts, you don’t normally want to make yourself such a target. We could argue that you ought to be able to. You should, in our ideal moral judgment world, be able to drink to incoherence in any bar you want to. You should be able to pass out on a pool table and be safe. Should, should, should. But in reality, much like waving a steak in front of a dog, if you tempt people with impulse control while intoxicants are plentiful, you’re going to get a powerful negative response.

Does this mean we should excuse these rapists? Well, there’s should again. Thinking practically, we probably should hang them or ship them (regardless of color) to Somalia where the local warlords can do as they wish with them. Is that a moral judgment, or a “should”? No, it’s a practical judgment: this incident helpfully reveals that these people are opportunists of the worst sort. Since in every society these crop up in abundance, we should take advantage of this situation to get rid of some extra ones.

Does this mean we should blame the young woman? There’s should again as well. As realists, we would instead acknowledge that she made a dumb decision with predictable results. She might have gotten away with it, but that doesn’t mean it’s a good idea. Kind of like taunting a pit bull with steak... don’t be surprised if you get bitten. Hard. So we shift her into therapy and try to teach her cause/effect logic. If the cause is tempting a pit bull with steak, and the effect is bites, can we draw a line between the two, right like that, and you get a gold star.

Moral judgment tells us to throw all this practical thinking out the window. Moral judgment is in fact the enemy of practicality, because it is purely social thinking, as if we were making conversation. Isn’t it terrible that we’re mortal? Yes, we should be immortal. Isn’t it awful that some people are criminals? Yes, they should not be such a way. Where a realist would just admit that criminals exist, and are not desired, therefore sending them on to Somalia is desirable, in social conversation we cannot do that — because that shows disregard for their humanity. We can instead fall back into the comfortable world of should.

In fact, if you mention a realist position — exile all rapists, but don’t prosecute in cases where some clueless idiot gets loaded among potential rapists — people pounce on you immediately. They see a chance for themselves to look good by talking about moral judgments instead of reality. Nevermind that there will always be dangers, parasites, criminals and rapists; they keep us honest by reminding us that they are what they are, and if we get drunk to incoherence around them, they’ll rape us.

People want to talk about should, and if you think it's practical to exile rapists, they'll defend the universal human rights of the rapists. They talk about universal absolutes, like rights, freedom, justice, peace and equality because these sound good in conversation. They make others listening to the conversation think the speaker is a Christ-like god among men who just wants to help all of us. That's because listeners are thinking only of themselves; when I say "No one should suffer prosecution for one little violent gang rape," they're thinking of themselves, and by the nature of having fears, worrying that under the right circumstances, they could screw up and violently gangrape someone. When that thought hits their mind, they want the protection of universal absolutes, even if back in realityland they'd never get anywhere near that kind of situation. They hear "I should not suffer prosecution for one little accidental gang rape," and they're with me because I've used an absolute to *include* them under its aegis.

This is why people fear situational ethics of any kind: they want a guarantee that people come first, so that they come first. They never want other, competing simians to have a chance to shut them down, defeat them or make them look stupid in public. This is why rights, freedoms, equality, peace and justice are popular topics with most people, but very very popular topics with people who have problems and don't trust themselves to have impulse control in every situation. If you're the dog that lunges when steak appears, you want a guarantee that no matter how badly you screw up, you won't be hung or exiled to Somalia.



There's a flip side to this too. You gain power by practicing this inclusive style of public logic, which many call *competitive altruism*. Competitive altruism is the practice of being more inclusive, and thus more popular with a general audience, than others. It's what politicians, marketers, con men, salesmen, and religious hypnotists do. They know most people think only of themselves, and fear that others will get ahead, so they promise them safety. They also promote themselves by making these very popular statements, and they give their audience a powerful tool: revenge.

Revenge in the social sense is not like *Death Wish III: I Will Sodomize Your Corpse*. It's the sense of, if someone else has said something that will require you to be obligated to move your fat ass one centimeter more than you want to, having some way to shut them down fast. Better than a witty retort — you've got a universal absolute. The whine of a child ("But I don't *want* to!") gets disguised in adult language as: I have a right not to; You're not respecting my reality; I'm not obligated to; I have a freedom to stay disengaged, and so on. It's an excuse to remain independent, and at the same

time, lessen the other person's social status by cutting them down. They violated the prime dogma of the crowd and now have lost face.

Why do we like that, inner monkey and all?

AROUND the time of the G20 summit in London on 2 April, the streets of cities across the world were filled with people protesting against the excesses of the banking bosses, among other things. Chances are you agreed with the sentiment. Chances are too that if you had been asked to put your hand in your pocket to fund a campaign to seize their bonuses, even if you wouldn't see any of the money, you'd have been sorely tempted.

At a meeting of London's Royal Society in January, Hauser reported preliminary results from experiments in which children between 4 and 8 years old were offered varying numbers of sweets for themselves and another child unknown to them. They had to pull either a lever delivering the sweets, or another that tipped the sweets out of reach. Infants of all ages almost always rejected one sweet for themselves if the other child was set to receive more. The older children often also rejected sweets if they got more than the other child. Where that kind of concern about inequality disappears to is unclear, because we adults certainly don't have it. "Imagine you have four dollars on your side, and there's one on the other side," says Hauser.

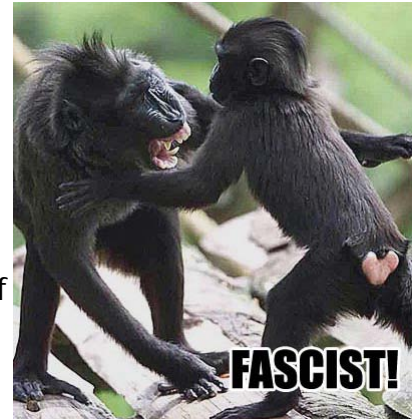
"It's highly unlikely that you'll dump your four dollars." But the negative, spiteful version persists: most of us would be quite prepared to sacrifice a dollar to stop someone else getting four. "Spite is the ugly sister of altruism," says Hauser.

[New Scientist](#)

What they're getting at is this: we are willing to destroy others to get ahead. In some situations, this forms social justice. When someone violates a taboo, like rape, we want to destroy them and will inconvenience ourselves to do it. But when we do not have a real target, we use spite as a means of making ourselves appear to rise relative to others by the oldest means possible — pushing them down.

In a long term analysis, of course, this kind of action is destructive. But it's more than a sister of altruism — it *is* altruism. We're acting altruistic or spiteful to maintain a sense of social order for all individuals, which we then interpret as being applied to ourselves. So we spitefully destroy others so we get universal absolute treatment, just like we demand others be included. We are competing on the basis of appearing altruistic or righteous to others, but the real goal is to make ourselves advance.

A more sensible society would, as Plato suggests (with his parable of the ring of the Lydian Gyges), have its focus on abstract goals rather than individuals. If the goal is fairness, punish the unfair, but don't use fairness as a weapon; you deprive people of fairness as a weapon when they are trying to be fair to an abstract ideal, instead of tangible people represented/hidden by an abstract symbol.



However, that requires we sacrifice our absolute universal "right" to think first of ourselves, and with that, our ability to let moral judgments replace reality. That in turn suggests we give up a tangible, defensive position for one based in a long-term, abstract order of balances and harmonies instead of rewards and retributions, and that may be too much for our inner monkey to handle.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [revolution](#) · [schadenfreude](#)

30 Minute Presentation on Overpopulation

May 15th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

Worth checking out:

[[Click here](#)]

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Politics](#).
Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

Things ain't what they used to be

May 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

What an interesting phrase: "Things ain't what they used to be." Implication: things are getting steadily worse.

During the first half of a civilization's life, no one says it but the insane.

During the second half of a civilization's life, no one denies it but the insane.

Thresholds

May 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Whenever the words “it’s the natural way” appear in debate or in print, I groan inwardly. They once seemed such an easy thing to say; granola, monogamous marriage, friendship and eating vegetables were “natural,” and soft drinks, aggressive selfishness, and living in tiny air-conditioned boxes were “un-natural.”

But then someone pointed out the first paradox: if we’re a product of nature, anything we do is natural.

To that I added that natural selection would enforce natural on us; but then I realized that natural selection is defined by our actions. If our society suddenly made penis size all important, in a few hundred years we might be idiots of violent dispositions, but all the men would have huge penises, even grotesque ones like the purple buttocks of baboons.

So what is natural? I’ve come to realize how this term means little because when we made fire, invented agriculture and learned to speak, we left the realm of the previously natural. We left natural selection behind for social selection; we made use of tools and technology just as natural as digging up roots with our bare hands and catching squirrels with our teeth.

From that realization came a more profitable one: since we are in the driver’s seat, and define our own destiny, we can choose what is natural as in “fits into the type of pattern designs we see in nature,” or can cut to the chase and pick what we find to be better designs, more beautiful ways of living, and so on — because the most natural thing in nature is challenging us with thresholds.



What do I mean by thresholds? I mean that there’s a default way of doing things that just works, as in all things in nature. It starts out as a hack, or temporary unorthodox fix, and through gradual improvement (natural *kaizen*) it evolves into something highly refined, even if its original design was awkward. What challenges evolution? Each time one of these hacks becomes the norm, there’s a reward for getting over it.

For example, early hominids found life to be OK. They hunted and gathered in groups, and were able to survive. But at some point, probably spurred on by emotion, they saw that life could be better if they were able to harvest most of their food, trading a diet of pure protein for a more regular diet. That meant they needed fields, and fire to cook the food, and permanent dwellings that were also defensible.

This was a threshold: could they escape the natural of old for the natural of new, which meant *altering themselves*?

Another example in a fixed society is this: we find it most natural to wander outside and take a dump wherever is convenient. But when you have a group, that becomes toxic quickly. So there’s a threshold: do we find a way of concentrating and removing our waste, or do we die in horror of feces-born diseases, or do we give up on fixed societies and go back to hunter-gathering?

It was natural to wander around foraging, and it was equally natural to construct sewer systems.

As time went on, we discovered another dimension: societies need some kind of morality. We faced two extremes:

- A. Let the most aggressive dominate us through violence.
- B. Let our fear of aggressive dominators cause us to reject collective organization and centralized power,

and thus die slowly through inaction regarding non-immediate but still vital socialized problems.

You may recognize these two extremes: the far right believes in the former, and the far left believes in the latter. They're still with us because we're still fighting out this challenge, which is a threshold that nature offers to us with a reward if we cross it and a default state of OK-not-great if we don't.

And all three outcomes — pass, fail, or abstain — remain “natural,” but the question faces us of which do we *choose*?



Nihilism as I see it is the rejection of all inherent values. There are no writings on the wall; there is no Word from the other side that didn't pass through humans, getting distorted in the process. There is no instruction manual to life. So we must look at our options and choose not only which seems most logical, but which appeals to our emotions and sense of aesthetics.

Emotions and aesthetics after all wouldn't exist if they didn't serve some purpose. My guess is that their value is in their non-linearity. They consider many factors at once as a single factor. That kind of decision-making is not useful when choosing between one tool or strain of grain or another, but it's very useful when getting up the impetus to brave doubt and opt for a change, like first learning to make fire or domesticate grain. The

choice to make those choices came from pure passion.

We are in the driver's seat. We must design our own futures. We cannot count on something being “natural” any more than we can count on writing on the wall or God screaming instructions to us through a psychedelic telepathic loudspeaker. (This is not an argument for or against God, but a statement of fact: we do not, as a group, perceive instructions from the world beyond.)

Deferring to nature is dangerous because it has us arguing from a foregone conclusion instead of considering the results at hand. What should we do? Well, what does God/the blue book/nature say? Yet there's another hidden foregone conclusion: the individual. What do all individuals, representing the idealized individual, say?

It's fallacious to argue from the individual because history shows us that individuals in a group default to lowest common denominator behavior, and individuals alone if given a choice pick the safer action — the one with the least risk. That doesn't get us over the threshold; it keeps us in the default behavior.

Like a game of Secret, societies over time break down ideas into their simplest forms. This means that the default behavior, if not countered by a strong impetus to cross a threshold, results in decay of social order over time. As the old saying goes, if you're standing still, you're actually moving backward in a river of passing time and entropy.

What would this ongoing self-reducing default be, in our modern time? It's a curious type of conservatism — the kind that places the individual above all else, and so is unwilling to inconvenience anyone. It's the default that says we should divide up our wealth and focus on each other's psychology, not try to move forward collectively. On the left it is anarchy, on the right it's American conservatism or libertarianism. Same impulse: stick with the default, because it doesn't challenge us as individuals.

But this lack of desire to surge over thresholds comes at a cost.

Individualism of the rugged kind decays into convenience.

Anarchy creates consumerism on a vast scale. Libertarianism encourages the wealthy to withdraw from society until the rest of society saddles itself with so many problems it explodes in revolution, and then libertarians die outnumbered a thousand to one. History shows us this pattern repeating like wallpaper. It's

the universal “society fail” that marks the end of productive existence for a civilization.

This creates a bizarre hybrid of individualism, utilitarianism, bureaucracy and anarchy. It is created by a struggle for control by the individual: when faced with a group, the individual must appeal to the group in order to have power. So they construct a virus of honey, not vinegar. “If we’re all equal as a group, we each get what we want, and we don’t have to face any thresholds.” Thus the individual uses the group to achieve independence from the group, at the expense of collective action, which would cause conflict in the group. In turn, because “independence” and “freedom” don’t address a balance between individual needs and group needs, strong control forces are needed — with a centralized administration, of course — to apply the rules of the herd onto the herd and so to filter out destabilizers, both predators and ideologues who oppose this strange jury-rig.



Although it seems completely weird, it’s very normal, at least in the latter half of a civilization’s lifespan. It allows us to indulge in the idea of “equality,” otherwise known as interchangeable parts, in which we treat individuals as composites who can be controlled by providing the right motivation and threats. We don’t treat them as individuals; we treat them as political individuals, or people who can be managed. The more we strive for freedom and individualism, on an external level, the more we get away from it on an internal level.

In this sense, all of society’s history is like watching [4chan’s /b](#): people show up and post memes, hoping a Personal Army will arise which through the force of its numbers, will crush the enemy. At the same time, the society functions under the pretense of individual choice determining when a personal army arises, even though the personal army is a mob spurred on by the lowest of human impulses: revenge, destruction, resentment and so on. And maybe this, too, is a threshold.

In other words, if we’re able to out-evolve our self-awareness and progress to a level in which we’re aware of self, others and world at large at once, and make our decisions on that basis, we will have left an OK but not great default in favor of a more productive and beautiful way of living. It’s something to think about any time you see people doing what is natural for this time, and yet remaining unfulfilled as they see nothing of greatness on this side of this latest threshold.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [anarchy](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [passive aggression](#)

The problem with statistics

May 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Our society relies extensively on statistics, which are an averaged measurement of effects over multiple instances.

However, there's a problem with these: they suggest a truth, linguistically, that they do not actually indicate.

Those who specialize in statistics tend to be wary of their use except as a statistical assessment; they're careful to point out that statistical data doesn't decide an issue. Yet many of the sources of information we rely in on this busy modern society, especially those from the mass media, source their argument with statistics.

Here are some problems with statistics:

- Cause/effect reversal (from Nietzsche): The old man thinks he has had a long life because he eats nothing but celery. Reality: it's genetic, and he would have lived just as long eating steak.
- Cause/correlation: Many people with green eyes die of heart disease. Therefore, the implied argument goes, green eyes lead to heart attacks. Reality: people with green eyes are clustered in an area of the country where people eat more fats, are of Irish heritage and spend many months indoors during the winter — any of these could contribute.
- Single factor: Many of the people who eat lots of eggs have high cholesterol. Therefore, eggs cause high cholesterol. Reality: many of the people who eat lots of eggs also eat lots of bacon, causing high cholesterol.

As you can see, statistical correlation does not mean proof of cause.

Another illusion: that you can statistically compensate for the above, which requires knowledge of the causes of outcomes which, in any sample size of statistical importance, is impossible.

Using statistics, I can prove that brushing your teeth causes AIDS and being Caucasian makes you a pygmy anal rapist. Does it mean what it seems to mean, if you read the language as it falls on the page?

Here's a great example:

In their book *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett present a graph showing a 30-year widening gap between the incomes of the richest and the poorest. Using a brilliant compilation of statistics, they argue that inequality is the root cause of much unhappiness in our society.

[The Guardian](#)

More detail here:

Their book charts the level of health and social problems — as many as they could find reliable figures for — against the level of income inequality in 20 of the world's richest nations, and in each of the 50 United States. They allocate a brief chapter to each problem, supplying graphs that display the evidence starkly and unarguably. What they find is that, in states and countries where there is a big gap between the incomes of rich and poor, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, obesity and teenage pregnancy are more common, the homicide rate is higher, life expectancy is shorter, and children's educational performance and literacy scores are worse. The Scandinavian countries and Japan consistently come at the positive end of this spectrum. They have the smallest differences between higher and lower incomes, and the best record of psycho-

social health. The countries with the widest gulf between rich and poor, and the highest incidence of most health and social problems, are Britain, America and Portugal.

[The Times](#)

Let's assume they have not faked any of their data — a big assumption with these books that get debunked five years after their release, which is not soon enough to prevent their authors from carrying off a pile of loot and prestige.

Societies with more inequality have more problems. Sounds like simple cause/effect logic, doesn't it? We mention more inequality, and then what sounds like the result: more problems. And then there's some handwaving about statistically accounting for other factors and eliminating other sources.

But the one thing they didn't address was that there are in fact also *causes of inequality*, and those causes could be the cause of the social problems mentioned. They have shown correlation; have they shown cause? They have shown a single factor; have they accounted for all?

No, they haven't, because that wouldn't sell books. We'd all love to hear that life not treating us fairly is the reason for all our problems; that way, we're off the hook. If we're crafty, we claim that life treats no one fairly, and that we all need to be treated with more equality; that gets us treated equally, and puts the weight of all the other people in society behind us. If one is mistreated, in theory, the rest rush to his or her aid. So with that solution we get to have our cake and eat it too.

Modern people are so stupefied by correlation arguments that [when confronted with them, they panic and spout gibberish](#).

[I]nequality comes from people being in unequal situations.

See how this man's brain has been cut off at the stem? The world is not considered as a factor. Only human motivations — we're all equal, and the only difference is our situation. There are no factors that existed before us, no biological factors that limit us, and no real-world factors that restrain us. It's just ol' Inequality there (substitute "Satan" if you wish) that holds some of us back and gifts others — without them having worked for it, or even better being smart enough that they don't need to slave away to get better results.

Isn't that wishful thinking in a nutshell? It's that mentality that the authors pander to, and instead of using a scientific proof, they create an implied statistical correlation and leave it at that. "Oh, that's the answer! How easy!"

Yet making society more equal, throughout history, has never made the society what it needs to be, which is more organized, more creative, more intelligent and more disciplined — factors which lead to both greater wealth and greater social stability. (We call those "rising" cultures.)

Here's another statement of the same idea:

Growing inequality in US cities could lead to widespread social unrest and increased mortality, says a new United Nations report on the urban environment.

In a survey of 120 major cities, New York was found to be the ninth most unequal in the world and Atlanta, New Orleans, Washington, and Miami had similar inequality levels to those of Nairobi, Kenya Abidjan and Ivory Coast. Many were above an internationally recognised acceptable "alert" line used to warn governments.

"High levels of inequality can lead to negative social, economic and political consequences that have a destabilising effect on societies," said the report. "[They] create social and political fractures that can develop into social unrest and insecurity."

[The Guardian](#)

Inequality is a red herring. Statistically speaking, unequal places have more problems. But what if there is a cause of inequality? Supposing there are two options:

- A. Inequality is caused by society.
- B. Inequality is caused by different levels of ability.

If it's the former case, and we accept that belief as religion, then the UN makes sense: people who are capable are being oppressed. Yet that obviously makes no sense, because the amount of effort required to suppress capable people causes nations to collapse.

Instead, it's more likely the answer is "B" — that we have differing abilities, and so differing fortunes, and that emerges as "inequality." But equality isn't a fix, because the people are unequal. So campaigning for inequality only produces more unrest, and more incapable people, who eventually create social unrest and then the society collapses. Heck, it's how most societies have collapsed through history.

But their statistical view doesn't look this deeply. It only checks off factors: inequality yes, a big fat mess, yes also. Then, in some nitwit sense of logic, it assumes there's an arrow between the former and the latter. "Well this must be the cause! Great Scott!"

And then some evidence for column B:

American political views aren't so binary, yet the happiness divide seems to be real. Previous studies, including a 2006 survey from Pew Research Center have found the same general trend, much to the delight of conservative pundits like George Will, who noted that "liberalism is a complicated and exacting, not to say grim and scolding, creed."

The authors of the Pew study suggested income, religion and ideology all played a role in shaping the happiness divide.

To add some ammo to these explanations, Napier and Tost conducted a series of surveys on political attitudes of Americans and citizens of 8 Western countries, using previously collected data. Their results affirmed the "conservatives are happy, liberals are mad" findings of previous polls, but income, education, religion and other demographic variables couldn't explain the happiness gap.

However, when the authors instead grouped people by their "rationalisation of inequality," the differences between conservatives and liberals dissolved. Republican or Democrat, people not bothered by social or economic disparities tend to be happy.

This trend held for non-Americans, as well. Right-wingers in the Czech Republic, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland were all happier than liberals, on average. And the poorer – and presumably more unequal – a country, the greater the happiness divide.

[New Scientist](#)

Liberalism is a tantrum against reality. It assumes that society is like a parent, and if we didn't get what we wanted for Christmas, it was just that parent being unfair. Conservatives are happier because they cast aside this neurotic outlook. They recognize that thinking of society as a parent makes one disempowered to do anything but misbehave. Viewing society instead as a series of natural forces allows one to do what is necessary to enjoy it and survive well.

And to cap it off:

As a general rule, the more unequal a place is, the more Democratic; the more equal, the more Republican. The gap between rich and poor in Washington is nearly twice as great as in strongly Republican Charlotte, N.C.; and more than twice as great as in Republican-leaning Phoenix, Fort

Worth, Indianapolis and Anaheim.

My fellow conservatives and Republicans have tended not to worry very much about the widening of income inequalities. As long as there exists equality of opportunity — as long as everybody's income is rising — who cares if some people get rich faster than others? Societies that try too hard to enforce equality deny important freedoms and inhibit wealth-creating enterprise. Individuals who worry overmuch about inequality can succumb to life-distorting envy and resentment.

[New York Times](#)

Are people Republican because they're in an equal place, and people Democratic because they're in unequal ones? Possibly. Or possibly there's not much of a link between the two at all that we can derive from this data. However, one thing does pop up that seems worth investigating: if Democratic places are not more equal, are Democratic policies failing?

Starting with, of course, that "life-distorting envy and resentment" — that sounds like the tantrum I was describing above. A tantrum against parents and the world at large that re-affirms the inability of the individual to make positive change. Maybe the authors of *The Spirit Level* should consider that harder than their inaccurate conclusions about cause and effect from their statistics.

(As a side note, I found this amusement:

Two Brown University economists have created a new data set explaining differences in the world's current per capita gross domestic products (GDPs). In a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, Louis Putterman and David N. Weil introduce a "World Migration Matrix" showing that inequality among countries can be largely explained by where the ancestors of each country's people lived some 500 years ago. "What matters is the history of the people who live in a country today, more than the history of the country itself," they say.

When Putterman and Weil used the matrix to investigate the effects of the post-1500 population movements on income differences today, the results were "almost breathtaking." The power of regional origins is illustrated by the fact that in a 125-country regression, 44 percent of the variance in current per capita GDP is accounted for by entering only the share of the population's ancestors that lived in Europe in 1500.

[eScience News](#)

Interesting in that it uses the same approach, but looks at origins of biological individuals, not socially-applied equalizing forces.)

From this, we see the ultimate problem with statistics: reliance on them feeds a mentality that believes all actions have a cause in their symptoms, because there's an implied parent-ness to this view of society that assumes the individual is inert (but equal). Statistics do not explain reality. They show us details, not conclusions. Too much reliance on them reverses the process of cognition, so that instead of thinking from cause to effect, we're thinking from effect to cause and assuming the roles are reversed. That alone could lead us to mental disease, if the ensuing social problems caused by well-intentioned but delusional people did not.

When we start thinking in cause/effect logic, we are freed from the negativity of statistics. In turn, we start to encounter a world we can finally understand and manipulate. Society by its very nature of a utilitarian, bureaucratic approach tends to reduce its thinking to statistics. Only knowledge of cause/effect logic can reverse this destructive pattern.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Introduction to philosophy

May 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People keep asking me about this, and I always feel helpless because it's like asking for an introduction to science.

Philosophy is stuff (arguments, proofs) you memorize, but it's also a way of thinking that leads to a way of viewing the world.

At that stage, it's like a religion of meditative thinking. But you don't get to that stage directly, and not everyone can (or wants to!) do it.

I warn readers that to discover the way of thinking that is philosophy, they will need a good background in [critical thinking](#), debate, logical analysis, literary theory and some psychology. Luckily, you can learn all of those with the aid of a good English or Philosophy program, because those skills are central to both disciplines.

So what I've compiled here is the barebones reading list for being conversant with the stuff of philosophy.

I. Thought Process

- [The Story of Philosophy, Will Durant](#)
- [The Republic, Plato](#)

II. Specific Disciplines

- [On the Fourfold Principle of the Root of Sufficient Reason, by Arthur Schopenhauer](#) ([German idealism](#))
- [Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Immanuel Kant](#) ([Rationalism](#))
- [On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense, Friedrich Nietzsche](#) ([Romanticism](#))

III. Political Philosophy

- [The Worldly Philosophers, Joseph Heilbroner](#)
- [Democracy in America, Alexis de Toqueville](#)
- [American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony, by Samuel Huntington](#)

It helps to have a guide as you go through the above, and you will probably need other people to help you. Join a debate society, or a debate team, or a literature program that emphasizes critical thinking and argument. Do not join any internet-based programs; on the internet, people can't tell you're a dog, so dogs outnumber people.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Critical thinking

May 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Of late, I've been frustrated by the difference between sciences and the humanities. Scientists know the scientific method, but when it comes to implementation or abstracting principles from it, they get it all wrong.

On the other hand, humanities people are good at grasping concepts but often let language fool them since they don't know the basic science, and assume that categorical containers outweigh a complex, multi-faceted reality.

Two different approaches, with two similar downfalls, and one solution in common: critical thinking.

As a Zen master might say, the first task in critical thinking is to define critical thinking. Here's mine:

Critical thinking is the ability to understand concepts on the basis of their internal coherence and relevance to a consistent order to external reality. It encompasses partial skillsets from logic, debate, law, philosophy and politics. Its end is to make the user able to understand arguments, dissect them and assess their truthfulness, and conduct a debate according to the evolved ruleset which enables it to reach a conclusion.

That's a definition from what I hope is the top angle or near-objective position.

- [On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion, by John Stuart Mill](#) – a historical nexus where a highly evolved conceptual field got explained in pragmatic terms.
- [Good list of parts of arguments and how to assess them](#)
- [Critical Thinking](#) – Critical thinking is here assumed to be reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do.
- [Critical Thinking: What it is and why it counts](#) – Good overview of the nature of critical thinking in a pragmatic context.
- [Critical thinking teaches students how to think](#) – without these intellectual tools, they can't use memorized information.
- [Argument Mapping Tutorials](#) – how to flow chart an argument and see who or what won out
- [Psychology of Intelligence Analysis, by Richards J. Heuer, Jr](#) – shows you why this matters in a real-world context: telling the BS from the action items.
- [Defining Critical thinking](#) – what I'd consider a full definition emphasizing critical thinking as a portable, lifelong skillset.

Critical thinking does have its downfall. It's very much in the Rationalist tradition, which means the idea that if we formalize something enough we can explain it to idiots and have them act like geniuses.

In the list above, you'll see that the community college professors have hijacked a lot of debate into making it a study of simple methods. Logical fallacies are a great example; I think few great debaters spend any time on these because if you cannot explain why an argument is fallacious using pure logic alone, and have to use a template of logical fallacies, you are doomed and no amount of textbook material can help you.

Critical thinking in a *literature* mindset melds well with debate because the two intersect where they intend to be used as applied disciplines. Literature and politics cover some of the same ground, which is the cultivation of a moral awareness in the soul of each human that is also able to make tough decisions like allowing natural selection to eliminate idiots, or torturing bad guys to get good information.

Idiots will try to cling to absolutes, much like they cling to logical fallacies, because they think that memorizing something makes them the super-genius.

Critical thinking as a discipline suggests that the flexible, resilient, adaptive ability to analyze, think and compare is what makes someone rise above the herd, even if the loudest voices for “critical thinking” forget this.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Unskilled labor

May 10th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Genghis Khan divides people. Many love him because he was tolerant of different faiths and believed in a classless society. Others point out rightfully that he destroyed more than he created, and all of the good things he did were a means to his own power.

However, one thing that Genghis Khan was which we should all emulate: a diehard realist.

When his armies conquered a city, he kept his troops from raiding and pillaging and sent in his administrators instead. They performed a simple task: divide the population between skilled labor and unskilled.

The realist principle behind this is simple. Adults who have found something to be good at are both competent and driven; adults who have created nothing, learned nothing and can only be told what to do are not only useless, but also are the groundwork of revolutions.

Because they have nothing to do, no direction of their own, and mismanage everything they have, unmotivated, unintelligent and unskilled people are always told what to do.

This in turn empowers their favorite activity, which is blaming other people for their own incompetence. It's a subset of the "it's not my fault, so I should just do what I wanted to do anything, even if it's selfish" mentality that got them in the unskilled, impoverished and ignored category in the first place.

That's why when things go badly, they ramp up the blame game until finally revolution is their only course. They cannot see how the unskilled, who by sheer incompetence breed more than others, create the conditions of overpopulation and lack of wealth production (only skills create wealth; unskilled people do some of the labor, but would not create the wealth on their own) that require systemic change. So they create revolutions, aided by the neurotic who because they don't fit into society, want to destroy it and control the ruins.

When I talk about an ideal society, I'm talking about the upper half of the American- and European-style middle classes setting up a society within a society. It would be a more expensive society when you purchased any one thing; however, it would be inexpensive in terms of your exposure to socialized costs. Less incompetence. Less crime. Less parasitism. It would not be a Utopia, because Utopias don't exist, but it would be more efficient and more pleasant.

It would have a lower IQ spread, meaning that the population would be roughly of the same intelligence, so that if you hired some guy to fix your back door, he'd be a master carpenter with a college education. The door fix would cost a lot more; however, the work would be of higher quality, and you'd pay less in taxes to support idiots and the damage they do.

In such a society, critics say, we'd be screwed because: who would clean the toilets? who would mow the lawns? who would take care of the kids?

To this I say: there's a difference between manual labor, or working with your hands, and unskilled labor, or working with your hands on simple repetitive tasks because you have no other choice.



Even the most elite intellectual should do manual labor every day. We should mow our own lawns, fix the minor stuff around our own houses, take care of our own kids, make our own food and clean our own toilets.

Interestingly, the successful people I know — and by that I mean the ones who are headed upward not just in wealth, but personal organization, skills and mental clarity — have no problem with this. They already go to few restaurants. One parent stops working to take care of the kids. They enjoy family-centric tasks like mowing lawns and fixing stuff around the house. The upper half of the middle class in America and Europe seem this way to me, for the most part.

It's the people who are in the middle between unskilled and skilled, like all the mediocre web designers of the world who have mastered basic Photoshop and PHP and now want to be richly rewarded, who are ambivalent. It's the lower-level programmers, who understand the basics but will never write an elegant, genius application. It's the paper-pushers, administrative assistants, and workers who have certifications and some kind of "skill" that is specific to a technology or a process; it's not the people who have skills that can be applied outside of a specific context, which means they are specialized to a skill area but not a skillset; they have transferable skills. The ambivalent have no transferable skills and so while technically "skilled" know they're very replaceable.

The non-ambivalent, who are comfortable with their skills, have a can-do mentality. They don't depend on having servants to feel good about themselves, nor do they engage in the kind of dramatic activity that requires lots of menial laborers to make them feel important. The non-ambivalent have direction and know that ultimately, they're competing against themselves. To be better programmers. Better teachers, better lawyers, better stonemasons, better builders, better artists, better warriors. Their goal is to exceed themselves, so that each successive instant brings more excitement, efficacy and success.

When Genghis Khan hit a new land, and divided the skilled from the unskilled, he kept the skilled and drove the others ahead of his armies into the weapons of the defenders of the next city. He used them as ultimate cannon fodder. Had Genghis Khan had a more holistic view, he would have left greatness behind him; instead, all that he did existed to serve his power, and so what he created not only did not last but fell in disorganized ruins without leaving permanent cultural contributions of its own. However, he did make areas of conquest more prosperous by ridding them of people who clustered around without contributing. And the people in these places learned to clean their own toilets.

From this, several principles can be derived. First is that having people working for you doesn't make you great; only you can make yourself great. The second is that life does have an immanent order which rewards those who can learn a skill, get personally organized, and apply discipline to themselves. Finally, it's OK to be rich if you do good for the community as a whole, not performing token competitively altruistic actions to "help" the unskilled, which end up failing like Khan's did because they serve the external power of the individual, not the power of the whole.

All of these things are stealth taboos in our society. People gain too much of a feeling of importance from flattering the unskilled, and having the unskilled cluster around them to make them feel like A Very Big Deal. However, the people who act this way are by definition not the skilled, but the partially skilled; not the intelligent, but the clever or partial intelligences or "thin intelligences" as Michael Crichton calls them. They would feel lost without their armies of parasites. The future belongs to those who set their own pace and go their own way, without needing the affirmation of the unskilled.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

On human entropy

May 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I posted this in response to someone bemoaning yet another web site converting its healthy, intelligent audience into hivemind drones:

Anytime something new forms, the pioneers are replaced by those who want to make it "safe."

Why safe? They fear themselves, they fear competition, and they fear reality.

They will hide this behind any number of convenient lies: they're for change/progress, they're fearless trying new things, they're humanitarians, they're geniuses, they're revolutionaries.

But really, they're dogmatists for one single rule: everyone is OK and equal just as they are and there's no reason to challenge ourselves and reach out beyond ourselves.

They then enforce that on others.

This is the universal human problem: instead of figuring that appearances are the result of some other cause, people figure that appearances cause all other things to happen. As a result, they manipulate reality *backward*.

They do this because if they view themselves as a cause, and not an effect, they feel in control. If they are the cause, they are the end and not the means; they are autonomous and a thing-in-itself with powers not granted to any other object. They might even escape a glimpse of mortality...

...But we all know that doesn't make any sense. Free will is bunk; we don't even know all the choices, and our knowledge of choices is determined by how many archetypes we've seen in the past, how smart we are, and how realistic we are as personalities. Even if it's popular to think that we have free will, really we're just animals reacting to our world, trying to adapt to it.

Social pretense arises out of our denial of this adaptation. We feel better, and we let others into our clubhouse of feeling better, but the price is that we must smash anyone who brings up any instance of us not being utterly *in control*. Inequality? To the guillotine. Biological determinism? Court of Star Chamber. Intelligence testing? Gulag time. And so on.

Modern philosophers, and not of the paid and bought-for kind that appear in most of academia, are swimming upstream trying to sort through all the excuses, justifications, pretenses, and wish fulfillment imagery generated by our species. The truth is simple once you see it, but 99% of your species have a vested interest in hiding it, and in ganging up on you if you speak it out loud.

Yet if we're to move forward, we need to do exactly that: face reality, accept it, and make the best of it. By move forward I mean evolve past self-awareness; it's a step up from ape, but limited in that we focus on our selves as a cause when we should be seeing the complex chains of causes formed of interacting natural forces and the emergent properties of that interaction. A smarter, fearless future human might come with that knowledge built in.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

A battle of absolutes

May 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

So much of politics comes down to the choice of where you want to place your disadvantages. Either you put them at the top, and minimize them through what you hope is judicious use, or you distribute them throughout the system.

Here's today's blast to this effect on Reason.com, where a raging debate on marijuana legalization was stopped by the question: what if it is a gateway drug, or even more, a gateway behavior — what if sending the message that pot is OK sends the message that intoxication is OK, and then amplifies social problems?

I decided to bring the issue to its logical extremes, then zero in on the mean, for these libertarians:

A true libertarian response is: let natural selection occur, and also let people segregate themselves as they see fit. That includes by sexual orientation, class, race, ethnicity and degree of antisocial tendency — it's that last category you mention.

Of course, it's taboo to say that people would ever be allowed to do such things. A community limited to upper middle class straight Christian whites? Why, that sounds like privilege! Yet this is what libertarianism is about: letting each us define our destiny, no matter how much it appalls others.

I think you'll find that many of us will opt to be in communities where recreational substances are not easy to get. Just like many of us will opt to be in communities where 4 wheelers, big pickup trucks, and hip-hop are illegal. That's the power of human choice right there.

Of course, others will be forced to confront the paradox of "freedom" as brought up by this little example: freedom means the ability to make all sorts of decisions, including hurtful and possibly destructive ones. Do we let nature sort it out, and hope our domination of technology has not obliterated natural selection? Do we blithely assume that tolerating bad behavior around us does not result in crippling consequences for the whole of society, including debilitating socialized cost and revolution?

[Reason](#)

Let's see where their audience comes down.

As a realist, I find the idea of natural selection within a civilization to be ludicrous. When we domesticated animals, created agriculture and tamed fire, we placed ourselves outside natural selection. With that came a morality of replacement selection, where we picked people who played by the rules over others — with only one glitch, which is that "only the good die young" or die in the process of accomplishing something good.

Consequently, I don't see it as likely that open anarchy is a good idea. However, I like the idea of localized communities defining their own rules, and some rules being designed like organic information gates instead of absolutes. How about instead of banning drugs, just making them hard to get and localizing them to one area of a city? I'd include alcohol in that count; why not? It causes as many problems as the other drugs, which doesn't make those drugs more acceptable, but alcohol less acceptable.

At some point, people thinking about where they want to live and raise families are going to have to face a salient fact: the actions of others have consequences, especially when taken as trends with socialized impact, that we have to face — and "freedom" as a model does not account for this. In fact, "freedom" is hard to compromise, since it's an absolute, so at some point all laws banning destructive and stupid behavior are struck down.

On the other extreme, it seems absolute for a local community to decide to censor its publications, regulate its chemicals, ban certain behaviors and even exclude certain types of people. But is it? They can relocate elsewhere; the society at large might not be able to it, and as we all know, the more refined and specific its tastes the more rare and delicate it is. But those are the societies from which greatness comes, and somewhere on that side of the middle is where most of us want to keep our families.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [absolutes](#) · [democracy](#) · [fascism](#)

Ten things to do when you live in a closed society

May 6th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

...where everyone is guilty and the only crime is... getting caught...

10. Pick on those weaker than you for their insignificant and arbitrary human characteristics.
9. Claim ultimate righteousness and authority based on some equally arbitrary rule invented and modified by generations of humans who failed to get at all close to the problem.
8. Procreate and torture your offspring to gain fulfillment of authority from a world that believes in it.
7. Bow low to those who you fancy will reward you, and denigrate those who you feel slighted you with favor.
6. Support singlehandedly issues which benefit you primarily even if having no eventual collective value in society.
5. Create miniature worlds, "fiefdoms," in which you play out the scenarios of power and punitive logic with a God on your side who is forever friendly to your cause. Suggestions: volunteer groups, subordinates, internet people.
4. Think in absolutes, and enforce time on everyone you see so that everyone is playing by the same handicaps put upon you that you loathe.
3. Use the prevailing order as an excuse to deny all reality in favor of distorted, mutated, cancerous dreams of the prevailing order support you for your weakness, and ratifying your presence as a living being.
2. Depend on quantitative systems of order and expression so that you may communicate, debate or prove any points you feel are valid. Trust this order implicitly, as it bears the seal of technocratic humanity.
1. Believer in a power greater than the individual conscience, mind, or spirit; necessitate that all join together to enforce this power on all others in the name of the individual.

Should drive you nuts in about 30 years or so.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Linear thinking makes you a blockhead

May 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I enjoy about half of what David Brooks writes. But sometimes, he just gets it wrong.

Some people live in romantic ages. They tend to believe that genius is the product of a divine spark. They believe that there have been, throughout the ages, certain paragons of greatness — Dante, Mozart, Einstein — whose talents far exceeded normal comprehension, who had an other-worldly access to transcendent truth, and who are best approached with reverential awe.

We, of course, live in a scientific age, and modern research pierces hocus-pocus. In the view that is now dominant, even Mozart's early abilities were not the product of some innate spiritual gift. His early compositions were nothing special. They were pastiches of other people's work. Mozart was a good musician at an early age, but he would not stand out among today's top child-performers.

What Mozart had, we now believe, was the same thing Tiger Woods had — the ability to focus for long periods of time and a father intent on improving his skills. Mozart played a lot of piano at a very young age, so he got his 10,000 hours of practice in early and then he built from there.

The latest research suggests a more prosaic, democratic, even puritanical view of the world. The key factor separating geniuses from the merely accomplished is not a divine spark. It's not I.Q., a generally bad predictor of success, even in realms like chess. Instead, it's deliberate practice. Top performers spend more hours (many more hours) rigorously practicing their craft.

[NYT](#)

Everyone loves democratic views of the world. "I could be anything, so society must treat me as if I am special," they drone, forgetting that around them are infinite others thinking the same thing, and that a society of selfish people makes for disorder, disorder makes for corruption, and at that point you're well on your way to third-world levels of disorganization.

Brooks is playing to the crowd with this popular notion that he carefully avoids saying is scientifically verified. He says we are scientific and enlightened, and that we have a new notion of how things work; he leaves it to you to assume that means science "says" things are this way.

In fact, the actual data points in the opposite direction: high intelligence is genetically determined, and as measured by IQ, determines success in life.

But that's not popular. "What, some are born to sweet delight, and others just born to the endless night? Well, I'm so much more afraid of the endless night that in my confusion and depression I think I'm prone to, I'm going to go find some of those sweet delight people and kick their asses." That's about the mentality we're looking at here, translated through Brooks' intelligent ability to market his writings.

And then there was the option I suggested, that people found inconvenient to mention:

Or, there's *the third option*:

Divine spark of intelligence (high *g*) + hard work = "a genius"

Here, I'm thinking of your Schopenhauer, your Beethoven, your Planck, your Faulkner, and so on. These guys may appear lazy at a first glance, but the fact of the matter is that they spent endless hours in focused thought on what they were doing — and also, had the raw ability to process this thought.

There are also some like Franz Schubert who seemed destined for quick rise and fall. I don't think Brooks' formula explains that, so he'd have to invent something about fortunate circumstances, wealthy families, oppression of average-IQ "geniuses," and so on — backward logic.

I might ask Brooks: so how many geniuses were born with average IQs? And how many people with average or above average worked really hard but didn't end up geniuses?

However, backward logic is still there. He might simply opt to re-define genius, and insist we call some mediocrity a genius because they made pots of money or came up with an idea that pleases lots of people because it justifies their selfishness, inaction or failure.

The basic problem here is that people demand a simple explanation for the crowd, and then confuse the means used to achieve that demonstration with how reality works. That is: they say "show me the evidence" so the presenter constructs a model that shows BEFORE and AFTER states, compares one factor ("how hard they worked"), and then concludes that, for the instances studied, this is the Truth and the Word.

So the crowd surges forth from the auditorium, assumes that they can look at single factors and draw broad conclusions, and then they start practicing. Truth is eroded. By the time David Brooks gets to the scene, there's no point even trying for truth; just try for a pseudo-truth that someone will buy. Geniuses work hard; therefore, hard work makes you a genius. It's a simple cause/effect confusion that pleases a crowd and makes them easy to control.

It's always interesting to see how people alter their reality with memes. They use them to control each other, but then, because they're now a token of social discourse, find themselves controlled by them. I guess they never anticipated that effect and consequent disaster, but it seems obvious to me.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [Darwinism](#) · [eugenics](#) · [genius](#)

Begging For Socialism

Apr 27th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

In a shameful move by a shamefully & poorly managed US auto company, GM is now asking the government to completely take over the company so it doesn't have to run itself – nor confront the unions it plans to phase out:

GM is living on \$15.4 billion in government loans and faces a June 1 deadline to restructure and get more government money. If the restructuring doesn't satisfy the government, the company could go into bankruptcy protection.

GM said in a news release that it will ask the government to take 50 percent of its common stock in exchange for canceling half the government loans to the company as of June 1.

If both are successful, the government and UAW health care trust would own 89 percent of the company's stock, with the government holding over a 50 percent stake, Henderson said.

[[±](#)]

I would rather see GM go out of business or at least substantially reduce its product offerings (more than just slashing Pontiac; think much bigger – or smaller, as the case may be). The government should not be in the business of making cars for profit. And since the government will realize this soon too, taking over 50% of the company's stock (read: operational & financial decisions) means we're slowly getting on the path of government taking over all industry. It's frightening for those of us who value good old fashioned hard work in our industry here in the States.

My only hope is that a strong state like Texas secedes from the union and shows the other 49 how it's done. Only that type of action will finally convince people that a heavily centralized federal government, which should not be in the business of bailing out or taking over industries to the point where those companies are given a lifeline just long enough to BEG the government to put it out of its misery as an independent for-profit going concern, has no place in this country.

If this (or something like it) doesn't happen? I fear the socialism bug that has infested too many countries in Europe, and spread all too easily via the EU.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [nationalism](#) · [socialism](#)

Reverse Colonization: Not Looking So Rosy Now

Apr 27th, 2009
by [Frank Azzurro](#).

"The Department of Health and Human Services has declared a Public Health Emergency as a precautionary tool to ensure that we have the resources we need at our disposal to respond quickly and effectively," Obama told a gathering of scientists, amid increasing worries worldwide about a possible pandemic.

In the United States, a private school in South Carolina was closed Monday because of fears that young people returning from Mexico might have been infected."

[[+](#)]

Reverse colonization never took such a hard blow. A Mexican illegal is on the border, right now, hearing word about this, and has one foot in one country and one in the other. Maybe his thought process would go something like this: Go into the US at risk of swine flu but free medical care; go back to Mexico at risk of swine flu and not-so-great medical facilities.

I don't think this changes much about our illegal immigration issue.

It does highlight a couple of important points though, and people tend to largely ignore these in the politically heated debate about illegal immigration:

- As awful as the immigration worker in The Godfather Part II was to Vito Andolini by changing his name to Corleone, checking his eyes, ears, nose, and throat for sickness was a good thing for our nation. I know; I'm the child of a legal Italian immigrant, the family of whom was rejected three times at the embassy due to eye infection in one child.
- Tolerance of everything except intolerance – this logic is hit hard by the simple reality that if you tolerate everything and everyone in a given society, you end up with no culture, no mores, nothing to which you can anchor your society. So "swine flu outbreak – let's shut down the border for a while and sort this out, oh and by the way, we're going to screen all passengers coming back from Mexico" becomes "swine flu – oh no – Obama will put the CDC into action and save us, all hail our savior!" We treat symptoms and effects in our society instead of causes: it's sickening, it can't last, and our country will crumble if we continue down this path.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#) · [multiculturalism](#)

How to get popular

Apr 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Justify selfishness.

If you look at all massively popular things, that's what they do: praise the social ego, that which demands more attention and more material product, and needs to think highly of itself.

They just don't do it directly... that doesn't flatter the ego, but makes it feel manipulated.

Tiresome much? Yeah, it is. Here's a good example:

What is Objectivism?

Rand described it as "the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute." The only social system consistent with this morality, Rand insisted, is pure, unfettered capitalism, and the only function of government is the protection of individual rights.

[The Week](#)

Working for you own happiness is a good way to isolate yourself.

I appreciate what Rand is reacting against: unfettered socialism, or the idea that we make equal distribution of wealth our primary goal, and therefore have zero feedback mechanism for separating responsible people from the parasites. What's nice about Rand is that she simply calls them parasites.

...mediocrities, parasites, and "second-handers" (i.e., the altruistic)...

What's insane and silly is that she insists on judgment of the individual, which requires individuals constantly mucking up social order in an effort to prove themselves. Not quality thinking there.

What's even more insane and silly is that she adopts her ideas from Nietzsche, super-simplifying his social Darwinism into "do what you want and if you succeed, it's the will of God/nature/Reason." From a philosophical standpoint, "Objectivism" has nothing to do with objectivity, never proves itself, and in fact never advances an argument — it lavishes us with words that sound good describing concepts that seem to feel good, until we consider their secondary consequences.

In Rand's world, the only argument is for the advancement of the individual; nevermind that society itself requires the cooperation of individuals, and does not naturally entail supporting parasites or creating bureaucracies hidebound in rules requiring they support parasites. She creates a false dichotomy, and people relish it because they — although this is cheesy, most people's logic is fairly cheesy — like the idea that selfishness is justified.

It makes more sense to have a goal/values for society at large, to work for family and community, and to realize the self is means to an end (the experience of life through the self)... but that would require Rand to face some unpopular truths. Ever the marketer, she sidesteps that.

Her dichotomy of the free versus the unfree, "reason" (rationalism) versus emotion/aesthetics, and so on reminds me of every liberal super-state and utopia ever designed. The individual is king; that's liberalism. There should be no rules on the individual; that's liberalism. We will use utilitarianism to make this individual king; that's liberalism. So why is she a conservative icon? Oh, because her route to "freedom" is through money.

Except that, historically speaking, mercantilism and capitalism are liberal innovations. They came as a replacement for the system of leadership by pure power through the best, known as aristocracy.

Rand's dichotomies remind me of this:

The Bielefeld Conspiracy story goes that the city of Bielefeld (population 330,000) in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia does not actually exist. Rather, its existence is merely propagated by an entity known only as SIE (THEY or THEM), which has conspired with authorities to create the illusion of the city's existence.

The theory posits three questions:

1. Do you know anybody from Bielefeld?
2. Have you ever been to Bielefeld?
3. Do you know anybody who has ever been to Bielefeld?

A majority are expected to answer 'no' to all three queries; if they don't, they, or the person they know, are said to be simply part of the conspiracy.

[Wikipedia](#)

You must acknowledge the dogma. If you do not, you are part of the anti-dogma, and therefore your opinion is valid. In Rand's case, the dogma is the ego, the method is capitalism, and while we all enjoy her slamming of the parasites, we should just get over our fears from social censure and criticize parasites on our own, without adopting a similarly parasitic ideology.

People working for the individual, through modern "reason" (linear thinking) produces the soulless modern city, the streets lined with advertising, the ugly concrete cube architecture, the blockhead giant corporations, the neurotic liberal office worker and the lonely Republican rich girl pining for meaning in her life. Rand is utilitarianism; Rand is "fiscally-justified anarchy," or libertarianism; Rand is destruction of the soul in the human spirit, just to get over our social fear of criticizing the parasite.

When she died of lung cancer, in 1982, a 6-foot-high floral dollar sign was erected by her open coffin.

Gauche.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Radical evil

Apr 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Spotted on the internet:

If a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out, but if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will never jump out... and die being boiled alive.

Empirically, this is not true: frogs have enough temperature sense to escape warming water, even though they're cold-blooded. Rhetorically, it may also be true. It's related to this:

Slippery Slope

If A happens, then by a gradual series of small steps through B, C,..., X, Y, eventually Z will happen, too.

Z should not happen.

Therefore, A should not happen, either.

We see slippery slope classified as a fallacy by those who need rigid definitions. However, technically speaking, it is not a fallacy — it's misused frequently and the unwashed masses can't tell the difference:

This type of argument is by no means invariably fallacious, but the strength of the argument is inversely proportional to the number of steps between A and Z, and directly proportional to the causal strength of the connections between adjacent steps.

[Fallacy Files](#)

I think such arguments appeal because we're referring to a form of the Broken Windows theory: if we tolerate small acts of stupidity/evil, we will soon become accustomed to them as a form of background noise, and then not notice when we enter a phase of true horror:

Kant places particular emphasis upon human responsibility for both radical evil and moral conversion.

Unlike original sin, which Christian belief has understood as inherited, radical evil is self-incurred by each human being. It consists in a fundamental misdirection of our willing that corrupts our choice of action. In Kant's terminology, it consists in an "inversion" of our "maxims," which are the principles for action we pose to ourselves in making our choices.

Instead of making the rightness of actions — i.e., the categorical imperative — the fundamental principle for choice, we make the satisfaction of one of our own ends take priority in the willing of our actions. We thus inculcate in ourselves a propensity to make exceptions to the demand of the categorical imperative in circumstances when such an exception seems to be in our own favor.

Overcoming radical evil requires a "change of heart" — i.e., a reordering of our fundamental principle of choice — that we are each responsible for effecting in ourselves.

[SEP](#)

The real question of radical evil is: when an individual goes down a path to error, or a group does, how do they reverse themselves when they have come to tolerate the evil as "normal"?

In other words, if we slowly boil that frog/slip that slope by making competitive only the everyday actions

that are radical evil, soon we radical evil is seen as normal, and defined as normal — and because that which opposes it also opposes the normal, any real “good” would be seen as evil.

Reminds me of Plato’s parable of the ring of the Lydian Gyges.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

We live on different planets

Apr 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

At some point, when a society becomes so internally divided that compatibility is impossible, truth itself gets assaulted. Groups literally believe in a different reality because the individuals in those groups make their identities from their beliefs.

Check this duality:

In the end, though, not a single significant plot was foiled as a result of Abu Zubaida's tortured confessions, according to former senior government officials who closely followed the interrogations. Nearly all of the leads attained through the harsh measures quickly evaporated, while most of the useful information from Abu Zubaida — chiefly names of al-Qaeda members and associates — was obtained before waterboarding was introduced, they said.

Moreover, within weeks of his capture, U.S. officials had gained evidence that made clear they had misjudged Abu Zubaida. President George W. Bush had publicly described him as "al-Qaeda's chief of operations," and other top officials called him a "trusted associate" of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and a major figure in the planning of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. None of that was accurate, the new evidence showed.

[WAPO](#)

And then:

The Central Intelligence Agency told CNSNews.com today that it stands by the assertion made in a May 30, 2005 Justice Department memo that the use of "enhanced techniques" of interrogation on al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) — including the use of waterboarding — caused KSM to reveal information that allowed the U.S. government to thwart a planned attack on Los Angeles.

[CNSN](#)

So which is true?

The right wing, who are inherently collectivists, realize that the individual never trumps the group; as part of this, they deign to subsidize those who do not contribute to the group.

The left wing, who are inherently individualists, say that no individual should ever be subjected to torture, even if the collective is threatened, because the principle of being immune to society is most important.

So we all believe what we want to believe is true, and at the end of the day, what we have done is fragmented ourselves and cast doubt on the idea that we'll ever know truth.

Everyone loses.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Relativism

Apr 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

So I was visiting an office the other day, and as often happens, I stumble on something in conversation that triggers a political response.

The woman I was talking to reminds me of a smart version of everyperson: roughly conservative on fiscal issues, roughly liberal on social issues, but personally relatively conservative as a means of self-preservation.

That is, she likes small government and capitalism; thinks we should have a civil rights agenda and that it's why our nation is great; however, has learned already that gay sex, multicultural neighborhoods, drugs and alcohol, casual sex, and pluralism don't work for her.

People like this make me curious because I'm envious. I like the nice, simple detached sound of that worldview: I'm just doing my thing. Unfortunately, so were most of the people in Greece, Rome, France, India and Russia when they fell; doing your own thing results in others seizing political power. You know that old saw: all that it takes for evil people to succeed is that good people don't challenge them.

Apparently, I stumbled onto one of her political hot buttons because I said something about the inefficiency of a public agency. "You know," she said. "I voted for Barack Obama, but Ron Paul is right about this. Government cannot do anything more efficiently than private practice."

I told her I agree, but that too much privatization could lead to corruption as we see in, and here are my worlds, "failed states like the third world." I don't see any point in beating around the bush and telling you that government works better in Italy than Germany, or in India than England, or in France than Sweden — it doesn't. Failed states crush their elites and spend the rest of their lives circling the drain.

She leapt on me in a flash. "We have something now called relativity," she said icily. "That means that there is no absolute standard for what is a failed or succeeding society."

I looked at her and said, "You know, you're right. There isn't an absolute standard. But by my standards, those places have failed and I don't want to live in them. So I'm going to call them failed."

"But you can't do that," she said. "We don't have an absolute standard."

"But that in itself is an absolute standard," I said to her. "Telling me I can't consider them failed is as absolute as calling them failed."

"That's a logic trap," she said, and to her credit: "I can't figure that out. I think it's in the words." Not the most coherent explanation, but better than any I can do: it's in the words, or the logic. It's a property of the symbols.

What she means is "don't judge others."

What I pointed out was that "not judging others" is in itself a judgment.

How to escape this logical loop?

If there's no universal standard, there's no universal standard. That means it's not bad for me to refer to third world nations as failed, and for others to think of them as doing just fine. Depending on where you are in life, both may be true.

But the problem exists when we try to apply one standard to both groups. I want to move upward, far

away from the third world state, to more organized, rule of law, rule of logic type states; others may have different goals.

"So," I said. "I guess the question really becomes relative: what you prefer. I know I'd rather move my family into a first-world state, and be among people who want to make first-world states, than be in the third world. Where would you rather live?"

We left the discussion at that, but it could extend to other things. Values systems — she and I are both personally conservative, meaning that we've figured out entertainment, intoxicants, casual sex, laziness, stupidity, freedom and convenience are bad goals. Order, efficiency, honor, fidelity, chastity, pride, intelligence, education and hard work are good goals.

We vote with our feet. There won't be one standard for all of us, but if someone else has the right not to be beholden to my standard, I have the right not to be beholden to hers.

She was right: it's in the words. They're claiming a standard of having no standards as somehow inherent or absolute — a variation on the naturalistic fallacy for neurotics — and trying to get me to agree to it. I want more, and so I won't.

A useful parable.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [democracy](#) · [liberalism](#) · [pluralism](#) · [relativism](#)

Biological determinism

Apr 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

This is anecdotal, and I don't pretend it is anything but. However, I think it's useful to agree on some facts that most seem to intuit but won't say in public — I wonder why?

Our population is divided by ability, including the ability to act sensibly and plan ahead:

- 90% need to be told specifically what to do or they lapse into their various pleasures and unproductive or destructive activity.
- 9% can be given a general task that helps fulfill a social direction or ideal, but they will not derive that direction or ideal themselves.
- 1% can define a direction or ideal.

What separates these divisions?

The number of factors they must consider.

A leader must analyze millions; a general task completer can analyze thousands; a worker can analyze just a few.

When workers revolt, it places people who are biologically unsuited to lead in positions of leadership, and this is why their revolutions are destructive, as in France and Russia.

The greatest taboo today is that these divisions exist. It makes people feel as if they cannot be anyone, which interrupts the pleasant wish fulfillment fantasies they have absorbed from marketing and polite socialization.

Suddenly, reality rears its ugly head, and they have no idea how to give it meaning.

People hate biological determinism. It means they're not undiscovered geniuses, brilliant artists, future kings — they're average and they can't escape it.

That irritates their monkey brains and they have epileptic seizures in which they wail miserably about oppression and conclude the solution is more powerful democracy, that can smash its enemies — including reality itself.

Yet the evidence keeps piling up — our intelligence, creativity, criminality and personality are defined for us before we're even born:

Personality types are linked with structural differences in the brain – which could explain why one child grows up to be impulsive and outgoing while another becomes diligent and introspective.

Anatomical differences between the brains of 85 people have been measured and linked with the four main categories of personality types as defined by psychiatrists using a clinically recognised system of character evaluation.

Brain scans that measure differences in volume down to an accuracy of less than one cubic millimetre found, for instance, that people defined as novelty-seeking personalities had a structurally bigger area of the brain above the eye sockets, known as the inferior part of the frontal lobe.

[NZH](#)

In other words, our abilities define our behaviors — and our abilities are innate. This is a social taboo because it tells us that as individuals, we cannot be whatever we want to be; also, it tells us that as groups, we cannot rely on individuals to make the right decision if it's beyond their ability level.

And as it turns out, there are problems with individual decision-making that can only be overcome with discipline and strong intelligence. First, there's [choice paralysis](#). Next, there's the aforementioned [Dunning-Kruger effect](#), where people who are out of their league when facing difficult tasks fail to notice their mistakes and so think they're making right decisions when they're screwing up. Finally, there's choice blindness:

We have been trying to answer this question using techniques from magic performances. Rather than playing tricks with alternatives presented to participants, we surreptitiously altered the outcomes of their choices, and recorded how they react. For example, in an early study we showed our volunteers pairs of pictures of faces and asked them to choose the most attractive. In some trials, immediately after they made their choice, we asked people to explain the reasons behind their choices.

Unknown to them, we sometimes used a double-card magic trick to covertly exchange one face for the other so they ended up with the face they did not choose. Common sense dictates that all of us would notice such a big change in the outcome of a choice. But the result showed that in 75 per cent of the trials our participants were blind to the mismatch, even offering "reasons" for their "choice".

We called this effect "choice blindness", echoing change blindness, the phenomenon identified by psychologists where a remarkably large number of people fail to spot a major change in their environment. Recall the famous experiments where X asks Y for directions; while Y is struggling to help, X is switched for Z – and Y fails to notice.

[New Scientist](#)

Change blindness is what happens while you're focused on a single aspect of reality, but don't notice how other aspects in the scenario change, even if they indirectly impact the aspect you're watching. This is why sleight of hand works; I distract you with the rapidly moving object, while slowing stuffing a pigeon in my hat in the background.

Choice blindness is a form of mental adjusting. If you want something, but get given something else, you're so focused on receiving something that you accept what came and justify it by altering your memories to claim it was what you wanted.

In real world terms, this means that if a candidate promises no war but does something equally dastardly on an issue other than war, people don't notice — that's change blindness. On the other hand, if a candidate promises great beautiful things and then delivers more of the same, people adapt to it and still support him — because he's their candidate.

I have a feeling these dizzy mental failings are the result of optimizations made to our thinking process, originally to get it to work with slower primate brains. These may no longer be necessary. If we're as intelligent as we like to think we are, we will recognize these limitations and thrust those who lack them to the forefront of our decision-making process.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Lack of moral attention kills communities

Apr 21st, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

What is moral attention, you might ask?

Moral attention is recognizing that the broken windows theory is real: if people seeing others getting away with breaking the rules, they're more likely to break the rules.

Therefore, tolerate no actions which are destructive to the collective or the non-deviant individual. (You can do both at the same time; this places you out of the left, which only protects the individual, and the extremists who only protect the collective.)

Here's someone who spotted this condition in the microcosm offered by web communities:

It was once a well-kept garden of intelligent discussion, where knowledgeable and interested folk came, attracted by the high quality of speech they saw ongoing. But into this garden comes a fool, and the level of discussion drops a little – or more than a little, if the fool is very prolific in their posting. (It is worse if the fool is just articulate enough that the former inhabitants of the garden feel obliged to respond, and correct misapprehensions – for then the fool dominates conversations.)

So the garden is tainted now, and it is less fun to play in; the old inhabitants, already invested there, will stay, but they are that much less likely to attract new blood. Or if there are new members, their quality also has gone down.

Then another fool joins, and the two fools begin talking to each other, and at that point some of the old members, those with the highest standards and the best opportunities elsewhere, leave...

{ snip }

But when the fools begin their invasion, some communities think themselves too good to use their banhammer for – gasp! – censorship.

After all – anyone acculturated by academia knows that censorship is a very grave sin... in their walled gardens where it costs thousands and thousands of dollars to enter, and students fear their professors' grading, and heaven forbid the janitors should speak up in the middle of a colloquium.

It is easy to be naive about the evils of censorship when you already live in a carefully kept garden. Just like it is easy to be naive about the universal virtue of unconditional nonviolent pacifism, when your country already has armed soldiers on the borders, and your city already has police. It costs you nothing to be righteous, so long as the police stay on their jobs.

{ snip }

And after all – who will be the censor? Who can possibly be trusted with such power?

Quite a lot of people, probably, in any well-kept garden. But if the garden is even a little divided within itself – if there are factions – if there are people who hang out in the community despite not much trusting the moderator or whoever could potentially wield the banhammer -

{ snip }

Maybe I understand on a gut level that the opposite of censorship is not academia but 4chan

(which probably still has mechanisms to prevent spam). Maybe because I grew up in that wide open space where the freedom that mattered was the freedom to choose a well-kept garden that you liked and that liked you, as if you actually could find a country with good laws.

{ snip }

I confess, for a while I didn't even understand why communities had such trouble defending themselves – I thought it was pure naivete. It didn't occur to me that it was an egalitarian instinct to prevent chieftains from getting too much power. "None of us are bigger than one another, all of us are men and can fight; I am going to get my arrows", was the saying in one hunter-gatherer tribe whose name I forget. (Because among humans, unlike chimpanzees, weapons are an equalizer – the tribal chieftain seems to be an invention of agriculture, when people can't just walk away any more.)

[Less Wrong](#)

Plato would agree, but he'd point out that it's not just agricultural societies: any civilization imposes a collectivist obligation. You can't just walk away. You can't just do it your way, and take your toys and go home, like libertarians or anarchists.

Instead, you need to stand your ground and separate the smart from the fools, and either censor the fools or removing them, but either way, keep them from *lowering the standard of your community*, because they will, and soon your community will be only populated by people [too silly to see they are selfish and destructive](#).

Common sense observations of someone who survived through discipline and careful perception:

"I'm not sure if it's good to have freedom or not," Chan said. "I'm really confused now. If you're too free, you're like the way Hong Kong is now. It's very chaotic. Taiwan is also chaotic."

Chan added: "I'm gradually beginning to feel that we Chinese need to be controlled. If we're not being controlled, we'll just do what we want."

Chan said the problem with Chinese youth is that "they like other people's things. They don't like their own things." Young people need to spend more time developing their own style, he added.

[Excite](#)

He's not talking about just the Chinese, but the human species as a whole. If we are given no constraints, we do what is selfish, and then disorder occurs. With too much constraint, we rebel.

I suggest another form of society: the cooperative where we don't overrate each other's egos through polite conversation, but clearly view where we each stand and what our abilities are. That way it's no surprise when a king's a king and a peasant is a peasant, even if he pretends to be a king on the internet.

We need direction. What we don't need are calcified power structures that no longer provide that direction.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Two memes that failed by succeeding

Apr 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

It's memetic warfare out there, folks. We have large populations empowered to vote, and fewer than five percent have any idea what they're doing or do any research.

As a result, every viewpoint has a cheering team that's fighting to inject its memes into the collective mind, basically using fond illusions and dire fears to convince the voting herd to sway one way or the next. If you want to know why our government is schizoid...

I illustrated one of these memes in another blog post, but wanted to show a curious twist of history: how a meme by becoming accepted can manipulate people, but if its manipulation is not carefully planned, can backfire and reverse all gains. Both of these have this problem, but only one has come true yet.

- **Postmodernism.** Good liberals quivered in their hip downtown lofts. The forces of centralization — government, corporations, religion — were gaining power and advancing increasingly absolutist agendas. How to combat it? Create an absolute of non-absolutes, and insist as in the art of Picasso or the writing of Thomas Pynchon, on seeing every situation from multiple angles at once with each angle as a valid viewpoint. The hope was that this would cause people to reject rigid values systems. The reality was that people used it as a justification for believing whatever was convenient, rejecting any systematic thought.
- **Out-freedoming.** The American right has got itself in a load of trouble. First, our country's founding fathers did not agree on a lot of things, but were able compromisers. So there's no tradition except European conservatism, which scares us. And then there's the enduring popularity of liberal — or should we say Revolutionary — thought. How to compete it? Conservatives want the welfare nanny state off their backs, and they want to compete with liberals. Their response has been to try to compete by offering more freedom than liberal parties; they insist on dogmatic libertarianism now, where pretty much no one can tell you to do anything if you don't want to. That sounds great when you first read it. The fond hope is that it will let the strong rise. The grim reality is that idiots will take advantage of this freedom to be selfish, causing socialized costs and an implosion of infrastructure. It wouldn't be the first time...

What's fascinating to me about these observations is that they show how different memology is from sciences that predict outcome. Memes catch on to hopes, dreams, wish fulfillment, humor, fond illusions... they have no bearing on reality. That's why in the game of memes, to succeed is often to doom yourself.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The nationalism conundrum

Apr 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We're accustomed to the idea that in every nation, there's a majority who inherently have privilege, and a minority, who are discriminated against.

Since 1789, we've known that minority to be a political minority, or the people versus the aristocrats and the wealthy.

Since 1968, we've thought of that minority as the oppressed/discriminated against, which is a long list of people from ethnic minorities, homosexuals, women, the disabled, religious minorities and youth.

We're comfortable with this rhetoric — of minority justified in fighting majority because the minority is oppressed — but it's a one-way street. First, it requires an enemy, an oppressor. Second, it requires that the oppressed be saints. And when those two come into conflict, we see that often there are multiple groups of oppressed and they are oppressing each other.

The United States is boycotting a U.N. conference on racism next week over a document that "singles out" Israel in its criticism and conflicts with the nation's "commitment to unfettered free speech," the U.S. State Department said Saturday.

State Department officials say the document contains language that reaffirms the Durban Declaration and Programme of Actions from the 2001 conference in Durban, South Africa, which the United States has said it won't support. The 2001 document "prejudges key issues that can only be resolved in negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the Congressional Black Caucus said it was "deeply dismayed" by the decision made by the nation's first African-American president, saying it was inconsistent with administration policies.

[CNN](#)

So what we've got here is our first African-American president, who the right is currently unsuccessfully trying to smear by comparing him to Hitler, and he's backing out of a conference that might call the descendants of Hitler's victims Hitleresque themselves. Hitler Hitler Hitler!

Obviously, this makes no sense. Our previous narrative — we use narratives to project ourselves into the future, in lieu of having some kind of values system we share — said that The Jews were victims, and that they were oppressed, and that empowering them would make us good.

But now, there's another oppressed group that feels it is oppressed by Israel (I'm not sure of the overlap of Israel and The Jews, which seems to be a media term for "selected interests of Jewish descent and/or religion"). So we're in conflict, just as we are anytime [Jews and blacks](#) mix it up on the streets of New York, or [American Indians decide to exclude blacks](#), or [gays hate on women](#). Our narrative has broken.

What makes more sense in my view is to recognize that the world is a varied place. Wherever a majority appears, they're going to work for their own interests — and any other group showing up is a thorn in their side. Our narrative now demands that we shame them into accepting that group by calling them racists. However, that's clearly not working: Israel, for example, knows that if they don't oust Palestinians, the Palestinians will outbreed them in the next 25 years and democratically take over the state.

It's time for a new narrative, and the USA being caught between a rock and a hard place — deriving its identity from being the savior of the oppressed everywhere, yet having allegiance to Israel — is forcing us all to reconsider the idea that majority-minority narratives don't explain enough of the story for us to rely

upon them.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Wisdom

Apr 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

From another place where I blog:

If you find what you don't like in the world, you are only halfway to knowing what you like. When you know what you like, you must reach past what you don't like to pull what you do like into reality, and in the process, your elbows will knock aside what you dislike. Without a goal of creation and acquisition we lapse into negativity, excessive literalism, bitterness, impotence — and most importantly: we do not accomplish our goals.

Reach toward what is desired; open the mind; never forget what you do desire because everything that is not-that is what you dislike, and if you try to focus on what you dislike, you will be cutting hydra heads and never reach victory.

[ANUS](#)

Writers — the real kind, which I'd like to be someday — walk a hard path because they must find the eternal in the mundane, and bring it back to you so you can desire to find the eternal in yourself. They do that because only then will you understand the moral vigilance which life requires if you don't want your species to fall back down the evolutionary staircase. Writers, or at least the ones I've known, recognize more than anyone else that every significant experience is a hard-fought victory that left scars, and if we read them, we have knowledge.

There really is nothing more to type here. Have a good night.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Choice paralysis

Apr 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Read this article and then think about the consequences for government and society:

Researchers from several universities have determined that even though humans' ability to weigh choices is remarkably advantageous, it can also come with some serious liabilities.

People faced with numerous choices, whether good or bad, find it difficult to stay focused enough to complete projects, handle daily tasks or even take their medicine

Researchers found that the participants who earlier had made choices had more trouble staying focused and finishing the disagreeable but goal-focused tasks compared to the participants who initially did not have to make choices.

[Science Daily](#)

Like computers, people can be hacked by overloading them with information. Cram too much in for them to consider, and they expend resources considering it, and are still considering it when you hit them with an important task, which they then get wrong.

Think about all the choices you make each day. Wandering around and deciding where to go, which stores to go to, what to buy, what to watch, what to wear, who to talk to, what political decisions to make in that conversation, and so on: your brain is overloaded. And that's before we get to advertising, political memes and social pressures.

This could explain why "primitive" and ancient peoples had clearer states of mind. It also has some negative implications for democracy and the idea of unfettered personal choice.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

Determinism

Apr 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

One of the giant problems with any kind of discourse on the net is that the audience is usually too self-obsessed to research the terms it uses and think about their implications.

For example, determinism — biological and otherwise.

In the form used by most thinkers, it refers to limits on abilities and perceptions, and also the presence of tendencies. It does not mean predestination or that every decision is made in advance; rather, it's a description of the parameters that shape that decision.

For example, chimps have limits on their intelligence. But individual chimps can if shown a better way emulate it, and sometimes other chimps hit on this stuff at random. Like natural selection, the testing of random events picks the one out of a thousand that is great.

For every one chimp who figured out how to wash food, there were thousands of others who tried bashing it with rocks, smearing it with feces, throwing it at trees, or covering it in leaves. That's how nature works... infinite branching, then testing.

When we talk about biological determinism, we're not saying that your dad was genetically destined to be a drunk and beat you, but that he has certain abilities that enabled him to make some choices. In some contexts, he may have run into his limitations to outthinking alcoholism as an option. But it doesn't mean he was destined for it, any more than it means you were destined for it.

Many smart people make bad choices, like the apes trying random food options. What matters is that better choices are selected, and as we figure out those are the right way to act, that we accept them and develop on them, in the process refining our own abilities, including self-regulation of genetics.

It's a feedback loop between abilities, choices and the traits selected by that loop, which means that with each iteration the loop either gets more complex (fewer highest level abstractions, more consistent order) or less ordered (flat hierarchy, no options better than others) and that determines our future fortunes.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Post-scarcity marketing

Apr 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

After I wrote about [the self-defeating nature of the media industry's agenda in the Pirate Bay case](#), a couple people wrote in to ask the question: what should the media industry do?

The real issue we're dealing with here is an end of scarcity. When we can duplicate any audio, video, text or application, there is no need for it to be tied to the physical means of its conveyance. That means it's out of the control of its owners. If it has a commercial in it, it can be edited out; if it has copy protection or digital rights management (DRM), that can be excised; and so on. Infinite copies can be made and the flow of data is so immense there is no stopping it.

With this end of scarcity, the question is how content owners make money. It used to be they sold the physical product; now, with one click, the consumer copies it, legally or not. Those precious few gigabytes don't seem worth the price of a physical object, since, after all, there's no need for the physical object. At least, that's how it appears to the consumer, and businesses have been careful for years not to let people know that the \$17 CD they just bought cost \$0.30 to manufacture because they printed 100,000 of them on giant industrial presses.

My advice to the media industry is to go to a licensing model, right now. Don't walk but run toward it. Set up a login for each customer, let them purchase products, and then charge them a minimal fee for the transfer each time they need it. That way, if they crash their hard drives and they didn't have them backed up, they pay to get it sent again. That's fair — bandwidth is cheap but not free.

Then, point out that this scarcity has always been artificial as a way of disguising how cheap the physical product was. The real cost has always been the organizations that promote artists, and the production costs of rendering the product, even if after that it costs nearly nothing to print 'em. Show the public the thousands of people who depend on these products for their livelihood, and to what degree they get rewarded.

Do not dick around with DRM. It doesn't work; in fact, the only person it penalizes is the honest consumer, because pirates work around it as a matter of course. Send your products in the free and clear. The people who would have bought them before now will buy them; however, the people who always stole them will continue to do so. Ignore them.

Cut your prices to reflect the fact that a brick and mortar store is not needed, nor is shipping, packaging and printing. But hold the line on everything else because those costs are still there. Run an honest business and the customers will come to you.

There is a glitch in all of this. The media industry likes blockbusters. Those days are gone, I'm afraid. The blockbuster had novelty on its side and attracted the biggest cross-section of audience, which was mostly stupid irresponsible people who will steal anything they think they can get away with. Solution: don't make product for these people. Focus on the middle class audience which thinks fair is fair and doesn't mind paying a reasonable price.

Until the industry acknowledges these truths, it's going to have problems.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Pirate Bay busted, nobody wins

Apr 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Dear reader, I suppose that now you have heard that the [four pirate bay defendants have been found guilty](#) of in essence behind enablers of piracy.

I think in the long run this is going to be bad news for everyone, although the music industry currently thinks it has won. However, this is only because they do not understand the mentality of people who view their task as one of resistance.

“The Stockholm district court has today convicted the four people charged with promoting other people’s infringement of copyright laws,” the court said in a statement.

“By providing a website with ... well-developed search functions, easy uploading and storage possibilities, and with a tracker linked to the website, the accused have incited the crimes that the filesharers have committed,” the court said in a statement to the media.

The court added that the four “knew that copyrighted material was being fileshared.”

This victory was inevitable when the case went to trial. The Pirate Bay, by the virtue of its name, encourages pirated material to be the bulk of what is on its service, and a quick glance verifies that this is true. Further, by establishing a history of enmity toward copyright law the Pirate Bay defendants made themselves public icons of flouting the law. Defy those in power, and you get crushed.

However, this “victory” is bad news in the long term for the following reasons:

- **Head of the Hydra.** This is like cutting up a starfish: each fragment is going to grow into another starfish. People who view themselves as oppressed by corporations — even if the same people are doing something they know is illegal — are going to view themselves as resisting that oppression. So they are going to fight back with a million small services.
- **Re-routed around already.** Because of this rhetoric of oppression, people who are not explicitly anti-piracy (people can be pro-piracy, anti-piracy, or somewhere in the middle) do not see this as a victory. The record labels may see it as cutting off the head, but people who are not anti-piracy are aware that there are a million and one sources of pirated material. The internet will simply re-route around the damaged pirate bay.
- **Doesn’t strengthen principle of law.** Like busting drug dealers instead of drug users, this ruling does not create a principle whereby those who commit piracy feel they are doing something that is both illegal and wrong, for which they will face consequences.
- **No alternate plan for the industry.** This victory allows the media industry to keep plodding ahead with its moribund business model. Now that all our media is in digital form, it is easily pirated. We need to find a way around that problem. No intermediate “victories” are going to fix that. However, with this victory, the media industry gets to claim it’s winning even though it still has no plan for the problem itself. They killed the messenger.
- **No moral principle asserted.** We see a public bust, instead of artists who are feeling the pain of having their material pirated. What the public needs to see is the damage of piracy, and be made to feel obligated to purchase the product; they also need to feel they’re dealing with a fair industry, not demons who love to oppress. From a public relations standpoint, this bust is a disaster.

The media industry views itself in a war against piracy.

It should be viewing itself in a struggle to adapt its business model to an age when copying anything is easily done.

In my view, that is best accomplished by making it clear that media arrives because of big profits, and that

the costs are necessary. We the consumers see a \$15 CD without knowing any of the costs behind it or being aware how that artist is surviving. Show us someone who is a normal artist, like Neko Case or Slayer, struggling to make a rent payment. Don't show us superstars like Metallica who are having to cut back on gold chrome on their newest Mercedes-Benz racer.

Those in the media who are celebrating this "victory" are enjoying a dubious at best moment of triumph: they still have not addressed the problem of which piracy is a symptom, or affirmed a sense of fair play ("morality") in the eyes of the media-buying public.

Further, and worse, they have now racked up the paranoia level for search engines like Google, who could find themselves at a legal disadvantage when people point out that typing an album name and "blogspot" into Google brings up endless sources of potential piracy. Expect this legal ruling to expand, and search engines, blog hosts, and file sharing hosts to have to respond. That in turn eliminates legitimate services and inconveniences the normal citizen, which makes them even less sympathetic to the media industry.

One example is sharing files: I routinely abuse Megaupload to send MP3 files of custom-created music to my collaborators. Right now, there's no form to fill out swearing we didn't pirate this. If in the future there is, we'll have to find another way, and probably one that is less universal and secure for all of us. Our perception at that point will be that the media industry screwed us out of a tool we need.

I don't lament what happened to the Pirate Bay guys for their sake. They knew they were test cases; even more, they know that what they're empowering is theft, even if all of justify it by saying that the media industry charges too much and the content is mostly junk, both of which are probably true. Now they're martyrs, and the situation is even farther from a positive solution than before. We all lose.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Equality of criticism for bad science

Apr 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Marina Hyde over at Science Blogs was [bemoaning our tolerance for celebrities spewing pseudoscience](#), when I pointed out the difficult position she's in:

If you want to be intolerant of celebrities speaking scientific nonsense, you have to be intolerant of them speaking all scientific nonsense.

This includes the non-sensical idea that intelligence and abilities are not determined by genetics, and the non-sensical idea that there are no significant genetic and biological differences between races, ethnicities and social classes.

But those aren't so politically popular. So now what do you do? Do you become a hypocrite, and yell at some celebrities for some views that are incorrect, but not all celebrities for all incorrect views?

I don't expect this comment to be approved, because it's socially toxic — but scientifically correct. People get along either by cooperation, which requires individuals to cede some rights and illusions for the sake of central action, or control, which is either authoritarian or accomplished by pandering as is done in liberal democracies. Do what we want, we throw you a bone. If you don't, we socially ostracize you. It's just as authoritarian as a Hitler, Stalin, Kim Il-Jung, Pol Pot, Mao, etc. except that you are less likely to run afoul of its laws if your only goals are making a living and enjoying selfish pleasures.

Bad science is all around us. For our control mechanism, we must tolerate the bad science that re-enforces our dominant paradigms and taboos. However, we can feel free to attack the fringe, because they don't conform. We have a word for this: groupthink.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Libertarianism and Anarchism: in denial?

Apr 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I think both of these forms of political activity succumb to one basic critique:

People are in denial of this obvious fact:

Being part of a civilization requires you to cooperate with others, usually through some central authority or power.

I guess where I agree with libertarians and anarchists is that less government is more effective. Economically, I'm a libertarian; keep stuff simple, avoid the kinds of weird economics that require tons of regulation. Letting the markets handle things is usually far more efficient than government; that doesn't mean the government should just cheer while rampant commerce destroys culture, people and environment alike.

I can understand libertarianism as a statement against bureaucracy. Who doesn't find that appealing? But as a political idea in and of itself — that's as ridiculous as unfettered socialism!

Posted in: [Politics](#).

What is “freedom”?

Apr 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The term “freedom” baffles philosophers but not artists.

It baffles philosophers because freedom is a negative term. You need something unfree to be free from; that’s never made clear when people talk about fighting for freedom. When they said they wanted freedom from Britain, that made sense, but claiming that we’re fighting in Germany or Iraq — neither nation having threatened us or stated plans to oppress us — for “freedom” makes it dodgy.

Logic does limit us in what we can know. For example, proving a negative case is very hard. “We have freedom” makes a claim on the entire domain of possible actions, many of which have never even happened, and claims that each one will be free. Neither inductive nor deductive reasoning breaks this barrier unless we apply them in a truly reckless manner.

We talk glibly about freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom in general to mean those and other activities because we inherit this Revolutionary language from the Americans and French. They wanted freedom from England and the aristocracy; we take freedom, then, to be a general value, which is convenient because if your foe has **any values** you can claim they’d oppress us on the basis of those values, where we have no values, so we’re free. Make sense? It’s not supposed to. It’s supposed to sound good and get you voting.

Onward to “freedom” of speech:

But now an equally troubling trend is developing in the West. Ever since 2006, when Muslims worldwide rioted over newspaper cartoons picturing the prophet Muhammad, Western countries, too, have been prosecuting more individuals for criticizing religion. The “Free World,” it appears, may be losing faith in free speech.

Among the new blasphemers is legendary French actress Brigitte Bardot, who was convicted last June of “inciting religious hatred” for a letter she wrote in 2006 to then-Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, saying that Muslims were ruining France. It was her fourth criminal citation for expressing intolerant views of Muslims and homosexuals.

While it hasn’t gone so far as to support the U.N. resolution, the West is prosecuting “religious hatred” cases under anti-discrimination and hate-crime laws.

The purpose of free speech is to be able to challenge widely held views.

History has shown that once governments begin to police speech, they find ever more of it to combat. Countries such as Canada, England and France have prosecuted speakers and journalists for criticizing homosexuals and other groups. It’s the ultimate irony: free speech curtailed for the sake of a pluralistic society.

[WAPO](#)

Why is it ironic?

Demand something implausible, get implausible results.

No society has existed in which “free speech” has existed because when large groups of people get offended, they squash the speaker. Interestingly, these groups are overwhelmingly from the pro-freedom camp; they interpret what they do not like as a crime against freedom and then the executions begin.

But remember, anything done in the name of “freedom” is GOOD. So you can get away with it for awhile at least.

Freedom is like the word “free” in marketing: people are drawn to it like moths to lightbulbs.

Watch how every side of the political spectrum claims it’s about freedom in order to hoodwink others into supporting it — we take this claim by a typical citizen from a conservative forum on a large political site:

Extreme Left = 100% government control

Extreme Right = no government control – anarchy

[Perspectives](#)

And from one forum over, the liberal forum:

Fascists are extreme right wing.

[Perspectives](#)

They’re not even using the same language, but they make it clear: each side stands for freedom.

Well, then, getting compromise shouldn’t be difficult — except that each side believes the other is anti-“freedom” and is working to constrain them.

If I wanted to paralyze a nation, I’d toss “freedom” into the room. It’s like a golden hand grenade — when you throw it among your enemy, they fight over it, half trying to throw it out the door because it’s a grenade and the other half trying to steal it because it’s gold.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

The unpopular truth

Apr 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This blog grew out of a previous blog that existed on blogger.com. I found the software limiting after some time, and started to get frustrated with the backlog of posts that did not reflect my opinion at the time but in the past. So an update occurred, but the concept is the same:

The Unpopular Truth

The truth is unpleasant and therefore unpopular: humans have invented a social reality that denies physical reality.

What this blog is about, more than anything else, is how we use social factors to deny the reality that's in front of our faces.

By social factors, I mean basing our opinions on those of others or of an ad hoc social consensus based on the avoidance of responsibility; paying attention to popularity of ideas as if that then defined reality; avoiding complicated truths that do not slavishly celebrate the individual and are therefore offensive.

When we talk about reality, we are talking about verifiable patterns from history, science and philosophy; the latter requires us to work in pure abstraction, but if arguments are both self-consistent and anchored to observable phenomena they are valid.

The great conflict of our time is this combat between physical reality and social reality. After the middle ages, Europe went through an "Enlightenment" that caused our thinking to shift toward the perspective of the individual, not a holistic order. With that, we began the path toward rationalism — or linear, single-perspective empirical observation — which in the view of this blog, is a type of science that both pays attention to reality and distorts our perception of reality by its linear/single-factor/linguistically literal focus.

It is my belief that our tendency toward this view originates in how we conceive of ourselves as individuals: we see ourselves having a body, but cannot orient our mind/personality/soul as being within that body. Thus we are born neurotic until we find a more holistic awareness to discipline our self-awareness to its correct position in reality "at large."

It is my belief that our future lies in creating people who are not bothered by offensive truths or negation of the individual, yet preserve the Faustian spirit of ancient Europeans by acting outside groupthink. In order to do that, we must escape this notion that social reality defines or is superior to physical reality. This in turn disempowers the crowds of people who form in any society dedicated to nothing but protecting their own irresponsibility, and as time goes on, erode that society from within like a cancer.

Rationalism and individualism have us look at a single factor orienting in "How does this affect me?" Our desires for Me — and our fears of what might make Me less powerful, show how Me is not evolutionarily the end-all be-all of humanity, or point out that Me is not the genius artist or entertainer or undiscovered talent Me wants to think it is — obstruct our view of reality. This neurotic state is the underpinning of all our modern problems.

A list of modern problems:

- Ugliness – utilitarian architecture, streets, interface design and clothing creates a surrounding that lacks subtlety and clashes with itself, inuring us to the idea that the world must be ugly and simplistic inside as well as on its human surface.
- Ignorance – our arrogant "scientific" rationalist view allows us to draw partial truths about complex situations, and then whine about "details" or "unexpected consequences" when things blow up in our faces. Michael Crichton claims this produces a whole class of scientists who are "partial intelligences"

or smart at one thing and one thing only, and oblivious to the whole.

- Inattention – oblivion is the most common element in this world. While we're busy focusing on ourselves, we ignore not only travesties but beauties around us, and then wonder why we are not happy. We look at "primitive" peoples and see they are happy; they have clarity of mission. But "do it all for the self" doesn't give us clarity of vision and so we are secretly miserable.
- Social fascism – when there is no clear truth, no clarity of vision, and no higher goal than pleasing the self, socialization becomes combat for the wittiest, the cleverest, the least-inhibited, etc. This always victimizes the intelligent, responsible, chaste, healthy and wise. We have created a social order where simians get ahead by tearing down others for believing in more than satisfying themselves from moment to moment.
- Ecocide – when you have a society based on individuals doing what is convenient for them, suddenly every aspect of your reality has a price tag on it. The open field can become a fast food restaurant and make Me a millionaire; the river is a free place to dump; if Me wants a kitten, Me should have it, even if Me cannot care for it and so it ends up starving and pregnant in a nearby alley. Individual desires have caused us to pollute, deplete and pave over our environment wherever not explicitly restricted.
- Convenience – any society based on the individual perspective soon decays to a society of convenience for the individual. This is where anarchism and consumerism are the same; we want only what we want and we want it now with no consequences, and if anyone says we cannot have it, we will band together and lynch the whoreson. Our convenience mania extends to self-identity: we deny facts about ourselves that are inconvenient, and since we can buy media that purport to be truthful, we purchase things that agree with us — and as a result stop caring whether they're true or not.

This modern society is a race to the bottom. We excel in one area, namely technology, because we're building on the work of the ancient Greeks and Romans that for centuries we considered witchcraft because religious devotion was a better way to succeed socially than experimenting with reality. In everything else, we are disorganized, dysfunctional, miserable, slaves of convenience, socially competitive through cruelty, and indifferent to our effect on the world.

The worst part about modern society is that it rejects any ability to self-regulate. If you speak up with an unpopular truth, someone will be offended. That's bad for business and socialization, so hippies and business jackboots — anarchists and consumerists alike — will join together to crush you, to shout you down, to slander you so thoroughly that you will be socially ostracized. I call this "decentralized totalitarianism" because it does require a tyrant for us to have tyranny, and an invisible tyranny is the most effective.

We have been cruising on the glories of the past for too long, convinced that because no sign has popped up warning us off this course, we are doing just fine and should continue... which is most convenient for the individual, so we're going to insist on it anyway. I was baffled by this seemingly inexorable entropy until I read Plato's *Republic* and saw how others had noticed that every society starts healthy with a strong consensus, and over time as that consensus decays by individuals pursuing their own desires at the expense of that ideal, the society shifts itself downward toward third-world status. Then I noticed how almost all third-world nations have glorious but distant histories, and realized that this is how civilizations day.

My fellow citizens are still too busy considering themselves smart and clever for being able to invent and use technology, and con each other socially (isn't socialization just a form of marketing?). They do not want to notice these inconvenient, unpopular truths. However, I love life and love being alive and love all the good things — great art, great people, great food, great architecture, nature — that life offers, so cannot act differently. I am motivated by my programming (!) to agitate for an end to the unpopularity of truth, and a renovation of society to a higher form than self-consciousness, so that the future is better than the present or the past.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Bad science: nurture advocacy

Apr 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

In the nature versus nurture debate, bad science proliferates. This is because the nature side argues that an individual's abilities are determined mostly by biology; the nurture side argues that an individual's abilities are determined mostly by access to social resources. Obviously, nurture will be infinitely more popular to a crowd.

We'd all like to think we can be anything. If we can be anything, our needs are obviously just and our importance is guaranteed. We are all superstars, geniuses, undiscovered artistic powerhouses, and so on. And the best part of the nurture argument is that if we fail, we can claim that this too was a product of limited access to social resources.

However, reality suggests that the nature people are right: some of what makes us is genetic recombination at the time of conception; some is nurture by parents and friends; some depends on what notions we've got in our little heads about how to organize ourselves. But the bulk of it, as shown in Stephen Pinker's *The Blank Slate*, is biologically determined before our birth.

But since the crowd wants to hear nurture is right, it's a good way to advance your career. Be a hero — pitch them a convenient half-truth. Here is it, in action:

Chronic stress from growing up poor appears to have a direct impact on the brain, leaving children with impairment in at least one key area — working memory.

For the new study, Evans and a colleague rated the level of stress each child experienced using a scale known as "allostatic load." The score was based on the results of tests the children were given when they were ages 9 and 13 to measure their levels of the stress hormones cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine, as well as their blood pressure and body mass index.

The subjects also underwent tests at age 17 to measure their working memory, which is the ability to remember information in the short term. Working memory is crucial for everyday activities as well as for forming long-term memories.

When the researchers analyzed the relationships among how long the children lived in poverty, their allostatic load and their later working memory, they found a clear relationship: The longer they lived in poverty, the higher their allostatic load and the lower they tended to score on working-memory tests. Those who spent their entire childhood in poverty scored about 20 percent lower on working memory than those who were never poor, Evans said.

[WAPO](#)

...you may be asking: "Is that the extent of the data presented?"

Indeed it is. They found a correlation and assumed a reason.

Nevermind that how long parents remain in poverty may have something to do with their intelligence — or be entirely determined by it. You have a few bad years; no biggie, you pull out. You're chronically dumb and disorganized? Yes, welcome to the doom forevermore.

It's embarrassing to see one of our nation's newspapers blankfacedly print this crap without a sense of how completely unscientific it is.

Would scientists do something so unscientific, just for their own gain?

A former Harvard researcher falsified data and fabricated results in a 2003 sleep study, two news outlets report online today.

Dr. Robert B. Fogel, who taught at Harvard Medical School and practiced at Brigham and Women's Hospital until 2004, said he altered numbers and invented anatomic details reported in an article about obesity and sleep apnea. The journal *Sleep* retracted the article in February and the federal Office of Research Integrity concluded its investigation last month.

[Boston](#)

They would, because it works.

For the record, my take is that 80% of ability is determined by genetics; some of that is enhanced with recombination at conception, often with dramatic results — but much, much more often with none at all. The rest is nurture and more importantly, the philosophy of the individual. Someone predisposed toward rigorous questioning will increase their brainpower as much as is possible given their genetic range, while people who live dissolute lives seem to get dumber.

This is not to say those traits are permanent or cannot be cured with discipline or fear, but that our subjective assessment of the intelligence of others is easily fooled. If they are disorganized or dissolute, or have personality quirks which make them both do stupid things and hide their reasoning, smarter people can appear to be blockheads to us.

In modern society, we have a superfluity of idiots who may not actually be idiots. They are generally nice, reasonably intelligent people who thanks to selfishness and disconnecting from an offensively stupid reality have made themselves oblivious, disorganized, dissolute and consequently fatuous. When we see them in action, we assume they are dumb but the truth may be more complex.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Dying empires need slave castes

Apr 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

An excellent point from an unusual source:

Those who form the majority population of a territory will rule that territory, no matter how powerful a ruling elite may be. They will determine its culture and society. A majority-European population will create a society that reflects European values and norms. A majority-African population will create a society that reflects African norms.

If the Boers had inhabited and worked their own land rather than rely on black labor, the states they created might still be strong and independent today. Their decision to use non-white labor was a critical error that undid all of the sacrifices of the early pioneers.

The only way to maintain a civilization is for the majority to occupy its own land with its own people, and to do its own manual labor.

[American Renaissance](#)

Racism is the belief that some people should be your servants because of their race. It leads to slavery, or a kind of outcaste serfdom, and eventually, demographic ruin.

Nationalism is the belief that each nation needs its own ethnicity, bonded to its own culture, to resist capitalism and communism and other "hands free" methods of self-regulation.

Even more than nationalism is the knowledge that among an ethnic group, people need to be roughly equal in ability — or class war breaks out. People who have radically lower ability will be unable to compete, and they'll counterattack with charges of oppression, whether true or not.

An ideal nation would consist of people of roughly similar ability and health and beauty, thus eliminating the strain of those with less being irate at those gifted by nature with more. That would be the realistic version of the "equality" liberals like to talk about; you can't apply reality after the fact, or you end up hobbling the strong to preserve the weak.

That doesn't sound bad until you think about society as an organism which must thrive or machine which must keep going. If you have a fleet of one thousand cars, you don't sell off the new flawless ones and keep the junkers. If you have a field of trees, you don't kill the healthy ones so you can nourish the runts. You pick the best and make more of them. That is how societies rise.

Against that idea, there are many dumb ideas which have a common root: wanting to deny reality. One of the dumbest of these ideas is that you can find nearby humans, discover they're dumb, and use them as disposable labor, and not have it come back to bite you in the hindquarters.

Posted in: [Politics](#).
Tagged: [race](#)

US Naval fleet falls apart before our eyes

Apr 9th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

WASHINGTON—The piracy crisis over a lone hostage in the Indian Ocean took on the familiar air of a cops-and-robbers standoff, with the U.S. Navy seeking advice Thursday from seasoned FBI negotiators.

Their goal: Resolve the incident without military force.

As the FBI joined the delicate negotiations, the shipping company Maersk said that the safety of Capt. Richard Phillips is its No. 1 priority. Barack Obama, facing one of the first national security tests of his presidency, declined comment Thursday when asked about the standoff.

[[+](#)]

So our Naval fleet, instead of using force to ensure this humanitarian aid ship can get on with its business, is enlisting the help of FBI negotiators.

Instead of being overly tolerant of moron "pirates" who fancy themselves heroes, kill them with long-range sniper attacks and salvage what you can of the vessel. Discouraging this activity with a few examples of brute force usually clear the waters, so to speak, for normalcy to return.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [neurosis](#) · [realism](#)

Pentti Linkola "Can Life Prevail?"

Apr 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Corrupt together with its publishing arm Integral Tradition present the hottest book on environmentalism and deep ecology this year: Pentti Linkola's "Can Life Prevail?". A brand new English translation of the latest work by this internationally famous ecophilosopher from Finland, including an exclusive foreword written by our columnist [Brett Stevens](#).

[CORRUPT](#)

Here for your enjoyment. Linkola is the one environmental thinker today who doesn't indulge in lying for the sake of sounding good; to save ecosystemic diversity, he says, we need to stop a society based on personal fulfillment through materialism, and democracy cannot do that.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Racism: a Converse Fallacy of Accident

Apr 4th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

From the mouth of The People's favorite font of wisdom, here's a logical fallacy you see all the time:

- Converse Fallacy of Accident: argues from a special case to a general rule
 - Example

Argument: Every swan I have seen is white, so it must be true that all swans are white.

Problem: What one has seen is a special case. One can not have seen all swans.

- Also called reverse accident, destroying the exception, a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter

[Argumentum ad sphincter](#)

Some might call it the tail wagging the dog. Instead of observing the whole of the situation, we observe an instance and abstract to the whole. This inductive fallacy confuses us to no end; like deduction, induction works only when non-linear and factors of design, construction and relation to the whole are considered. But those terms aren't "scientific" enough for our brave, literalist, linear thinkers!

There's a parallel to this in cause and effect. Every cause has infinite potential effects; every effect has one cause, by the nature of time — after an event has occurred, we can track down its definitive cause. Some people like to reverse this, and suggest that for any cause there is always a single effect, which translates into whenever you see the effect assume that the same cause that occurred in one instance is always the cause of that effect. We get fooled by some things, like the cause of the sun rising — always the same — but can be fooled by others, like looking at any situation where a black person doesn't come out on top as "racism."

Some popular downtown entertainment businesses and a shopping mall are considering closing or have already decided to close for the weekend during the Texas Relays track and field event, a move one civil rights leader says makes black visitors feel unwelcome.

The Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays at the University of Texas bring high school and college track athletes to town, and there are also numerous private parties at hotels, restaurants that attract mostly black attendees. Police have said the event does not draw any more crime than other large events here.

Nelson Linder, president of the Austin chapter of the NAACP, said that for years Texas Relays participants have said blacks feel shut out.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

Presumed cause: black people are not being treated well, and sometimes the cause is racism, so this is racism.

Actuality: the crowd of people who come to these relays, who are presumably a subset of all people and a subset of African-Americans, do not buy products at these stores **and also** cause the normal problems of a large group, per Austin PD.

So what a business owner faces is: fewer sales, and the usual damage caused by large crowds. They'll face that damage if sales also go up, but if not, board up and shut down.

There are other possibilities, but they are not important here.

Here's another:

When the restaurant, Royal Fried Chicken on Rutland Road in Brownsville, changed its name last week to Obama Fried Chicken, the reaction was swift.

Competition might have played some role in the new name. Crown Fried Chicken is across the street, owned by Osman Mohibi, 47, an Afghan immigrant. He keeps pictures of Mr. Obama and Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. taped to the plexiglass divider by the cash register.

Mr. Mohibi said his competitor's misstep was winning new customers for Crown Fried Chicken. "He used the name," Mr. Mohibi said of the owner. "He used black people."

[NYT](#)

I've cut this article to bloody pieces to show the raw story.

Presumed cause: restaurant is named "Obama Fried Chicken" to appeal to negative stereotypes about African-Americans eating more fried chicken than other ethnic groups.

Actuality: two Asian immigrants, owning competing stores in the ghetto, are trying to pander to their clientele, albeit clumsily.

Here's the heartbreaker:

Mr. Jabbar said he did not really understand the pressure to bring down the sign, since everyone who came in the store seemed to like the idea. And he was concerned about what would happen if the community advocates returned.

"I'm new to this country," he said. "I don't really know what they could do."

They might lynch you, dude. Watch out!

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Greenism needs to be absorbed by the right

Apr 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We've covered here before how [humanity cannot act on global warming](#) because humanity is too [internally confused](#) to act on anything but immediate threats.

Today, it's time to point out how the green movement itself doesn't need to exist — it should either be absorbed by another political concern, or migrate to a whole vision of society like the deep ecologists have.

More fuel for the fire:

The modern environmental movement is having an identity crisis. Staring down its biggest enemy yet, it's fiercely divided over how to beat it.

The global challenge of climate change is tougher than the localized problems the green movement has spent decades fighting. To some environmentalists, it requires chucking old orthodoxies and getting practical. To others, it demands an old-style moral crusade.

Rather than push certain technological fixes, critics say, environmentalists should simply push government to slap industry with a tough cap on greenhouse gases — and let industry figure out how to meet the mandate.

[WSJ](#)

We can't even face the actual problem, [overpopulation](#), because it [conflicts with our self-image](#) as democratic egalitarian saviors of ourselves.

(Some fear that acting on climate change will [lead to tyranny](#); I'd argue that any unrealistic action by masses of people requires strong centralized power — a benevolent tyrant — to sort out.)

Now people are trying to decide how to implement a change policy, and they're dancing around the fundamental problem: in order for vast change to occur, some group that's fanatical about this issue must prevail over others. I doubt this will be a green group, because those as single-issue activists are too fanatical about it, and sacrifice other things for it, destroying a lot of what we've as a species worked for.

Witness:

Last summer, China and the developing world announced the price for their cooperation on a global-warming treaty: up to 1% of the developed world's gross domestic product. For the U.S., this would mean sending \$140 billion a year to China, Iran, North Korea and Cuba, among other countries. This is in addition to the \$28 billion we already distribute each year in foreign aid.

A November 2008 study by the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change forecasts the international costs could be as much as \$3 trillion by 2050 for developing nations to make the significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that scientists say are necessary. The MIT report says that the U.S. share would total nearly \$1 trillion of these "international financial transfers of unprecedented scale."

President Barack Obama recently unveiled a budget blueprint that called for a \$646 billion climate tax through a carbon-trading system. Already, White House officials are saying this tax could be three times larger.

The U.S. cannot reduce the growth of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere without the developing nations cutting their emissions as well. A 2007 study by the Battelle Memorial

Institute found that if China, India and the other developing countries keep growing at current rates, they will emit nearly three times as much carbon dioxide as will the developed countries by the end of this century.

[WSJ](#)

Let me explain what's going on:

When you create a nuclear option in discourse, like "that's racist!" or "that's anti-green!", people will use that handy argument-ender to get their own way.

Developing nations would love to be able to knock the west out of the way so they can have world dominance instead. They're using our guilt over global warming to this end, even though with their much larger populations, they'll create a far worse disaster.

Europeans and European-Americans are a self-regulating, declining population that's roughly 8% of the world's people. They are not the problem, because this present moment leads to a future, and if that future is the other 92% of the world's population consuming resources at first-world rates, we'll be in trouble.

Smarter people for years have been warning us: open pollution is a bad idea. Individualism leads individuals to do what is convenient, not right. Our population is exploding and most of these people inherit a dismal future mainly because they're stupid (IQ under 100). We can't fix what nature did not make for our purposes.

Still, we in the liberal democratic West are fine with planting, but afraid of pruning. Death implies a lack of control by the individual, and our current myth is that of individual control. Control your life. Form mobs to enforce this control. Surely, reality will never hit us in the ass running, right?

At this point, most smart people have left the global warming debate. They've left it to the people who are going to use it to advance their own power and wealth. Where saying "God says so" was power in the 1500s, saying "Green says so" may be the equivalent now. And so in rush the profiteers: in *public reality*, they are concerned for our planet; in *private reality*, they are jockeying for more power and not even thinking about the environment. Screw the trees, I'm earning six figures defending the trees, so I hope this problem *never goes away*!

The only side of the political spectrum that can approach this situation semi-accurately is the right. They are either Social Darwinists, or farther to the right, believers in a unified state, values, population, heritage, customs, language. Either of these has enough force to tell people the dreaded word NO when they want to breed more dumb people, buy SUVs, or build fast food restaurants in the midst of pristine forest.

And that distills the global warming issue: we need someone who can say NO. But right now, we cannot, because our hands are tied by liberal democracy. Indeed, that's a problem.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Where liberalism and fascism cross over

Apr 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Politics is a game. The first step is to get you to pick a symbol of what you want as a replacement for the reality of dealing with needs.

It's like a talisman: when demons appear, wave this at it. That's how most people use politics.

Even good-intentions, like "be fair" (left) and "natural selection" (right) rapidly get twisted: instead of addressing the problem, we start trying to con each other into supporting the symbol.

That's how you get things done in a civilization. You produce a meme, convince many people to like it, and then you have millions of people rushing at the problem demanding the symbol of your solution.

But this itself fails, because the symbol erodes, and as postmodernists tell us, we then see that beneath the symbol and fancy mathematics of justification, there are the same old motivations: power, status, security.

Most important is power. We like to feel like we control our world, because deep inside we know we do not. It's tempting to, instead of trying to adapt to the world, try to dominate it — by controlling the symbols of what we fear.

You, dear reader, have probably noticed that in history, political movements tend to "cross over" and become the opposite of what they claim they intend. This is because the process of politics takes over from the stated intent, which may have all along been a justification for having power.

Political movements are founded around memes that sound good to large numbers of people. If I start my political party, named *The Free Beer Party*, and tell the people that they'll get free beers for voting for me, many of them will then support me. I then have power.

With that support, I can achieve free beer, but then since I have the power, I'm free to do anything else. Like further advance my power, since there's nothing else to do at that point.

Famous historical example:

The Jacobin Club was the largest and most powerful political club of the French Revolution. It originated as the Club Benthorn, formed at Versailles as a group of Breton deputies to the Estates General of 1789. At the height of its influence, there were thousands of chapters throughout France, with a membership estimated at 420,000. After the fall of Robespierre the club was closed.

Initially moderate, after the death of Mirabeau the club became notorious for its implementation of the Reign of Terror and for tacitly condoning the September Massacres.

[The People's Encycloblog](#)

Things weren't going so well in France. Poorer people were often starving; aristocrats seemed to be doing well, and they seemed to own everything. So the people decided to band together around a meme: *Liberty, Equality and Brotherly Love*.

Sounds great. Sign me up, said millions of French people. They overthrew their leaders. What now?

First, we redistribute the wealth. Immediate problem solved. But then, other problems show up. Mainly that people when told they can do whatever they want, tend to do selfish things to increase their own power. The power structure fragmented from a hierarchy into a kind of anarchy.

Seeing how that would be dysfunctional, the revolutionaries including Robespierre began purging ideological enemies. First, they killed the rest of the aristocrats they could find. That made the crowd happy: we hate these people, they said, because they caused our problems.

But problems remained!

The revolutionaries kept the purges coming. Soon they were killing each other. Robespierre, nicknamed "The Incorruptible" for his strict adherence to the ideals of the revolution, ended up being a tyrant who slaughtered his fellow revolutionaries.

He did this for two reasons: first, the *public reason*, which was that they were enemies of the revolution. Second, the *private reason*, which is that they were growing too powerful and fragmenting government.

The revolutionaries had learned that government itself demanded a hierarchy of power, and over the next decades, they replicated the power structure of the aristocrats. A left-leaning movement had become de facto right-leaning, albeit after a bloodbath of many of France's most talented people.

From that point on, France was in a slow and steady decline from being one of the cultural and military capitals of the world to being a mostly irrelevant place. Military power gave one last gasp over the next century, and then pretty much faded, in the process helping start two disastrous world wars. Culture became fashion. And now who looks to France?

They created politics based on what they wanted as individuals, and did not pay attention to how the world around them works. For example, if you make a nation, it's going to need some kind of centralized power, or it fragments into competing factions.

It's easy to make the mistake they did. Were it not for the fortune of having wise historians and philosophers to read, I might have made the same mistake. These aristocrats/Wall Street/religious leaders are oppressing us — let's kill them all and start over. But then we become what we hated.

Here's a modern example:

But "Wetlands" is more than just a complaint against the sexual double standards of contemporary life. It points to an odd paradox: For all the hedonism of an apparently liberated culture in which women can drink and screw with the best of them (think "Sex and the City"), the language we use to describe this behavior and these unleashed desires is profoundly outdated or, more often, simply absent.

Roche creates a world — a "Wetlands" indeed — in which there are new words to describe the weirdness of the female body and the ambivalence of sexual encounters. It's a damp and claustrophobic universe, but one that reminds us of how far we have to go to overcome deep-seated embarrassments about basic biological facts.

"I wrote it so that it would be a bit horny at some points, because I wanted it to be a realistic, honest book about the body. But it also has to have all the taboos in that we think are disgusting. Human, liquid, disgusting stuff... There are things in the book that are my lifetime problems, like going to the toilet in public lavatories. As soon as someone would walk in, I would stop because I feel so embarrassed. It's all about being a woman and not being about to shit."

My mother tried to raise me in a very liberated way. I was allowed to have sex at a very early age. I was allowed to bring boys over to the house because she didn't want me fucking around in the woods. She's a very strong, political feminist, and she raised me in a very feminist way, teaching me that as a girl, I can do everything a boy can do, there's no problem.

But still, the sexual stuff ... she never managed to teach me that masturbation is a good thing. Although my mother was liberated, I still feel that if I have dirty knickers [underpants], I have to hide them from my husband.

"For me, it's the same. I keep thinking I have to stop eating this, and stop drinking beer. It's unhealthy thinking. If I'm being really honest, on the one hand I want women to be liberated, but on the other, I have terrible problems. I think I'm too fat, although I'm probably too thin. It's really difficult, for example, to live in a society like this with small tits.

I don't even believe my husband when he says he likes the way I look. He has to tell me 10 times a day and I still don't believe him. I think he wants to fuck a blond, big-titted lady. You run around and you have complexes about everything. It's so difficult to keep it out of your head...The problem with political ideas like feminism is that you are not allowed sometimes to say the truth.

In Germany we have lots of older, very famous feminists. And it is not allowed for me as a young feminist to say that women are masochistic. I am and all my female friends are. We stand in front of the mirror, we are naked, and we feel ugly as fuck. We see everything as wrong. We try and fight our body to become prettier and work on it. It's not at all free and self-confident."

[Salon](#)

Here's a more complex example. If we argue from the individual, of course we all want equality and total acceptance and immortality, if we can get it. We want to be able to do whatever we want whenever we want and everyone else needs to screw off. That's absolute power — like being dictators of our own lives. We would have total control.

Of course, that doesn't make sense because we're connected to the world in both visible and invisible ways. Visible: We need nutrition, cleansing, medicine and so on. Invisible: we need to plan for the future, including our mortality, and many of our neat ideas have unintended consequences as they interact with parts of reality we weren't considering when we thought of them.

For example, the female body, a "thing-in-itself" that should stand free in any context. Do we want it to poop, or not? Well, it's going to poop, so we want to accept that pooping. Do we want to enforce the thing-in-itself of the female body on the whole, or recognize the female body as dependent on its context, and so enforce the context on the female body?

The first sounds really good; the second may be more practical, because it includes all of the factors that influence the female body and not just the female body itself. (Modern people have an obsession of the thing-in-itself. They may have confused it for a pure expression of Platonic forms.)

When we look at imposing the whole on the object (thing in itself) and not vice-versa, we see the wisdom of an alternate approach: instead of trying to make everything the female body does a topic of conversation, we create a hierarchy — an order both vertical and horizontal — that separates functions into contexts. Maybe what happens in the bathroom or laundry hamper needs to be private in most cases, and discussed only among those who share the need to talk about it.

Taking this argument to extremes, we either construct a society with a video camera in each bathroom to force us to accept each other's bodily functions, or a society that confines bodily functions to a context: bathroom, medical and nutritional.

It's not as equal, but it does make for a better embrace of reality as a whole. After all, we don't want the tail wagging the dog; we don't want, from fear of bodily functions, to make every situation become partially focused on bodily functions.

This would be easier if it were not for the real human immaturity, which is playing gross status games. We can accept that [some are taller than others](#); we hate the fact that some are smarter. Because we can't work our way around inherent differences like taller or smarter, instead we invent a social channel in which we can be "more important" even if we're not taller or smarter. Enter the memeticians like authors, artists, politicians, marketers.

In the world of status, everything you do is compared to see how you rank — except those innate tendencies. So you can't just take a huge stinking dump and say, "Oh well, I'm a smart person who is good to her friends"; instead, you're going to be mocked for your dump, or judged on its measly size or stench compared to that of others. It can go either way: if we approve public female dumps, females will soon compete on girth and density and corn distribution. Count on it.

When we talk about embracing reality, this means that instead of thinking about the individual, we think in terms of structures and designs. What are the mechanisms used to achieve this result? What kind of infrastructure must be made? These questions are more direct than determining an individual demand, and then insisting others make it happen, using "equality" as our justification — but not our reason, which in our *private reality* is that we want more power.

The wrong way to achieve acceptance is to demand that reality accept all of the human form at all times. In the same way, the wrong way to achieve equality is to destroy hierarchy. Our greatest errors occur when we are unable to see the whole, and by focusing too intently on the thing-in-itself or ourselves, we enforce an unstable paradigm.

Enforcing that unstable paradigm is how political movements switch from one side to the other. What happens is simple: as they gain power, their *private reality* conflicts with their *public reality*, and to reconcile the two they must invent monsters to fight and in doing so, converge on the oldest human failing: a need to control through the self what is the property of the world at large.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [feminism](#) · [neurosis](#) · [reproduction](#)

The Crowd loves a revenge fantasy

Apr 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Let's assume for a moment that Google Street View is damaging, in case it is.

When villagers in the quiet, 'affluent' village of Broughton in Cambridgeshire spotted a Google Street View car creeping into sight, they leaped into action and formed a human chain until the Google car slunk away with tailpipe between its tyres.

The villagers complained Google had no right to take pictures of their homes, calling it an 'invasion of privacy' and an 'invitation for burglars to strike'.

But not only has the village now become the focus of national attention, it has raised the ire of Internet users, who are now campaigning for Street View enthusiasts from across the UK to descend on the village to snap their own perfectly legal photographs.

[The Daily Mail](#)

You didn't join us in our self-destructive behaviors. What do you think, you're better than us? That's not so: we believe in equality, which generally translates to spreading the bad around so no one has too much of the good. And you're affluent? Stuck up pricks think you're too good for what the rest of us will endure. We'll make you descend to our level. Here we come with our cameras, enmeshed in a revenge fantasy.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

There are no radical ideas

Apr 3rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Sometime in my early twenties I realized that “radical ideas” are marketing twists, not actually anything radical.

There is nothing new under the sun, and nothing all that surprising, unless of course you venture away from reality and then you can have unicorns and eudaemoniac imaginary friends. The universe itself is mind-blowing, but that mind-blowingness is subtle and nearly invisible if your outlook on life is anthrocentric, or rooted in the human perspective.

How can the vastness of the universe, the detail of micro-organisms, or the fineness of quantum physics be appreciated if you focus is social events among human beings? “That’s nice,” you say, and turn back to those things that are made tangible because other people reinforce them: money, popularity, political power.

When we talk about radical ideas, we’re talking about making something sound radical so it has more currency in that human social events sphere. The ideas are never radical; they’re either departures from reality, or someone spinning a normal idea to make it seem new, wacky and far-out. Weird sells.

Here’s an example of the oldest fallacy in the book:

The core of Jesus’ message was directed to the economically downtrodden, the poor farmers, laborers and others who had little power in their own lives. Jesus presented a radical social proposition that meant society could be reconfigured to allow for less inequity and more sharing.

[Discovery](#)

The [useful idiot](#) who’s talking above is a Biblical scholar who wants to bring us a radical message that is radical to no one who has thought critically for more than five minutes on the topic:

Jesus was a guy who said let’s side-step the order of things as they are, and use social pressure to make sure we the meek as a group are equal to our masters, whether they be Romans or simply our supervisors at Wal-mart.

Is this a radical idea?

No, it’s old as the hills. Think about it: in any town, a few people are really good at what they do, most people are in the middle, and then at the bottom there are the screwups — the lepers, whores, addicts, thieves, bastards, inbreds, outcasts, etc.

If you unite all those people, you’ve got political power.

So along comes some enterprising young hippie like Jesus. He realizes: if I pitch these idiots on Hope! and Change! in the form of equality, what they’ll think is that they get a share of the pie.

Up go the banners demanding equality. Those who do not agree face the guillotine or gulag.

Soon there’s a new King in town — that Jesus guy. Having made himself an audience, and united them against their masters, he has turned society upside down. Or has he? With the screwups in control, problems proliferate, but there’s no solution other than more equality.

In the meantime, Jesus fakes his own death, sets up a gated compound in the hills of France and lives off the proceeds of having had control of a corrupt, dying society.

Is it terrible to say that? I've observed there's two types of Christians: the gestalt Christians, who like the basic message of helping a community and caring for others even when convenient; and the illusionists, who want to talk about the afterlife and Jesus' love and how he has saved them from themselves, all while ignoring practical actions they could take.

(An interesting tidbit: Christians were the revolutionaries/liberals of their day, just like the American founding fathers were radical revolutionary liberals in their day. Liberalism, like all negative philosophies or philosophies based on removal of a pre-existing condition, can be simplified without losing its basic message. So liberals offered the same dogma Christians did — equality — but stripped away the religious requirements. Similar product, lower price... and that's why atheist, progressive liberalism has overtaken Christianity in the west.)

I submit that it's equally possible Jesus was just a gentle stoner who came up with one really important doctrine, which is the forgiving of others so we can all move on, but his words got twisted by revolutionaries who wanted to seize Israel from the Romans. I'm not even sure if these revolutionaries were Jews so much as they were robber barons.

Since that time, the best scholars of Europe have slowly been equalizing the old and new Testaments of the Bible, and finding out that a God of Wrath is only compatible with a forgiving hippie if we consider them both to be naturalistic phenomena. This is where the gestalt Christians come in: they believe that God is the organizing force of the world, and since the world has produced such beauty and greatness, God is always good.

In that light, it's part of God's plan to let the screwups die out while taking care of widows from among the nice people. God gave some light and hope; it's important they thrive. And the others? God has a plan for them too. It may involve death in damp places without offspring having been produced, which means fewer screwups in the future... which, like nature red in tooth and claw, is part of God just as much as the warm fuzzy feelings we get from sunbeams on winter mornings.

It's a complex world and people always want to dumb it down. "Be an Atheist" and "Just follow Jesus" are conflatable, at that level. Looking for God as part of our world and its order, and finding one's own actions compatible with that order, is more complex but because it is logical, a heck of a lot less neurotic than these "radicals" who just want to sidestep reality so they can profit.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [altruism](#) · [christianity](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [control](#) · [egalitarianism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Playing with statistics

Apr 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

When you're saying stuff to the press, you can make it simple and base it on a partial truth, because most people hear it and process it immediately, then forget about it. An interesting debunking:

The fact is, only 17 percent of guns found at Mexican crime scenes have been traced to the U.S.

What's true, an ATF spokeswoman told FOXNews.com, in a clarification of the statistic used by her own agency's assistant director, "is that over 90 percent of the traced firearms originate from the U.S."

But a large percentage of the guns recovered in Mexico do not get sent back to the U.S. for tracing, because it is obvious from their markings that they do not come from the U.S.

[Fox](#)

I include this here because this type of sleight of hand is very common. I will leave bickering about guns, crimes, drugs, Mexico, etc. to others but I think it's vital that people become critical of media and learn to recognize these types of journalistic fallacy.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Austin: liberal paradise

Apr 2nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This place tries so hard to be tolerant, it becomes the parasite:

Just nine people accounted for nearly 2,700 of the emergency room visits in the Austin area during the past six years at a cost of \$3 million to taxpayers and others, according to a report.

Eight of the nine patients have drug abuse problems, seven were diagnosed with mental health issues and three were homeless. Five are women whose average age is 40, and four are men whose average age is 50, the report said, the Austin American-Statesman reported Wednesday.

The average emergency room visit costs \$1,000. Hospitals and taxpayers paid the bill through government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, Kitchen said.

[AP](#)

Liberals are terrified of inequality because it means triage. Someone might be more important than you. And they don't like that, because when you've got no anchor in reality, you is all you've got. Liberals are a product of the modern condition and not its antidote.

In Austin, famous for roving bands of crusties who want to borrow a cigarette, have a sip of your beer, need spare change for bus fare, and take full advantage of any federal aid programs, this isn't unusual.

A place that's pompous with its pretense of tolerance and warm attracts parasites, including the insane. They will very comfortably use up every resource you have because hey, they're insane. They cannot think through the consequences of their actions. And as every Austin liberal will remind you with finger-wagging superiority complexes intact, they have rights, too!

Austin after all is the place where outside a concert a small cloud of hippies, crusties and hipsters were hanging out. Each time a new wave of people came down the street, they started begging. "Anything you got man, just to get into this concert and go home." When the waves passed, they whipped out their shiny new cellphones and were busy texting each other.

Like all things liberal, this is a fad. If like me you were drawn to liberalism by the idea of justice and doing what's inconvenient but right, beware: it's a trap. You're not going to do what's right. You're going to do what guarantees the individual the ability to secede from reality and use the weight of social censure to defend that right.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [austin](#) · [liberalism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Nationalism rising across Europe

Apr 1st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Extreme Politics covers the rise of new “free nationalism” in Europe and what it means:

Nationalists don't want to just change laws — they want an entirely different type of civilization. We haven't heard much from them since 1945, since nationalist groups have been the province of mostly violent losers with a few disaffected intellectuals, but now nationalism seems to be coming back.

Because it was marginalized, and because people who take on the world with losing “but correct” causes are idolized by those who did not adapt to the current social order, nationalist movements have been cross-associated with hate groups, with few nationalist movements escaping the epithets, violence, anti-Semitism and similar brouhaha within their ranks.

However, that is changing, as nationalist movements make alliances with Zionists and vice-versa and nationalist movements grow across Europe as they drop violent orthodoxy for a coherent vision of an organic society that is both cultured, green — and monocultural.

[Nationalism: ethnic identity is important](#)

Commentary from Penetrate blog pretty much says what you need to know about this movement in opposition to Globalism and Ecocide, even if it's not politically acceptable quite yet:

Nationalism is no longer a political calling, but a flavor. Other parties are going to start incorporating it soon.

It's also losing its marginalized status as people realize it's necessary for Israel and probably Europe to survive as distinct ethnic-cultural groups.

I think it's interesting, this globalism trap we're in. Globalism exists to bring liberty and equality and fraternity to us all. In order to do that, it must smash borders, culture, local laws, etc. so that we have a utilitarian world society. This empowers both freedom and consumerism, but it also requires that the individual have more power than the state but be able to use the surrounding society to escape direct confrontation with means of production. It's an unstable balance.

Nationalism is one solution. The Deep Ecologists hint at a localized kind of nationalism, as in “I am from the Black Forest area” not “I am from Germany,” where per *blood and soil* people would identify with their local community and see themselves as stewards of the land. I like this idea, as I like the deep ecology idea of restructuring society so we have higher values than commerce, individualism, self-pleasure and entertainment.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [deep ecology](#) · [nationalism](#)

Overpopulation shows humanism fails

Apr 1st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We've covered [overpopulation](#) and its role in ecocide, and in turn in [throwing us into tyranny](#), before on this blog.

It's worth also mentioning that [our dominant paradigm does not permit us to think of solutions](#) that involve limiting the rights of people like us, which is why [we are paralyzed on global warming](#) because we [feel no sense of efficacy in making decisions](#) when we are manipulated. Even more, it's worth pointing out that population growth [produces people who are less intelligent and healthy rather than more](#), guaranteeing a slow [civilization decline](#).

These are the problems of overpopulation: too many people, and by definition for any species that breeds out of control, those people are of low intelligence. It's nature's way of surviving a cataclysm: 1% will survive, so create as many as you can so that 1% is a high enough number. Yet with technology in our hands, that can be a fatal path.

And now today, someone makes an even stronger statement:

Nina Fedoroff told the BBC One Planet programme that humans had exceeded the Earth's "limits of sustainability".

Dr Fedoroff has been the science and technology advisor to the US secretary of state since 2007, initially working with Condoleezza Rice.

Under the new Obama administration, she now advises Hillary Clinton.

"We need to continue to decrease the growth rate of the global population; the planet can't support many more people," Dr Fedoroff said, stressing the need for humans to become much better at managing "wild lands", and in particular water supplies.

Pressed on whether she thought the world population was simply too high, Dr Fedoroff replied: "There are probably already too many people on the planet."

[BBC](#)

Among populations with above 100 IQ points as the average, population growth is already negative; these populations have stabilized and are declining. It's the [under-100s worldwide](#) that are booming, even when they exist [among populations of higher IQ](#). Remember, it's not where you were born that determines your IQ; it's who your ancestors were. IQ cannot be raised by education and is only marginally influenced by a first-world diet.

Our philosophy, [humanism](#), prohibits us from sacrificing any individual for the collective good. That's the conservative part of it. That induces individuals to form giant mobs, or [Crowds](#) that demand increasing rights and "equality," which translates in reality into the ability to tear down those above them and enforce equality.

It's not just socialism — our pretty scientific and academic terms mask an ugly part of our simian heritage, which is known simply by the term *envy*. We don't want a universal land of plenty; we want to destroy those who did better than us. It seems to me conservatives and liberals alike fall prey to this, as do members of any philosophy. It's only those who achieve a Zen-like ability to act for themselves yet with total selflessness who are immune, and those are rare.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [eugenics](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Apathy is immorality

Apr 1st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A writer in Poland contemplates littering, and sees within it the moral violation that it is.

I share this world with each and every one of you. If I don't care about the world I live in, indirectly I demonstrate my lack of care for you.

I know I take for granted the streets will be kept clean but it's really not the city government's responsibility. It's mine – and yours. It's up to me to care for the world I live in, to make sure, as far as I can, that I'm not polluting it and to educate my children to treat the whole world as their home.

[Quantum Learning](#)

What he hasn't branched to yet: people don't care, generally because they are unable to be aware of anything past the next two weeks. It's literally the limits of their intelligence. Think about it: the IQ average is 100. That means there's a lot of people under 115, which is where you start to be able to see into the coming months or years. Only people over 120 think about decades, and people over 125 seem concerned with centuries, even.

That means only about 10% of our population is even approximating giving a damn about litter and other sins of omission, apathy or carelessness. And by approximating, I mean "biologically able to consider the possibility." Many of those will not give a damn further because they're wracked with that weird kind of modern PTSD that afflicts people who've seen first-hand how dysfunctional this society is. That PTSD may hit our Polish writer friend if he looks too deeply into this abyss.

If you want to know why deep ecologists often emphasize strong leadership hierarchies, and limiting disposable products, this is why: the majority of our population, unless there's someone nearby forcing them not to, will simply throw it on the ground and walk away.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

The biological basis of race

Mar 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I know, I know... if you want to be one of the popular kids, you insist that everyone is equal, we all want the same things, and we all have inalienable rights and we're all OK.

If you're a realist, you know that people are different, have different abilities, and some are born bad and some are born good, and that all categories get fuzzy around the edges but still apply.

Then you run into [the modern dogma that race is a "social construct."](#) or has no basis in biology. As you remember from biology class, your genotype or genetic makeup determines your phenotype or the traits that show up in you. Obviously, then, consistent differences between people have some root in genetics.

But thanks to those who want to be the popular kids, that's not what you're hearing from the multibillion dollar media sources of your government and your mainstream media.

However, some information has sneaked through the cracks and so I'm compiling it here. The purpose of this post is not to affirm racism, superiority or inferiority, or any of that jazz; its only purpose is to point out that race does have a biological construct, and because all traits originate in genetic information, it's insane to insist any consistent difference in appearance, behavior or biological process has anything but a genetic basis.

Let's begin.

Recent research has produced a surprise, however. Population geneticists expected to find dramatic differences as they got a look at the full genomes — about 25,000 genes — of people of widely varying ethnic and geographic backgrounds. Specifically, they expected to find that many ethnic groups would have derived alleles that their members shared but that were uncommon or nonexistent in other groups. Each regional, ethnic group or latitude was thought to have a genomic "signature" — the record of its recent evolution through natural selection.

All of Earth's people, according to a new analysis of the genomes of 53 populations, fall into just three genetic groups. They are the products of the first and most important journey our species made — the walk out of Africa about 70,000 years ago by a small fraction of ancestral Homo sapiens.

One group is the African. It contains the descendants of the original humans who emerged in East Africa about 200,000 years ago. The second is the Eurasian, encompassing the natives of Europe, the Middle East and Southwest Asia (east to about Pakistan). The third is the East Asian, the inhabitants of Asia, Japan and Southeast Asia, and — thanks to the Bering Land Bridge and island-hopping in the South Pacific — of the Americas and Oceania as well.

[Washington Post](#)

The writer injects a certain amount of political correctness into the article, so I reversed the order of the three paragraphs above. The point is this: we can trace the history of evolution through genes, and it shows us three groups which have small but crucial differences caused by "genetic drift" — in this case, the traits kept by being successful in the different areas to which these new populations adapted.

Geneticists are uncovering another level of human ethnic diversity: It may not be which genes we have so much as the way they behave that accounts for our differences. Using the International HapMap Project, which catalogs human gene variants across populations, University of Pennsylvania researchers Vivian Cheung and Richard Spielman first collected the gene sequences of a particular white blood cell from 82 Asians and 60 people of European descent.

Then, using microarray chips, they measured expression levels of those genes.

What they found was surprising: Although which genes were present didn't differ dramatically between the Asians and the Europeans, their expression did. And that expression was governed by single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs)—one-letter changes in DNA—in nearby regulator regions that determine how much of a gene's product is made. Overall, 25 percent of the genes seem to show different levels of expression in Asians versus Europeans, and SNPs in regulatory regions probably account for much of the difference. In the case of one gene, researchers found that Caucasians expressed it at 22 times the strength that Asians did.

[Discover](#)

I quote this article first for two reasons: first, it shows the clear differences in genetics; second, it shows that we're not looking for a race gene, or identical genetics; we're looking for genetic coding that expresses what goes into the organism.

As the article points out, the differences weren't dramatic — but they occurred in crucial areas, just like the difference between the computer code for a word processor and a database program is mostly the same, but has important details changed. It's like saying to person A "Take ten of these red pills, and five of the green, after each meal" and to person B "Take five of these red pills, and ten of the green, before each meal" — small but [vitally different](#) instructions.

And lest you missed it:

25 percent of the genes seem to show different levels of expression in Asians versus Europeans

One quarter of the instructions you give to person A and person B are substantially different, although both involve red pills and green pills.

Next up, a neat cascade by Steve Hsu, who fired off one of the more recent salvos in this fight by pointing out the obvious:

We were told long ago that there is no scientific basis for race. Yet, it would be surprising if the distribution of individual genes were the same in all ethnic groups, with their different evolutionary histories of the last tens of thousands of years. In fact, mtDNA tests can readily identify which of a few dozen matrilineal lines any modern human belongs to. Each of these lines can in turn be traced to certain geographical regions to which early humans migrated from Africa, and correspond reasonably well to conventional racial categories.

Researchers last week described a new drug, called BiDil, that sharply reduces death from heart disease among African-Americans. ...But not everyone is cheering unreservedly. Many people, including some African-Americans, have long been uneasy with the concept of race-based medicine, in part from fear that it may legitimize less benign ideas about race.

...The emergence of BiDil, described last week in The New England Journal of Medicine, is a sharp reality test for an academic debate about race and medicine that has long occupied the pages of medical journals. Is there a biological basis for race? If there is not, as many social scientists and others argue, how can a drug like BiDil work so well in one race?

...This month, in a special issue on race published by the journal Nature Genetics, several geneticists wrote that people can generally be assigned to their continent of origin on the basis of their DNA, and that these broad geographical regions correspond to self-identified racial categories, such as African, East Asian, European and Native American. Race, in other words, does have a genetic basis, in their view.

...Some African-Americans fear that if doctors start to make diagnoses by race, then some in the public may see that as a basis for imputing behavioral traits as well. "If you think in terms of taxonomies of race, you will make the dangerous conclusion that race will explain violence," says Dr. Troy Duster, a sociologist at New York University.

[NYT](#)

[InfoProc](#)

I like how he excerpts the vital parts of this article. But the point is clear, and this article was the first mention of it in the public eye: the races are biologically different, e.g. in homeostatic process, not just [bone density](#), [skull/facial shape](#), skin color, [hair type](#), etc.

But now we're looking at it as biology as well:

But several other geneticists writing in the same issue of the journal say the human family tree is divided into branches that correspond to the ancestral populations of each major continent, and that these branches coincide with the popular notion of race. "The emerging picture is that populations do, generally, cluster by broad geographic regions that correspond with common racial classification (Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, Americas)," say Dr. Sarah A. Tishkoff of the University of Maryland and Dr. Kenneth K. Kidd of Yale.

Although there is not much genetic variation between the populations of each continent, write Dr. Joanna L. Mountain and Dr. Neil Risch of Stanford University, new data "coincide closely with groups defined by self-identified race or continental ancestry." The data is based on DNA elements outside the genes with no bearing on the body's physical form.

The pattern reflects the fact that once humans dispersed from Africa, the populations on each continent started breeding in isolation and developing their own set of genetic variations.

[NYT](#)

"Not much" is somewhat arbitrary. Just as one percent of a computer program being changed could cause it to act radically differently, even a tenth of a percent of our DNA being different could create different results. Even more, DNA is not linear, so a single difference in a key place makes it operate differently. So when scientists bandy about terms like us being 90% similar to chimpanzees, or 99% similar between ethnic groups, keep in mind that those figures understate how radically different the results can be.

Forensic experts are increasingly relying on DNA as "a genetic eyewitness," says Jack Ballantyne, associate director for research at the National Center for Forensic Science at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, who is studying whether a DNA sample can reveal a person's age.

The push to predict physical features from genetic material is known as DNA forensic phenotyping, and it's already helped crack some difficult investigations. In 2004, police caught a Louisiana serial killer who eyewitnesses had suggested was white, but whose crime-scene DNA suggested — correctly — that he was black. Britain's forensic service uses a similar "ethnic inference" test to trace murderers and rapists.

In 2007, a DNA test based on 34 genetic biomarkers developed by Christopher Phillips, a forensic geneticist at the University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, indicated that one of the suspects associated with the Madrid bombings was of North African origin. His body was mostly destroyed in an explosion. Using other clues, police later confirmed he had been an Algerian, thereby validating the test results.

Worried about the ethical and social challenges, Germany doesn't permit the forensic use of DNA to infer ethnicity or physical traits. Nor do a handful of U.S. states, including Indiana, Wyoming

and Rhode Island. The U.K. and the Netherlands allow it.

DNA-based racial profiling “has to be used carefully,” especially in a diverse country like America, says Bert-Jaap Koops of Tilburg University in the Netherlands, who has studied the regulatory picture in different countries. “Some people could make connections between race, crime and genetic disposition” and thereby encourage stigmatization.

[WSJ](#)

A small amount makes a big difference. And by reading that genetic history, we can tell where something evolved and, increasingly, what its traits are.

Biologists have constructed a genetic map of Europe showing the degree of relatedness between its various populations.

All the populations are quite similar, but the differences are sufficient that it should be possible to devise a forensic test to tell which country in Europe an individual probably comes from, said Manfred Kayser, a geneticist at the Erasmus University Medical Center in the Netherlands.

The genetic map of Europe bears a clear structural similarity to the geographic map. The major genetic differences are between populations of the north and south (the vertical axis of the map shows north-south differences, the horizontal axis those of east-west). The area assigned to each population reflects the amount of genetic variation in it.

[NYT](#)

Not only can we tell that races have different homeostatic processes, but [we can tell them apart](#) — and ethnicities too, including [ancient ones](#).

That’s a big blow to the idea that there’s no ethnic component to race. Starting about 1968, it became taboo to note differences between races; if you did, you got called a bumpkin, a redneck, an uneducated hick, and people assumed you did it because you had no money and hated society. This kind of groupthink is never healthy, and it’s [thoroughly opposed to everything that science is supposed to stand for](#), but if you’re a scientist looking for grant money and to further his own career, you’re not going to take on an unpopular issue.

During the 1990s, this hysteria peaked and we had common statements like: there’s more difference between individuals of the same race than between individuals of different races, we’re 99% similar, race is a social construct, and so on.

2. Race has no genetic basis. Not one characteristic, trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.

5. Most variation is within, not between, “races.” Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.

9. Race isn’t biological, but racism is still real. Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to white people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.

[PBS](#)

Note how they have to fall into bad science: **Not one characteristic, trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.** But race has always been assumed to be a collection of traits; it’s only anti-racists that refer to it as a difference in

skin color.

Gradually, this view has fallen into panicked disrepair as science has assaulted it, starting with *The Bell Curve* and then *The Blank Slate*, showing that for every ability we have, there's a gene, and that collections of genes make races and ethnicities, even class distinctions. This upsets people who want equality and an end to all strife, because lack of equality means strife and possibly that someone will interrupt them doing whatever they want to do.

Here's a great assault on these scientific fallacies:

Once one accepts that genetic information clusters people together according to geography and that these clusters sometimes correspond to race, the next question is, do these genetic differences add up to phenotypic differences? The answer to this question is slowly emerging, and in the shadows I see the outline of a "YES".

All of the studies I will cite are based on the HapMap, a resource with genetic data as well as cell lines for individuals from four populations— one of Western European ancestry, an Nigerian population, a Chinese population, and a Japanese population. Does the Nigerian population represent all populations in the African cluster, or the European population represent all the populations in the Eurasian cluster? Of course not, but analyzing them certainly gives an insight as to what makes one population different from any other.

First, the genetic data from the different populations can be analyzed to search for areas of the genome that have been under recent selection— i.e. that have recently become beneficial for Nigerians, or Chinese, or whichever group. That analysis was done by two groups (both papers are open access), though I will discuss the second one. What they found was that each of the populations (they group the Chinese and Japanese together into a single population) has been under, and probably continues to be under, natural selection. It would be theoretically possible (if remarkable) to find that all humans are undergoing the same selective pressures and responding identically to them, but that is not the case. I've posted on the right a Venn diagram from the paper showing that most of the loci identified as under selection are detected in only one of the three groups, indicating that selection is causing people in different parts of the globe to become more distinct. The precise effects of the genetic variation between populations is unclear, but (as it's under selection) it's certainly phenotypically relevant. And lest you think the genes under selection are related only to "boring" physiological traits, note that one of the papers found that a number of genes involved in "neuronal function" have been under selection.

Even more recently, another group analyzed gene expression in both the Asian HapMap samples and the European HapMap samples and found that around 25% of the genes in the two were differentially expressed, and that this differential expression is due to genetic differences in many cases. The road from genotype to phenotype goes through gene expression, so this is a major step in connecting genetic variation to phenotypic variation.

So it's clear that populations differ genetically and that these differences are relevant phenotypically and informative about race. So, do genetic differences explain racial differences in any given phenotype? I hope that for phenotypes like eye color and skin color people accept the answer as obviously yes; these sorts of things have been convincingly demonstrated. For other phenotypes like IQ or personality, if you're inclined to react negatively, I say wait a few years before you get too confident; the study of human genetic variation is in its infancy, and once it hits adolescence it's going to start becoming a real pain in the ass.

[GNXP](#)

As people are learning, the [fallacy that people are more different within ethnic groups than between ethnic groups](#) ([Lewontin's fallacy](#)) makes no sense biologically, but it made a good sound bite.

If differences are considered to exist when individuals can be accurately classified according

using a single randomly chosen trait, then Lewontin's results imply that human races are not distinct in this sense.

[Wikipedia](#)

We're looking for a single trait again? Yet people have never claimed race is determined by a single trait, but by multiple traits:

In response to questionable interpretations of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and to help ensure the evolutionary significance of populations deemed 'subspecies,' a set of criteria was outlined in the early 1990s by John C. Avise, R. Martin Ball, Jr.[10], Stephen J. O'Brien and Ernst Mayr [11] which is as follows: "members of a subspecies would share a unique, geographic locale, a set of phylogenetically concordant phenotypic characters, and a unique natural history relative to other subdivisions of the species. Although subspecies are not reproductively isolated, they will normally be allopatric and exhibit recognizable phylogenetic partitioning."

[The Race FAQ](#)

That's a scientific definition of race. People who argue against race generally make up a definition they think they can beat, and then disprove it. That trick sort of works on undergraduate papers but its value disappears when there's real-world consequences on the line.

Here's a good definition as well:

That is, we think that what most people call "races" are actually independently evolved sub-populations, but that human races exist in the same sense as ecotypes exist among other animals and plants.

An ecotype is a locally adapted population (say, characterized by an "alpine" phenotype for a plant, or a "high light intensity" phenotype for a human), which is not genetically much different from other populations of the same species, except for genes specifically influencing whatever traits are adaptive in that environment (say, short and branched stalks in alpine plants, to protect against strong wind; or dark skin in humans living near the Equator, to protect from high light intensity).

[Scientific Blogging](#)

Jonathan Haidt points out that these small differences, which are tiny compared to the amount of code required to create a body and brain, could influence not just physical traits and mental traits, but also that subset of mental traits known as moral traits:

The most offensive idea in all of science for the last 40 years is the possibility that behavioral differences between racial and ethnic groups have some genetic basis. Knowing nothing but the long-term offensiveness of this idea, a betting person would have to predict that as we decode the genomes of people around the world, we're going to find deeper differences than most scientists now expect. Expectations, after all, are not based purely on current evidence; they are biased, even if only slightly, by the gut feelings of the researchers, and those gut feelings include disgust toward racism..

But the writing is on the wall. Russian scientists showed in the 1990s that a strong selection pressure (picking out and breeding only the tamest fox pups in each generation) created what was — in behavior as well as body — essentially a new species in just 30 generations. That would correspond to about 750 years for humans. Humans may never have experienced such a strong selection pressure for such a long period, but they surely experienced many weaker selection pressures that lasted far longer, and for which some heritable personality traits were more adaptive than others. It stands to reason that local populations (not continent-wide "races") adapted to local circumstances by a process known as "co-evolution" in which genes

and cultural elements change over time and mutually influence each other. The best documented example of this process is the co-evolution of genetic mutations that maintain the ability to fully digest lactose in adulthood with the cultural innovation of keeping cattle and drinking their milk.

Skin color has no moral significance, but traits that led to Darwinian success in one of the many new niches and occupations of Holocene life — traits such as collectivism, clannishness, aggressiveness, docility, or the ability to delay gratification — are often seen as virtues or vices. Virtues are acquired slowly, by practice within a cultural context, but the discovery that there might be ethnically-linked genetic variations in the ease with which people can acquire specific virtues is — and this is my prediction — going to be a “game changing” scientific event.

I believe that the “Bell Curve” wars of the 1990s, over race differences in intelligence, will seem genteel and short-lived compared to the coming arguments over ethnic differences in moralized traits. I predict that this “war” will break out between 2012 and 2017.

[Edge](#)

Others can provide more on the IQ-race differences:

What I've found is that in brain size, intelligence, temperament, sexual behavior, fertility, growth rate, life span, crime, and family stability, Orientals, as a group, consistently fall at one end of the spectrum, Blacks fall at the other end, and Whites fall in between. On average, Orientals are slower to mature, less fertile, and less sexually active, and have larger brains and higher IQ scores. Blacks are at the opposite end in each of these areas. Whites fall in the middle, often close to Orientals (see Chart 1)

Of course, these three-way racial differences are averages. Individuals are individuals. However, I've found that this three-way pattern is consistently true over time and across nations. That the same three-way racial pattern occurs repeatedly on some 60 different biological and behavioral variables is profoundly interesting and shows that race is more than “just skin deep.” The international data come from the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and Interpol. Recently, I even traveled to South Africa to collect new IQ data.

[Charles Darwin Research](#)

This fits in with what we know about humans as a whole, which is that traits like [intelligence are heritable](#) along with physical constraints, with a small amount of influence for other factors of gene expression and factors of nurture, such as better diet and exercise.

Even more, it fits in with a view of the world that many find disturbing, which is one that views the [world by IQ](#):

Rank	Country	IQ estimate	Rank	Country	IQ estimate	Rank	Country	IQ estimate
1	 Hong Kong	107	28	 Russia	96	55	 Fiji	84
2	 South Korea	106	29	 Slovakia	96	56	 Iran	84
3	 Japan	105	30	 Uruguay	96	57	 Marshall Islands	84
4	 Taiwan	104	31	 Portugal	95	58	 Puerto Rico	84
5	 Singapore	103	32	 Slovenia	95	59	 Egypt	83
6	 Austria	102	33	 Israel	94	60	 India	81
7	 Germany	102	34	 Romania	94	61	 Ecuador	80
8	 Italy	102	35	 Bulgaria	93	62	 Guatemala	79
9	 Netherlands	102	36	 Ireland	93	63	 Barbados	78
10	 Sweden	101	37	 Greece	92	64	 Nepal	78
11	 Switzerland	101	38	 Malaysia	92	65	 Qatar	78
12	 Belgium	100	39	 Thailand	91	66	 Zambia	77
13	 China	100	40	 Croatia	90	67	 Congo	73
14	 New Zealand	100	41	 Peru	90	68	 Uganda	73
15	 United Kingdom	100	42	 Turkey	90	69	 Jamaica	72
16	 Hungary	99	43	 Colombia	89	70	 Kenya	72
17	 Poland	99	44	 Indonesia	89	71	 South Africa	72
18	 Australia	98	45	 Suriname	89	72	 Sudan	72
19	 Denmark	98	46	 Brazil	87	73	 Tanzania	72
20	 France	98	47	 Iraq	87	74	 Ghana	71
21	 Mongolia	98	48	 Mexico	87	75	 Nigeria	67
22	 United States	98	49	 Samoa	87	76	 Guinea	66
23	 Canada	97	50	 Tonga	87	77	 Zimbabwe	66
24	 Czech Republic	97	51	 Lebanon	86	78	 Democratic Republic of the Congo	65
25	 Finland	97	52	 Philippines	86	79	 Sierra Leone	64
26	 Spain	97	53	 Cuba	85	80	 Ethiopia	63
27	 Argentina	96	54	 Morocco	85	81	 Equatorial Guinea	59

This roughly mirrors the pattern of evolution, and the racial makeup of different nations. Pretty hard to argue with there.

Others get more into the IQ debate — I start to shut off at this point, although I'm a big believer in IQ:

A 60-page review of the scientific evidence, some based on state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of brain size, has concluded that race differences in average IQ are largely genetic.

The lead article in the June 2005 issue of *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, a journal of the American Psychological Association, examined 10 categories of research evidence from around the world to contrast "a hereditarian model (50% genetic-50% cultural) and a culture-only model (0% genetic-100% cultural)."

The paper, "Thirty Years of Research on Race Differences in Cognitive Ability," by J. Philippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario and Arthur R. Jensen of the University of California at Berkeley, appeared with a positive commentary by Linda Gottfredson of the University of Delaware, three critical ones (by Robert Sternberg of Yale University, Richard Nisbett of the University of Michigan, and Lisa Suzuki & Joshua Aronson of New York University), and the authors' reply.

"Neither the existence nor the size of race differences in IQ are a matter of dispute, only their cause," write the authors. The Black-White difference has been found consistently from the time of the massive World War I Army testing of 90 years ago to a massive study of over 6 million corporate, military, and higher-education test-takers in 2001.

"Race differences show up by 3 years of age, even after matching on maternal education and other variables," said Rushton. "Therefore they cannot be due to poor education since this has not yet begun to exert an effect."

[Medical News](#)

While all this seems a bit much, all of it underscores the vital truth: race is genetic, just like abilities are genetic; races and ethnicities are defined by clusters of inherited abilities relevant to the specific conditions under which that group developed. While these are a small number of our overall genetic makeup, most of the makeup we have in common is to establish the very basics of our bodies and minds, and it's the tweaks that give us special abilities beyond the utter average. That makes knowing that race is genetic important; there's also another reason why we should care — it's ignorant to deny science, and yet people are trying to censor science in this regard.

The Soviet Union lost a generation of genetics research to the politicization of science when Trofim Lysenko, director of biology under Joseph Stalin, parlayed his rejection of Mendelian genetics into a powerful political scientific movement. By the late 1920s, Lysenko had denounced academics embracing Mendelian genetics, which some said undermined tenets of Soviet society. His efforts to extinguish 'harmful' scientific ideas ruined opponents' careers and delayed scientific progress.

Yet the spectre of Lysenkoism lurks in current scientific discourse on gender, race and intelligence. Claims that sex- or race-based IQ gaps are partly genetic can offend entire groups, who feel that such work feeds hatred and discrimination. Pressure from professional organizations and university administrators can result in boycotting such research, and even in ending scientific careers.

Nobel prizewinner William Shockley became a subject of controversy in the 1970s, after his work turned to racial differences in intelligence. In recent decades, the writings, statements and teachings of Arthur Jensen, Michael Levin and John Philippe Rushton, also on racial differences in intelligence, have met variously with acclaim, outcries and demands for job termination. So have writings of Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray on the differential distribution of IQ by race. And Frank Ellis, a lecturer at the University of Leeds, UK, took early retirement in the face of an ethical storm that developed after he suggested in a student newspaper that intelligence levels were related to ethnicity. The list goes on. Many have been dissuaded from even looking at the research topic for fear of condemnation.

The outcries against those who speak of racial and gender gaps in IQ have become deafening, at times resembling Lysenkoism in language if not in deed.

[Nature](#)

We, the people, will empower others to alter our reality if we demand the right to alter reality through censorship and boycott of the topics that scare us.

I don't believe in racism, which seems to me to be a preference for putting others down because of their race. However, it's not clear to me how recognizing racial differences is inherently racist, and like the writers above, I am appalled at the idea of censoring science for political pretense.

Right now most of the divide is political. [Leftists prefer multiculturalism because it guarantees them power](#), while nativist movements oppose both raw capitalism and socialism, seeing both as components of the globalism that replaces culture with rules and commerce.

If we are to ever face the truth of this issue, we must look past politics to see reality, and that states with recognizing that race is a biological reality.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Humanists versus naturalists

Mar 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Any person who has spent any time trying to get things done knows that the biggest enemy of achievement is the individual.

People space out, procrastinate, indulge in illusions, screw up, fall asleep, drop the ball, etc. The root of most of these problems is that they get lost in their own minds and forget that reality goes on without them.

If you've gone through this experience, you think humans should probably get a good reaming by reality because they so arrogantly, stupidly, and blindly ignore reality in favor of short-term social and monetary rewards. That's the core of the human evil.

Now, there are these people called humanists who want us to be a law unto ourselves, and to put human concerns before concerns of the whole (humans + world around them, and not just in the present tense either):

The disagreement about values may be described in an over-simplified way as a disagreement between naturalists and humanists. Naturalists believe that nature knows best. For them the highest value is to respect the natural order of things. Any gross human disruption of the natural environment is evil. Excessive burning of fossil fuels is evil. Changing nature's desert, either the Sahara desert or the ocean desert, into a managed ecosystem where giraffes or tunafish may flourish, is likewise evil. Nature knows best, and anything we do to improve upon Nature will only bring trouble.

The humanist ethic begins with the belief that humans are an essential part of nature. Through human minds the biosphere has acquired the capacity to steer its own evolution, and now we are in charge. Humans have the right and the duty to reconstruct nature so that humans and biosphere can both survive and prosper. For humanists, the highest value is harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The greatest evils are poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, disease and hunger, all the conditions that deprive people of opportunities and limit their freedoms. The humanist ethic accepts an increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as a small price to pay, if world-wide industrial development can alleviate the miseries of the poorer half of humanity. The humanist ethic accepts our responsibility to guide the evolution of the planet.

[NYT](#)

I don't side with the humanists because that's like siding with solipsists. They ignore reality around them in favor of what they'd like to think.

For this reason, I'm more on the side of the naturalists, but I find human beings claiming to know what nature wants are usually full of shit.

Instead, I advocate design science: we pay attention to how reality works and fit into it. That means not destroying our environment, or ourselves.

It's that simple.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why the courts ignore rape

Mar 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Check out the anatomy of a disaster in formation:

The jury heard she drunk up to six bottles of wine before the pair had sex in her flat in Canterbury, Kent, in February last year.

The woman, who described herself in court as a 'recreational binge drinker', said she found Mr Bacon lying in her bed one morning with no memory of what had happened.

She immediately accused the university student – who was her friend's housemate – of taking advantage of her, shouting that the law had been changed because of 'f***** like you'.

In her interview, the woman said she would never have consented to sex with Mr Bacon because he was 'not her type', and she did not feel the need to 'chase after a 20-something man'.

[The Daily Mail](#)

I am an unpopular realist; I say things that upset people because they know they're true.

You drank six bottles of wine, woke up after sex had happened, and want us to assume the sex was not consensual because of your normal habits?

Lady, you didn't exist at the time of intercourse. Your brain was obliterated by alcohol. You may or may not have made a choice, but no one can prove either way.

You're the one who made yourself a victim here.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why Libertarianism fails

Mar 30th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

From an email response:

I don't think liberty is a particularly desirable goal, because liberty is a negative state ("freedom from x,y,z") not a positive, creative, abstract goal. I think that's the critique most are avoiding; American conservatives love liberty because they intend it to mean, libertarian-style, freedom from parasites; in actuality, it's a poor argument since liberty will soon be extended to those parasites and infrastructure/socialized cost will doom them.

The first step in learning logical argument is to separate what sounds good from what makes the structural changes you need.

Many things sound good. Hell, Communism sounds best, if you ask me: everyone has what they need, and no class war. Heck, Consumerism sounds just as good. Buy whatever you want, be happy, be obligated to nothing but yourself. A philosopher might say that if you look 300 steps down the line, they're the same thing.

But then you have to look at the secondary impacts and consequences of your action, and its impacts 299 other steps down the line. When you do x today, what will happen when others respond to it? How will others re-interpret it in simpler ways, as they do with any philosophy?

Prozak's law of decay: any ideology will be measured by history not by its most articulate and complex statement, but by the simplified form of it passed from one person to another in conversation.

There are lots of things that sound good, until you realize that they don't address the actual problem. Why don't people address the actual problem? Because that requires real re-ordering, and we don't trust each other. We know irrational people will cause trouble, and that there are liars who will claim to do the right thing and then rip us off. But that's a secondary reason. The real reason is that it rocks the boat, and that might disrupt what we have already, especially those small greedy pleasures that make our inner monkey glow.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Using green as an excuse to create the NWO

Mar 29th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

There's a pattern in human affairs:

The cruelest manipulators hold out the prettiest symbols and visions, promising those if you just put them into power.

Like dogs rushing toward offal, the crowd eats it up and surges forward, then finds themselves in chains. "How did that happen? They didn't say this was going to happen!" they say, and then happily go about their miserable lives because they never expected change anyway, nor would welcome it because it would challenge them.

A philosopher might say, "Verily, the appearance of things and their social symbols do not constitute a thing-in-itself, but instead the token of another mind's processing of appearance." But no one can understand that complexity anymore.

So it will happen again. Here's one candidate. While I will always encourage green thinking and environmentalism of the oldest sort, Conservationism, I am suspicious of the motivations of the [Crowd](#) that has taken over the left, and suspect they will wreck the environment while using it as a symbol of their own righteousness and need for Power and Control.

A United Nations document on "climate change" that will be distributed to a major environmental conclave next week envisions a huge reordering of the world economy, likely involving trillions of dollars in wealth transfer, millions of job losses and gains, new taxes, industrial relocations, new tariffs and subsidies, and complicated payments for greenhouse gas abatement schemes and carbon taxes — all under the supervision of the world body.

Those and other results are blandly discussed in a discretely worded United Nations "information note" on potential consequences of the measures that industrialized countries will likely have to take to implement the Copenhagen Accord, the successor to the Kyoto Treaty, after it is negotiated and signed by December 2009. The Obama administration has said it supports the treaty process if, in the words of a U.S. State Department spokesman, it can come up with an "effective framework" for dealing with global warming.

[FOX](#)

I'm not blown away by our news media. They cheer one side or the other, but serve the same lobbyists and oligarchs. However, this is interesting enough to report for discussion.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Legalize it

Mar 29th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A brief thought on legal drugs:

When I was a teenager, I thought drugs should be legalized and sold at the same prices. Why not just put that money toward government costs?

I thought I was really smart for telling people, "You know, people are going to take drugs anyway, and making them illegal just makes them more attractive, so legalize and < poof > the problem goes magically away!"

As I saw more of the world, I started to see how this scheme would become a scam like anything else. I then thought it would be best to legalize, nationalize and sell drugs at cost with no age restrictions. Not only enhance "freedom," but let natural selection reign.

The more I see of life — not going to different places, but getting better at observing what's been in front of me all this time — the more I think we need to segregate by type of lifestyle desired.

Some communities will want conservative living. This means you roughly follow European-style "Christian" morals: truthfulness, simple pleasures, hard work, cleanliness, monogamy/chastity, honor, collectivism, helping out those who have fallen prey of chance, and so on. This doesn't include the liberal fantasy of finding the most screwed up people out there to try to "help" so you can prove to your friends what a good egalitarian altruist you are; it just means helping those in the community who have fallen into hard times... helping them out of those hard times.

For these people, legal drugs would be a big mistake and a bad idea. So, no legal drugs in those communities. If they're smart they'll ban alcohol, cigarettes and junk/fast food as well. Why not? They have at this point taken a stand to their values and these things are outside the scope.

I no longer believe problems go magically away through legislation. I expect this community would have drug problems, but it would have a punishment that's actually effective: exile.

Yep, you don't go to jail for doing drugs; you don't get raped by bubbas and vatos and others in the joint; you don't get called Satan. You just get told that your values system doesn't match and you'll be happier elsewhere. Gentle culling.

On the other hand, other communities would be liberal, and in those, having legal drugs would be a sacrament. They could pick how they'd want to implement it. This means that no one ever goes to jail or faces any penalty for using drugs. They would be drug free zones.

Twenty years down the road, we could look at each type of community and see which is the place we'd want to live in.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Chinese practicality

Mar 29th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

In the West, we get sticky about anything that involves death or inequality. In Asia, where overpopulation and brutality have been present for far longer, this is not an issue:

A corrupt local planning official with a taste for the high life, Yong solicited money from businessmen eager to expand in China's economic boom.

But Yong, a portly, bespectacled figure, was caught by the Chinese authorities during a purge on corrupt local officials last year.

But there will be nothing ordinary about Yong's death by lethal injection. Unless he wins an appeal, he will draw his final breath strapped inside a vehicle that has been specially developed to make executions more cost-effective and efficient.

Inside each 'death van' there is a dedicated team of doctors to 'harvest' the organs of the deceased. The injections leave the body intact and in pristine condition for such lucrative work.

After checking that the victim is dead, the medical team first remove the eyes. Then, wearing surgical gowns and masks, they remove the kidney, liver, pancreas and lungs.

Little goes to waste, though the heart cannot be used, having been poisoned by the drugs.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Western readers are getting ready to masturbate all over themselves with illusions that they are "more civilized" than those rodenty Chinese who kill and harvest just about anything, including each other.

But thinking practically, we're awash in scumbags and idiots, why not slaughter them and harvest their organs? We have more violent criminals and corrupt officials than good ones here. Their organs could go to people suffering medical maladies, and their removal would be "green" in that fewer resources would be taken up, especially by people with no intent of contribution to society at large.

Go China!

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Bad science on the march

Mar 29th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Scientists should be forced through philosophy classes so that they understand logical argument beyond a conflation of correlation and causation, such as polycausal argument:

The history of western civilization aside, humans are naturally polygamous. Polyandry (a marriage of one woman to many men) is very rare, but polygyny (the marriage of one man to many women) is widely practiced in human societies, even though Judeo-Christian traditions hold that monogamy is the only natural form of marriage. We know that humans have been polygynous throughout most of history because men are taller than women.

Among primate and nonprimate species, the degree of polygyny highly correlates with the degree to which males of a species are larger than females. The more polygynous the species, the greater the size disparity between the sexes. Typically, human males are 10 percent taller and 20 percent heavier than females. This suggests that, throughout history, humans have been mildly polygynous.

Relative to monogamy, polygyny creates greater fitness variance (the distance between the "winners" and the "losers" in the reproductive game) among males than among females because it allows a few males to monopolize all the females in the group. The greater fitness variance among males creates greater pressure for men to compete with each other for mates. Only big and tall males can win mating opportunities. Among pair-bonding species like humans, in which males and females stay together to raise their children, females also prefer to mate with big and tall males because they can provide better physical protection against predators and other males.

In societies where rich men are much richer than poor men, women (and their children) are better off sharing the few wealthy men; one-half, one-quarter, or even one-tenth of a wealthy man is still better than an entire poor man. As George Bernard Shaw puts it, "The maternal instinct leads a woman to prefer a tenth share in a first-rate man to the exclusive possession of a third-rate one." Despite the fact that humans are naturally polygynous, most industrial societies are monogamous because men tend to be more or less equal in their resources compared with their ancestors in medieval times. (Inequality tends to increase as society advances in complexity from hunter-gatherer to advanced agrarian societies. Industrialization tends to decrease the level of inequality.)

[Psychology Today](#)

This giant pile of stupidity comes to us, we imagine, from someone who wishes he or she had more sex.

Let's look at the bad logic, step by step:

The history of western civilization aside, humans are naturally polygamous.

Western Civilization was created by a different subspecies with different genetics than other groups. You need to study them separately.

Among primate and nonprimate species, the degree of polygyny highly correlates with the degree to which males of a species are larger than females. The more polygynous the species, the greater the size disparity between the sexes. Typically, human males are 10 percent taller and 20 percent heavier than females. This suggests that, throughout history, humans have been mildly polygynous.

There are multiple factors that influence height. One could be the degree of testosterone present in the womb; it doesn't make sense to assign a result to an arbitrary cause like this. You need more intervening steps and greater knowledge of how height is coded and developed before you can make this sweeping statement.

Relative to monogamy, polygyny creates greater fitness variance (the distance between the "winners" and the "losers" in the reproductive game) among males than among females because it allows a few males to monopolize all the females in the group.

What about the fitness of the women? How does a society develop so that there are more fit women than men? Answer: it doesn't, so you have one man impregnating many clueless women, producing half-clueless offspring.

In societies where rich men are much richer than poor men, women (and their children) are better off sharing the few wealthy men; one-half, one-quarter, or even one-tenth of a wealthy man is still better than an entire poor man.

No, they're not, because the real question is how the children will be raised. In the view of science, we're all rodents who want to fire and forget with our breeding; in reality, women of IQs above 100 tend to plan for the future as best they can. Being one wife of a rich man makes sense only if he's a really rich man, but at that point, the child does not have much of an active father figure; a nuclear family makes more sense for the development of the child's psychology.

And finally, the piece de resistance of BS argumentation:

Despite the fact that humans are naturally polygynous, most industrial societies are monogamous because men tend to be more or less equal in their resources compared with their ancestors in medieval times.

Western civilization was monogamous before Christianity and before industrialization.

He just shot his foot off.

Watch for more bad science like this. Being a scientist doesn't mean someone is logical; it means they are rational, or can compare a single factor of many in "before" and "after" conditions. That's how they confuse correlation with causation and make other, [similar mistakes](#).

Scientists like to think that philosophy is memorizing logical fallacies. They generally are unaware of the complexity of argument or polycasual factors.

It makes them a bad choice as our experts and leaders.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Are we post-racial yet?

Mar 29th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When I worked in journalism, one of my editors was fond of asking us whether we'd understood the question. For every story, he said, there was always a fundamental question at each moment (it changed over time) which revealed what we were afraid to face, and therefore, where the story was going to end.

I read Leonard Pitts not because I agree with him, although I think I'm with him for up to 40% of each column, but because he has his finger on the question most of the time. Of course, he only writes about a single issue: race, or being black in America. But still, notice how he nails it here.

Psychology professor Richard Eibach was reported last year in the Washington Post as having found that in judging racial progress, white people and black ones tend to use different yardsticks. Whites use the yardstick of how far we have come from the nation we used to be. Blacks use the yardstick of how far we have yet to go to be the nation we ought to be.

The most complete picture, of course, requires both measures. But who can be surprised that blacks and whites each tend to gravitate toward the measure that is most forgiving of their individual groups, that shoves the onus for change off on the other? The black yardstick, after all, leaves black people no obligation other than to demand justice and equality from white people. The white yardstick requires of white people only that they exhort black people to become more self-reliant and take more responsibility for their own problems.

But what if you are an American who realizes there is no either/or here, no need to buy into a false dichotomy that requires you to choose one yardstick over the other?

[CNN](#)

I have another supposition here for Mr. Pitts:

The white yardstick is the one white people apply to themselves. Caucasians are notoriously cold-blooded about failure; it happens, someone writes a poem, and then we move on. We know that people all around us fail. We're used to see high intelligences become unstable and detonate. So we keep moving forward and trust in the reward for those who are smarter, stronger, healthier, and more disciplined than others.

We've applied the white yardstick to groups like Italians, the Irish, Greeks, etc. as they've come into our country. The reigning Caucasian hierarchy, which was like the founders of the USA English-German-Dutch, was not impressed with the places from which these people came, and figured that many would bring their failure with them, so discriminated against them. This discrimination worked like natural selection and winnowed out the failures, leaving the strongest from these populations.

Hint to black America: once white people feel the playing field is roughly level, they're going to leave it up to nature. And now that we have a black president, a black billionaire, black people on TV and in the news, they feel it's level. Sure, there are going to be some who pander to your vote, but the American middle class has moved on. In their view, slavery and the guilt-wound opened is over; they're going to do what they do, and hope you do what you do well.

They're also sick of this attitude:

If you hear racist sentiments being aired among white co-workers, question them on their statements.

Simply ask the person how they reached the conclusion they have about that ethnic or racial group. They will self-correct if they become uncomfortable often enough.

Obviously, the act of self-censoring isn't a signal that they have been magically "cured" of their racism, but it will give them something to think about the next time they open their mouths. And self-censoring often enough may well cause them to reflect more deeply on their prejudices during quiet times at home. It's a first step.

All of us (not just white folks) need to learn how to go beyond the concerns of the specific community to which we belong and recognize that when one group is discriminated against, it is an affront to us all.

[Some profiteer](#)

Not all of us agree it's an affront to us all. We're concerned with ourselves, our families, our local communities, and our communities of value (churches, programming guilds, National Guard, etc.). We view the right path as one that rewards the best and ignores or destroys the least healthy, intelligent, and disciplined/organized. That's natural selection and we think it's fair.

Race profiteering, or using implied white guilt to passive-aggressively extract money or power from them, is over. It died with the ascension of Barack Obama. It's dying even harder as people are starting to look at our bankrupt government more critically, and realizing that our social welfare programs consume over a third of our budget and yet produce zero reward that's lasting — in other words, that improves us as a society, instead of simply subsidizing our failures, whether they're white or black or in-between.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Design versus control

Mar 29th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Design science is an interesting field spanning multiple human specializations. By altering the design, or abstract structure, of an object, society or individual, you can make it better without a marked increase in resources.

Imagine a human being gaining ten IQ points; suddenly, many things they used to do seem really pointless, and there are new challenges to shoot for. Now imagine a society that instead of being at war with itself, is able to find a balance and move onward to objectives outside of internal bickering.

If you do not improve design, your only other option is to keep forcing square pegs into round holes, which requires the application of blind force — whether that's money, muscle or fear of law enforcement. Humanity is now at a crossroads between improving itself, and continuing to force its failed designs to advance limpingly.

The following quotation is interesting because like many of the things quoted here, it is an instant of clarity in a philosophy with which I share much in common, without being a devotee. People often ask "Are you a _____?" and hope I'll answer for whatever tribe they've picked as their own, but the answer is that I'm not a libertarian, transhumanist, socialist, eugenicist, nationalist, etc. but have cherry-picked from each according to what I've learned from history and philosophy. '

While I respect the integrity of beliefs, modern people use them as adornments as if trying to show me that they've found the one truth path to enlightenment, and I'm only interested in results. Was Plato a socialist? Yes and no. Was Marcus Aurelius a libertarian? Yes and no. Nietzsche a eugenicist? Yes and no. Trying to shop for beliefs by category is a dead-end trick.

That being said, where truth is found in any of these beliefs, one finds a stepping stone to modulate between beliefs — a place where they agree, and from this agreement, each can interpret the other as a version of itself with slightly altered priorities. That's where philosophy gets interesting.

To do this, we must study the possibilities of creating a more favourable social environment, as we have already done in large measure with our physical environment. We shall start from new premises. For instance, that beauty (something to enjoy and something to be proud of) is indispensable, and therefore that ugly or depressing towns are immoral; that quality of people, not mere quantity, is what we must aim at, and therefore that a concerted policy is required to prevent the present flood of population-increase from wrecking all our hopes for a better world; that true understanding and enjoyment are ends in themselves, as well as tools for or relaxations from a job, and that therefore we must explore and make fully available the techniques of education and self-education; that the most ultimate satisfaction comes from a depth and wholeness of the inner life, and therefore that we must explore and make fully available the techniques of spiritual development; above all, that there are two complementary parts of our cosmic duty —one to ourselves, to be fulfilled in the realization and enjoyment of our capacities, the other to others, to be fulfilled in service to the community and in promoting the welfare of the generations to come and the advancement of our species as a whole.

The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself —not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity.

Transhumanism.org

The point here is valid: if we sit around fighting over who gets what, we will not improve, and as time rushes on, we'll decay.

We need a positive, abstract, design-based goal, like improving simultaneously the human individual and social design. This does not happen through Progressive ideals, which are essentially wealth redistribution; it happens by setting higher qualitative goals and shooting for those. More genius! More strength! More beauty! And more wisdom.

This will involve several components:

- A more realistic social design.
- Mental and moral discipline in the individual.
- Biological improvement in the abilities, mainly *g* or general intelligence, of the individual.

Most people freak out at this point because they're underconfident: but what if I don't make the cut?

My answer is that there doesn't need to be a cut. All we need to do is keep growing forward and rewarding the best examples of humanity, instead of sending them to dreary offices and then home to equally sterile and pointless gated communities to keep the *hoi polloi* out.

Here's an example of an area for design improvement:

New research suggests that the layer of insulation coating neural wiring in the brain plays a critical role in determining intelligence. In addition, the quality of this insulation appears to be largely genetically determined, providing further support for the idea that IQ is partly inherited.

Thompson and his colleagues took DTI scans of 92 pairs of fraternal and identical twins. They found a strong correlation between the integrity of the white matter and performance on a standard IQ test. "Going forward, we are certainly going to think of white matter structure as an important contributor of intelligence," says Van Wedeen, a neuroscientist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, who was also not involved in the research. "It also changes how you think about what IQ is measuring," says Wedeen. The research was published last month in the *Journal of Neuroscience*.

Results showed that the quality of the white matter is highly genetically determined, although the influence of genetics varies by brain area. According to the findings, about 85 percent of the variation in white matter in the parietal lobe, which is involved in mathematics, logic, and visual-spatial skills, can be attributed to genetics. But only about 45 percent of the variation in the temporal lobe, which plays a central role in learning and memory, appears to be inherited.

[Technology Review](#)

As you can see from the article, our DNA determines our intelligence for the greatest part, and it's up to us to nurture the rest and develop it to its best level. However, without the DNA coding for the raw intelligence, there's no point exerting that effort.

If we made ourselves smarter as a species, our problems would decrease and we would feel better about ourselves as a species. The dumb stuff that people do now would be seen as obviously corrupt and with potential to end badly, and people would bypass it for more intelligent courses. Even more importantly, they'd stop buying really stupid products and insisting on really stupid services, which would gear our economy forward instead of toward self-parasitism.

The alternative is more control — more strong leaders, more media manipulation, and more fake experts:

A brain-scanning study of people making financial choices suggests that when given expert advice, the decision-making parts of our brains often shut down.

The problem with this, of course, is that the advice may not be good.

"When the expert's advice made the least sense, that's where we could see the behavioral effect," said study co-author Greg Berns, an Emory University neuroscientist. "It's as if people

weren't using their own internal value mechanisms."

[Wired](#)

When the advice is at its worst, we don't understand it, but accept it because the person is an expert and now we have someone else to blame.

Wow. That's control in a nutshell. When we are in a relationship, we'll often let the other person take charge, and then blame them when it doesn't work out. We gladly delegate to our leaders but when things don't turn out, we ask for their heads. And so on.

Most people would rather be controlled than think about altering their designs. Things as they now exist are tangible and comfortingly familiar; anything that requires we stretch ourselves, or reward someone for rising above, can be negative unless that person did it through "hard work" or other illusions that seem equally accessible to us. Control can be justified as necessary, with the unspoken caveat that it's going to apply to the other guy — we, the wiser monkey, will game the system.

Here's an American pragmatist, much in the line of Plato and Aristotle, writing about the literal reality of making a civilization that does not head toward failure:

Let the will of the state act, then, instead of that of the individual. Let an institution be created which shall have for its object to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people, to reiterate them perpetually, and to teach them to the young; having at the same time power to prevent contrary doctrines from being taught, advocated, or expressed. Let all possible causes of a change of mind be removed from men's apprehensions. Let them be kept ignorant, lest they should learn of some reason to think otherwise than they do. Let their passions be enlisted, so that they may regard private and unusual opinions with hatred and horror. Then, let all men who reject the established belief be terrified into silence. Let the people turn out and tar-and-feather such men, or let inquisitions be made into the manner of thinking of suspected persons, and when they are found guilty of forbidden beliefs, let them be subjected to some signal punishment. When complete agreement could not otherwise be reached, a general massacre of all who have not thought in a certain way has proved a very effective means of settling opinion in a country. If the power to do this be wanting, let a list of opinions be drawn up, to which no man of the least independence of thought can assent, and let the faithful be required to accept all these propositions, in order to segregate them as radically as possible from the influence of the rest of the world.

This method has, from the earliest times, been one of the chief means of upholding correct theological and political doctrines, and of preserving their universal or catholic character. In Rome, especially, it has been practised from the days of Numa Pompilius to those of Pius Nonus. This is the most perfect example in history; but wherever there is a priesthood — and no religion has been without one — this method has been more or less made use of. Wherever there is an aristocracy, or a guild, or any association of a class of men whose interests depend, or are supposed to depend, on certain propositions, there will be inevitably found some traces of this natural product of social feeling. Cruelties always accompany this system; and when it is consistently carried out, they become atrocities of the most horrible kind in the eyes of any rational man. Nor should this occasion surprise, for the officer of a society does not feel justified in surrendering the interests of that society for the sake of mercy, as he might his own private interests. It is natural, therefore, that sympathy and fellowship should thus produce a most ruthless power.

In judging this method of fixing belief, which may be called the method of authority, we must, in the first place, allow its immeasurable mental and moral superiority to the method of tenacity. Its success is proportionately greater; and, in fact, it has over and over again worked the most majestic results. The mere structures of stone which it has caused to be put together — in Siam, for example, in Egypt, and in Europe — have many of them a sublimity hardly more than rivaled by the greatest works of Nature. And, except the geological epochs, there are no periods

of time so vast as those which are measured by some of these organized faiths. If we scrutinize the matter closely, we shall find that there has not been one of their creeds which has remained always the same; yet the change is so slow as to be imperceptible during one person's life, so that individual belief remains sensibly fixed. For the mass of mankind, then, there is perhaps no better method than this. If it is their highest impulse to be intellectual slaves, then slaves they ought to remain.

[Charles S. Peirce, *The Fixation of Belief* \(1877\)](#)

It's interesting how thinkers of the past saw our present calamities coming, and warned others, but people had the option to simply turn off their brains and so they did in order to avoid difficult truths that impeded socialization.

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves- since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey, This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself-in short, a continuous fluttering around the solitary flame of vanity-is so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them. They are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see "forms." Their senses nowhere lead to truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and, as it were, to engage in a groping game on the backs of things.

...

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions- they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.

...

There are ages in which the rational man and the intuitive man stand side by side, the one in fear of intuition, the other with scorn for abstraction. The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic. They both desire to rule over life: the former, by knowing how to meet his principle needs by means of foresight, prudence, and regularity; the latter, by disregarding these needs and, as an "overjoyed hero," counting as real only that life which has been disguised as illusion and beauty. Whenever, as was perhaps the case in ancient Greece, the intuitive man handles his weapons more authoritatively and victoriously than his opponent, then, under favorable circumstances, a culture can take shape and art's mastery over life can be established. All the manifestations of such a life will be accompanied by this dissimulation, this disavowal of indigence, this glitter of metaphorical intuitions, and, in general, this immediacy of deception: neither the house, nor the gait, nor the clothes, nor the clay jugs give evidence of having been invented because of a pressing need.

[Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense* \(1873\)](#)

Notice how Nietzsche stresses beauty, as Huxley did, and much as Peirce suggested a society moving forward toward a goal not bound in servitude to past failure? They are saying: discard linear rationality, and instead, look toward a whole picture as you might find in art or sentience itself. Do not break your thought down into little logical steps; make use of your big brain to consider many factors at once, and aim not to reconcile the present but to grow toward the future!

I suggest that instead of doing that, we've embarked on the path of control since the industrial revolution, and that we're seeing how it's not working. It requires people to put their brains on hold, accept expert advice, and then blame the experts who oversimplified the process in the first place so everyone could understand it. It also is a negative goal; it doesn't aim for something new, but for re-shuffling of what we already have.

Instead, we need to create the new and beautiful, in ourselves, our society and our world. That way, we escape control, but gain a sense of increased self-esteem and purpose, and are able to see ourselves in a new plan without the failings of the old because it aims at tomorrow and not yesterday.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

USA tumbles into third world status

Mar 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We've been saying for a while here at Amerika that the USA is going to go third world from a series of factors:

- Destruction of culture by commerce.
- Corruption in government, thanks to a clueless electorate and powerful media.
- Decay into illusory behavior thanks to democracy and wish fulfillment entertainment.
- Third world-style breeding habits.
- Reckless consumer and government debt.
- Destruction of culture by multiculturalism/globalism.

Now we're starting to see those 500 lb bombs of concepts make craters here in realityland, and while it's not happy to see, it's fun to watch reality send a giant YOU WERE WRONG to the doubters.

Exhibit A:

I still recall the shock I felt at a meeting in Russia's dingy Ministry of Finance, where I finally realized how a handful of young oligarchs were bringing Russia's economy to ruin in the pursuit of their own selfish interests, despite the supposed brilliance of Anatoly Chubais, Russia's economic czar at the time.

At the time, I could not imagine that anything remotely similar could happen in the United States. Indeed, I shared the American conceit that most emerging-market nations had poorly developed institutions and would do well to emulate Washington and Wall Street. These days, though, I'm hardly so confident. Many economists and analysts are worrying that the United States might go the way of Japan, which suffered a "lost decade" after its own real estate market fell apart in the early 1990s. But I'm more concerned that the United States is coming to resemble Argentina, Russia and other so-called emerging markets, both in what led us to the crisis, and in how we're trying to fix it.

But instead of facing our problems we extol the resilience of the U.S. economy, praise the most productive workers in the world, and go on and on about America's inherent ability to extricate itself from any crisis. And we ignore our proclivity as a nation to spend, year in year out, more than we produce, to put off dealing with long-term problems, and to engage in grandiose long-term programs that as a nation we can ill afford.

[WAPQ](#)

He makes a good case. We are ruled by oligarchs, [as Plato predicted in *The Republic*](#), because we have allowed a Revolution to empower our know-nothings and these, newly liberal to support the revolution, have done everything they can to wreck our cultural infrastructure, prompting cultural and class war. This started in 1789, and peaked in 1968; 2008's election was symbolic but actually not all that radical given what happened in the four decades before.

We are told that history is not cyclic; that America has discovered a new form of Progress and we're heading from Neanderthal ignorance to an enlightened liberal Utopia. Yet history repeats itself because reality is consistent; the same action gets the same response, every time, and so when we make unrealistic plans, they fail the same way every time.

Here's another example:

The Khmer Rouge leaders were off to a head start when the amnesty came, having amassed

mini-fortunes during their days as guerrillas through smuggling of timber, gems and antiques to Thailand. Now, the upper echelons own some of the poshest houses and cars in the provinces of Pailin, Preah Vihear, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Oddar Meanchey — Cambodia's Khmer Rouge country.

Some have sunk into gross corruption and engage in activities, like gambling, which would have earned them summary execution in the old days. And they have certainly ditched their ideal of a classless society.

In Anlong Veng, a two-class system appears to have emerged: the rich businessmen and government officials living in town and former low-ranking soldiers who barely survive on arid land they don't own in the surrounding countryside. Thus the town witnessed both the final military defeat of the Khmer Rouge and the death of its ideals.

[AP](#)

When leadership goes away, and it gets handed to the people, idiocy reigns because few people are ready to make political decisions with long-range consequences — and even fewer care to do the basic research required to do it well. The result is that people vote for whatever is popular, and cynical bastards quickly figure that out and promise the sky, delivering instead repression.

Plato predicted that, too.

But inevitably, emerging-market oligarchs get carried away; they waste money and build massive business empires on a mountain of debt. Local banks, sometimes pressured by the government, become too willing to extend credit to the elite and to those who depend on them. Overborrowing always ends badly, whether for an individual, a company, or a country. Sooner or later, credit conditions become tighter and no one will lend you money on anything close to affordable terms.

The downward spiral that follows is remarkably steep. Enormous companies teeter on the brink of default, and the local banks that have lent to them collapse. Yesterday's "public-private partnerships" are relabeled "crony capitalism." With credit unavailable, economic paralysis ensues, and conditions just get worse and worse. The government is forced to draw down its foreign-currency reserves to pay for imports, service debt, and cover private losses. But these reserves will eventually run out. If the country cannot right itself before that happens, it will default on its sovereign debt and become an economic pariah. The government, in its race to stop the bleeding, will typically need to wipe out some of the national champions—now hemorrhaging cash—and usually restructure a banking system that's gone badly out of balance. It will, in other words, need to squeeze at least some of its oligarchs.

In its depth and suddenness, the U.S. economic and financial crisis is shockingly reminiscent of moments we have recently seen in emerging markets (and only in emerging markets): South Korea (1997), Malaysia (1998), Russia and Argentina (time and again). In each of those cases, global investors, afraid that the country or its financial sector wouldn't be able to pay off mountainous debt, suddenly stopped lending. And in each case, that fear became self-fulfilling, as banks that couldn't roll over their debt did, in fact, become unable to pay. This is precisely what drove Lehman Brothers into bankruptcy on September 15, causing all sources of funding to the U.S. financial sector to dry up overnight. Just as in emerging-market crises, the weakness in the banking system has quickly rippled out into the rest of the economy, causing a severe economic contraction and hardship for millions of people.

But there's a deeper and more disturbing similarity: elite business interests—financiers, in the case of the U.S.—played a central role in creating the crisis, making ever-larger gambles, with the implicit backing of the government, until the inevitable collapse. More alarming, they are now using their influence to prevent precisely the sorts of reforms that are needed, and fast, to pull the economy out of its nosedive. The government seems helpless, or unwilling, to act

against them.

[The Atlantic](#)

As years pass since their founding date, every society degenerates through a process of entropy. Things fall apart. People forget the original reasons for things, and uphold the appearance of the past. They do their best to carry on the dogma but as they garble it, it loses relevance. In come new people, from abroad and born domestically, who do not share the older culture; it is replaced by the lowest common denominator between them all, which is commerce, entertainment, sex/intoxication and denial.

The denial ramps up, and the further it goes, the worse things get, usually in the form of socialized costs passed on to others. The society goes into arrogant, passive aggressive denial, claiming it has ended history and moved forward to be a new, enlightened, Progressive nation. But problems remain and proliferate.

Finally, the drones turn on the bourgeois, and new leaders intervene. They're like Jesus or Marx, all about peace and equality. But first they need a military unit loyal to their command. From there, it's easy to make the nation into a dictatorship, and it's probably more functional that way.

And what will happen, while this is going on? Do The People take to the streets and overthrow the government? Do they educate themselves and make more sensible choices.

No way. People will remain checked out of reality in their virtual worlds:

Adult Americans spend an average of more than eight hours a day in front of screens — televisions, computer monitors, cellphones or other devices, according to a new study.

The study also found that live television in the home continues to attract the greatest amount of viewing time with the average American spending slightly more than five hours a day in front of the tube.

The figure drops to 210 minutes a day of average TV viewing time among 18-24 year olds but rises to 420 minutes a day among those aged 65 and older.

[Breitbart](#)

History repeats itself. This is how all nations fall.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Race genetics likened to racial profiling

Mar 27th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Forensic experts are increasingly relying on DNA as “a genetic eyewitness,” says Jack Ballantyne, associate director for research at the National Center for Forensic Science at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, who is studying whether a DNA sample can reveal a person's age.

Researchers are identifying genes that give rise to a person's physical traits, such as facial structure, skin color or even whether they are right- or left-handed. That could allow police to build a picture of what a criminal looks like not just from sometimes-fuzzy eyewitness accounts, but by analyzing DNA found at a crime scene.

In 2004, police caught a Louisiana serial killer who eyewitnesses had suggested was white, but whose crime-scene DNA suggested—correctly—that he was black. Britain's forensic service uses a similar “ethnic inference” test to trace murderers and rapists.

[WSJ](#)

(Race is a collection of genetically-determined traits derived from adaptation to a specific locality.)

We're so in denial of issues like race that we cannot even discuss them maturely. Most people, having listened to their TVs, would be shocked that there's even a link between race and DNA at all.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Liberal bias in media and government

Mar 27th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

It's not liberal bias, yet it ends up being liberal bias.

People who want to be in elites imitate other elites, which are those who adopt cutting-edge, altruistic programs. In their imitation, they simplify this to a form of competitive altruism that is also the root of modern liberalism. But they're not doing it to be ideologically liberal; they're doing it to look cool.

Second, people who want to profit by getting people to buy their product or vote for them are pandering to the cross-section of all people that's called the lowest common denominator. How do you appeal to that? You simplify to a form of competitive altruism that is also the root of modern liberalism. Again, they're not doing it to be ideologically liberal, but to market themselves.

Thus it's not surprising that media, government and social elites are liberal and inject liberal bias into their products:

Groseclose and Milyo based their research on a standard gauge of a lawmaker's support for liberal causes. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) tracks the percentage of times that each lawmaker votes on the liberal side of an issue. Based on these votes, the ADA assigns a numerical score to each lawmaker, where "100" is the most liberal and "0" is the most conservative. After adjustments to compensate for disproportionate representation that the Senate gives to low-population states and the lack of representation for the District of Columbia, the average ADA score in Congress (50.1) was assumed to represent the political position of the average U.S. voter.

Groseclose and Milyo then directed 21 research assistants — most of them college students — to scour U.S. media coverage of the past 10 years. They tallied the number of times each media outlet referred to think tanks and policy groups, such as the left-leaning NAACP or the right-leaning Heritage Foundation.

Next, they did the same exercise with speeches of U.S. lawmakers. If a media outlet displayed a citation pattern similar to that of a lawmaker, then Groseclose and Milyo's method assigned both a similar ADA score.

"A media person would have never done this study," said Groseclose, a UCLA political science professor, whose research and teaching focuses on the U.S. Congress. "It takes a Congress scholar even to think of using ADA scores as a measure. And I don't think many media scholars would have considered comparing news stories to congressional speeches."

Of the 20 major media outlets studied, 18 scored left of center, with CBS' "Evening News," The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times ranking second, third and fourth most liberal behind the news pages of The Wall Street Journal.

[UCLA](#)

Media bias is real, but it's not ideological bias. These people are using the root of liberalism, or the idea that everyone is equal, as a means of selling themselves to you. Most liberals are doing the same thing.

But now this grand liberal vision is running into some problems:

A United Nations forum on Thursday passed a resolution condemning "defamation of religion" as a human rights violation, despite wide concerns that it could be used to justify curbs on free speech in Muslim countries.

Western governments and a broad alliance of activist groups have voiced dismay about the religious defamation text, which adds to recent efforts to broaden the concept of human rights to protect communities of believers rather than individuals.

It called on states to ensure that religious places, sites, shrines and symbols are protected, to reinforce laws "to deny impunity" for those exhibiting intolerance of ethnic and religious minorities, and "to take all possible measures to promote tolerance and respect for all religions and beliefs."

[Reuters](#)

But groups are composed of individuals, and sometimes individuals as a group choose to have a certain value system.

All value systems are intolerant of all that are materially different from them; for example, tolerance-based value systems are intolerant of intolerance.

Is this a paradox? If you let bad logic into your mind, you'll assume we can all just get along in the same space even though we have different values and backgrounds, because that's how you please an audience of people. Offer them a vision of egalitarianism, of peace and comfort, of unity.

Even if it's completely divorced from reality. After all, they just need to buy your product or vote for you, and you'll be out of range when the fit hits the shan.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Conservatives are Satan

Mar 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A liberal commentator gets riled as she attacks neoliberals, er, "conservatives":

When have Conservative Americans ever been correct about anything? At the nation's founding they were Tories, during the Civil War they were slave owners during the Depression they were the cause, in the Second World War they were isolationists. They opposed virtually every program, law or principle that has made this country great. Rather than whining about victimization, they should be ashamed. Of course, Herbert Hoover whined, too.

[Salon](#)

If you reduce your attention span, and also reduce your focus to specific negative issues while ignoring positives that occurred simultaneously, you can make anything appear to be Satan.

At the nation's founding, not all conservatives were Tories, obviously, because the people who founded the nation created it on neoliberal principles — the foundation of modern conservatism. Her attention span isn't long enough for that.

During the Civil War, the issue was not slavery, but preserving state's rights — reducing the power of the central government, which has been a traditional liberal desire. Slavery was a related but not pivotal issue.

During the Depression they were the cause, she says. This baffling unsourced statement is as simplistic as it is unfounded.

In the second world war, they were isolationists. Here's where we have to take a long view of history: it's possible that the second world war created the cold war, destroyed European and American armies, and unleashed world discontent. It might have been smarter to sit it out and simply offer aid and shelter to displaced and persecuted Jewish populations.

Didn't we also drop nuclear weapons on 200,000 Japanese children?

And then there's the current recession. Brought on by a Clinton-era program to force [lending to minorities](#), it was equally wrecked by Clinton's adviser Robert Rubin and his tendency toward cheap money and reckless growth. Bush inherited this mess and staved it off to some degree, but nothing could stop our economy from readjusting its value.

It seems to me that "liberal" is a catch-all term for the discontented and fashionable who want to show others how smart, savvy, wise and compassionate/altruistic they are by embracing liberal policies. But these same people, by virtue of needing some external affirmation of their self-worth, are the most neurotic people we have in our society — and that's why conservatives don't want them making decisions.

Why do people love to bash on conservatives? Because they speak of long-term, historical and scientific truths, not emotions that make us all feel a warming tenderness. Conservatism (and to some degree, neoliberalism as practiced by Reagan and Bush) is for people who want to get over the negative sides of life to embrace the positive, but without denying the reality they must live in.

Liberalism from moderate to extreme just *sounds good*. Everyone is equal, we're all in it together, and we're going to support that idea that you can be whatever you want to be and we'll still take care of you. Never mind that this idea is anti-nature; if you do something stupid in nature, you might end up dead or maimed. Liberalism sounds good because it takes the risk of natural selection, the risk of losing social status, and the risk of being seen as less-able than others, and smothers them under a comforting blanket of equality.

As Dennis Prager asks in "Why Doesn't Communism Have as Bad a Name as Nazism?":

2. Communism is based on lovely sounding theories; Nazism is based on heinous sounding theories.

Intellectuals, among whom are the people who write history, are seduced by words — so much so that deeds are deemed considerably less significant. Communism's words are far more intellectually and morally appealing than the moronic and vile racism of Nazism. The monstrous evils of communists have not been focused on nearly as much as the monstrous deeds of the Nazis. The former have been regularly dismissed as perversions of a beautiful doctrine (though Christians who committed evil in the name of Christianity are never regarded by these same people as having perverted a beautiful doctrine), whereas Nazi atrocities have been perceived (correctly) as the logical and inevitable results of Nazi ideology.

This seduction by words while ignoring deeds has been a major factor in the ongoing appeal of the left to intellectuals. How else explain the appeal of a Che Guevara or Fidel Castro to so many left-wing intellectuals, other than that they care more about beautiful words than about vile deeds?

[Jewish World Review](#)

(Ballsy article from a great publication.)

The left sounds good because it uses social realities to comfort people, instead of making them confront hard physical realities like conservatism does. It also does not believe in a society with a consensus, preferring a society of atomized individuals each "doing their own thing." Never mind that history deals harshly with that — it *sounds good*.

For this reason, the left will always be more popular than the right, especially as societies decay and more people are left wandering without a center. Doing everything for yourself sounds good until you realize that this means everything becomes yet another mundane pleasure, and there's no overall goal that makes you feel fulfilled. How many mountains can you climb before that, too, is just a hobby?

The left's weakness is that in the long term, they make disasters. The revolutions that wrecked France and Russia took those from being world powers to being hopeless backwaters, and even when they crawl back from that precipice, they are still behind and somehow come across as more primitive and clueless than other nations of the stature they once had. French culture used to rule the world; now they're known for lingerie and little else. Russia was once one of the cultural centers of the near East, but no one talks about Russian culture since about 1916.

In America, we have a different kind of leftist and neoliberal disaster — as predicted in *Brave New World*, people pursue their own pleasures and in doing so not only empty those pleasures of significance but also leave behind a wasteland. Like so:

It is hard to overstate how reliant the Southern California economy has always been on population growth to drive its economic growth — in oversimplified terms, building houses for the next wave of home builders. In the beginning, the early developers could be pretty confident that if they built it, they would come — from the Northeast and Midwest, and then from all corners of the globe. But in recent years, this perpetual growth machine has pretty much run out of steam as residents old and new confronted the realities of two-hour commutes, bad air, a shortage of water and a backlash against illegal immigration.

Moreover, without the steady growth in tax revenue that came with population growth, the Ponzi scheme that passes for public finance in California was suddenly and painfully revealed. Much of the blame lies with public employee unions and a handful of other special-interest groups that have essentially hijacked political control of state and local governments. Now, despite decades of high taxes and rapid growth, state and local governments find that they not only don't have

the revenue to provide even basic services, but are saddled with hundreds of billions of dollars in unfunded pension liabilities and infrastructure needs.

"L.A. is becoming a Third World city," says Rick Caruso, a successful developer who has considered running for mayor.

[WAPO](#)

Let everyone come in and buy everything on credit. Whatever they think they can afford, they can buy. And don't criticize their weird and unstable lifestyles, or the mental states those work them into before they go on their buying sprees. If they're soulless and empty, they're actually better consumers, so why not?

And then reality comes home to roost: it was a Ponzi scheme all along. The cheap labor that we imported is now a population fighting for its own power; the idiots we imported to act in our films are their own kind of abusive power; no one has their eyes on the road ahead. So California will soon be an empty sprawl of abandoned buildings, covered in graffiti and leaking toxic compounds.

What built this empire? Liberalism: the idea that every person has the right to do anything they want to do, as long as they don't interfere with others doing the same. That means that as long as you don't rape, censor, or kill, you can feel free to make whatever stupid decisions that leave timebombs to your descendants. You can't tell other people to stop selling anal pron in the grocery stores, but you can build a gigantic empire and then leave it to rot. Which act — in the long term — is more destructive?

Liberalism has left us with a knee jerk population who, having no power, know only that they feel good by asserting social control on others. If you censor anything, you're a Nazi. If you suggest the actions of any person are stupid, you're a Nazi. If you want any kind of culture to resist this swarming wave of non-culture, you're a Nazi. If you're not them, you're a Nazi. Get it yet?

And so we're now in the final stages of empire where we play a gross game of image, instead of focusing on serious problems that can really ruin our day:

An article in the New York Times last week documented how green groups are having trouble attracting black and Hispanic supporters. Carl Pope, the executive director of the Sierra Club, noted that at a typical Sierra Club meeting — despite the organization's best efforts — "the people are mostly white, largely over 40, almost all college educated, whose style is to argue with each other. . . . That may not be a welcoming environment." Other green leaders quoted by the Times bemoaned their failure to draw a more rainbow-colored crowd, faulting themselves for not coming up with better outreach efforts. One diversity consultant complained that the dress code of environmental groups might be putting off minorities. "It's the tyranny of the fleece," he said.

The rueful tone of environmental leaders sounds not unlike that of proponents of gay marriage who — noting a similar lack of success with minority "outreach" — keep arguing that if they only frame the debate correctly they will be able to convince blacks and Hispanics that gay marriage is a good idea. If you buy into one element of the liberal agenda, the thinking goes, surely you'll like the rest of it.

But is this true? It may be mere condescension to assume that racial minorities don't understand what's at stake in such matters — that it is the outreach effort that is failing and not the message itself. It could well be that minorities understand all too well. "Environmentalism doesn't appeal to minorities," says Steven Milloy, the publisher of JunkScience.com, because "it doesn't bring them anything." He explains: "Environmentalists scare companies from building plants where people could use the jobs, and the plants go overseas instead." In the late '90s, for instance, the greens managed to run the Shintech company out of Convent, La., where it had planned to build a chemical plant that would have created more than 150 jobs. Though three-quarters of the black residents near the site wanted the facility, the company eventually backed out, tired of the harassment from the Clinton administration's EPA.

[WSJ](#)

It's an image game. How do we pull people in? The answer is that you have to appeal to their political anger or sense of entitlement or give them something. That doesn't work, but because we've eliminated the hard boundary of reality that conservatism acknowledges, we have no way of saying "Look, pay attention to this or we'll all die."

This is the same reason the global warming crusade is getting so shrill. They're realizing that not enough people really care. World leaders love it — it expands their power. Liberals love it — it gives them a cause. Conservatives see it as a step to one world government, and point out that simply cutting off imports and foreign aid will effectively end the problem. The urban poor, the rural people, and the third world are oblivious to the issue at all. So nothing gets done, and while global warming may be a charade, human destruction of our environment is not and should be acted upon.

What towers of hypocrisy, labyrinths of status-raising image sleights of hand, and wastelands of insincerity we build! And all for ideas that *sound good* until you consider the step after they become real.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

The Psychological Novel

Mar 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Tom Wolfe used this phrase for the type of novel currently in vogue, as it has been for the past fifty years: the psychological novel.

He is also known for his attacks on literary realism, or the idea that literature can linearly evoke reality through gritty detail, scenes of underage sodomy, and other details.

However, I think the psychological novel — exploring the inside of the human head by using tokens of the outside world — is what he really targets. Toni Morrison, Paul Mitchell, we're looking at you.

The traditional novel shows a character making moral decisions based on reality, not based on the centerless inside of the mind, where they're trying to pick the best option for themselves and therefore, are in arbitrary-land. Pynchon illustrated this best in the *The Crying of Lot 49*.

One reason many of us abandoned Joyce with *Ulysses* is that he went too far into the psychological novel. Where POTAYM showed us adaptation, *Ulysses* showed us compensation and cognitive dissonance. Lie back and think of England or, in Joyce's case, a nice fresh potato.

We could apply the same to any art form. Metal now is the psychological album; tossing around random symbols from the past and trying to generate inspiration from those. It's like all language cut off from reality — it makes sense internally, but does not correspond to the world, so it's solipsistic/narcissistic in the best tradition of Crowdism (to join a Crowd, you must be thinking only of yourself, and using others to guarantee for you a selfish but impersonal outcome).

If a correspondence theory of truth is correct, and if thus for a sentence to be truth it has to correspond to the world in a way that mirrors the structure and matches parts of the sentence properly with parts of the world, then the structure of a true sentence would have to be mirrored in the world. But if, on the other extreme, a coherence theory of truth is correct then the truth of a sentence does not require a structural correspondence to the world, but merely a coherence with other sentences.

If there is an explanation of this similarity to be given it seems it could go in one of two ways: either the structure of thought explains the structure of reality, or the other way round.

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

Another word for the psychological novel, or realistic novel, is the artist-centric one. It's like Twitter: this is what I see, so these tokens must mean something to you too. That's in contrast to the traditional novel, which labored hard to find tokens shared between author and audience, even if the tokens were not the ones the artist had experienced that gave meaning to an event or events. Demanding the use of your own tokens is like demanding attention, or control; using shared tokens is like cooperation.

And as you know, there are only two models for human interaction: cooperation or control. Interestingly, they involve the same mechanisms. You cannot cooperate with everyone; you must control something. The question is what your primary means of achieving your goal is.

The psychological novel resembles CONTROL more than COOPERATION. It is not motivated by sharing of information, or transcendence of our individual boundaries; it is motivated by demanding you pay attention to static information and tokens that inspired another person. Its goal is not to cooperate; it's to control your eyes and focus them on another individual, as if you noticing them might make them important enough in the human world to remove the sting of inevitable death from the world beyond.

Posted in: [Books](#).

Nationalism rediscovered

Mar 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Bit by bit:

Britain needs a strong sense of national identity and national purpose to get through the current recession, Gordon Brown said in an interview published today.

The prime minister said that the process of globalisation was forcing countries to be clearer about what they were as nations in order to provide a sense of rootedness and community in a fast-changing world.

And he warned that, without a strong national identity, the danger was that people defined themselves by race or ethnicity.

He said it was important to view British history in terms of the growth of ideas such as tolerance, liberty, fairness and justice as well as through the stories of individual people and institutions.

"Globalisation is something that is here to stay ... but it actually forces countries to be far more explicit about what they are as nations. People want to feel that sense of belonging in what is an insecure and changing world, as well as a great world of opportunity.

[The Guardian](#)

He is afraid of the consequences of what he's thinking, so he speaks of allegiance to the nation-state and not the nation, but even that seems hollow as people look for something that can glue them together. Culture as a weapon keeps a nation strong.

The current leaders don't think that far ahead however.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Do we dare not norm?

Mar 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

This article had me rolling:

First Worlders have a moral obligation to give away thousands of dollars — thousands! — a year of personal income to eradicate Third World poverty? Right. Even when Americans had jobs and 401(k)s, they weren't exactly emptying their wallets for the 1.4 billion people who live in absolute destitution — \$1.25 a day or less — in the developing world. How much harder to get people to give when money is tight, so many are broke and even those who are doing all right are worried and afraid for their future.

Even today, though, as Singer would be the first to remind us, an ordinary middle-class American lives like Louis XIV compared to the destitute villagers and slum dwellers of Africa, Asia and elsewhere around the globe. Singer can sound a bit puritanical when he scoffs at our outlays on \$4 lattes, restaurant meals, concerts, movies, that second glass of wine we don't really want and the \$600 worth of clothes in their closet that women supposedly haven't worn for a year. Bottled water comes in for special scorn. His point, though, isn't that we should forgo all pleasure but that we have more disposable income than we think we do — enough to save the lives of many people. If you put it like that — hmm, do I go out for pie or vaccinate ten children? — the answer is pretty clear.

[Alternet](#)

Haven't we had enough of guilt?

The scam goes like this: author wants to have some way to market himself, so he emulates Christ and advocates selfless giving, which makes him seem more compassion than you or I. Since we compete for social values, we are now tempted to prove we are as compassionate or more compassionate than he. In short, neither party cares about the starving third world; we're trying to out-moralize each other.

But guilt leaves a hangover.

The manipulated person always somewhat senses the scam, so they tend to have it both ways. They insist on public displays of altruism, but make sure it's ineffective and cheap altruism. Send the old clothes to the starving Africans. Maybe they can eat our sweaters. And so on.

The real problem with guilt is that it introduces a bias toward the failing, and therefore, a tendency to skimp on those who might actually provide a good future for humanity — the gifted who, because they come from people who were also gifted, tend to be wealthier, better looking, healthier, more fertile, smarter, etc.

State schools are being forced to prioritise "social misfits" at the expense of the majority of pupils, according to a former academy head teacher.

Steve Patriarca blamed Gordon Brown's decision to create a new "Orwellian" Government department with dual responsibility for schools and social services.

It meant education for the most able often came second best to the needs of problem pupils, he said.

He also criticised the lack of freedom to control admissions, and he attacked the practice of forcing academies to share pupils expelled from other schools.

"The more disruptive the child is the more attention it receives and the more benefits," Mr Patriarca said.

[The Telegraph](#)

When you think in negative terms, like looking for objects of guilt with which to advance your own social standing, you become tuned to the negative, not the positive. That means you take care of the violent and uncontrollable pupils but ignore the brightest, because you're doing your moral duty in taking care of nature's failures.

If we threw out guilt tomorrow, we'd all feel a weight lifted from our chests. But we don't, because it's such an effective way of manipulating others, and clever monkeys love that even if the long-term effects include self-destruction.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [norming](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Good liberal discovers nature is immutable

Mar 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

On the day he should have graduated from high school, Andrew was instead being treated in a psychiatric ward at the Mayo Clinic. But he seemed to improve, and we were hopeful. Upon release, he was placed in a series of behavioral health centers and group homes. This is where his real education began.

He'd quit progressing in school, but now my son soaked up new information like a toddler learning to talk. Every placement in a succeedingly tougher environment gave him new skills. He shoplifted like a pro, traded his belongings for sexual favors, and dined and dashed so often some local restaurants had his picture posted in their kitchen under the words, "Don't serve this man." I told myself at least he was thinking, making his own bad choices, experiencing adult consequences. A part of me was even proud.

[Salon](#)

Liberalism seems to be the illusion that each person is in charge of their own destiny, just by wanting to be. No need to engage with life and summon will; instead, just wish it to be so. Stay back safe and comfortable in your self, where you can deny mortality or your insignificance, and make choices like you're buying objects or voting. Now you are *empowered*.

She fawns over her mentally broken son being empowered above. Yet he is still a monster. Why is he a monster, and why are some people evil? Because they are broken. Their brains do not process reality correctly, or to put it bluntly, they are stupid in certain ways where they need to be smart to not be destructive. Low-grade evil is stupid people who commit crimes of opportunity, squander their money, vandalize whatever they touch and burn their ghettos to protest; high-grade stupid is violent autistic kids, psychopaths and sociopaths, and liberal or neoliberal flag-wavers.

Can you see the similarity? Her kid behaves like other stupid and correspondingly violent people:

He ate like some gnashing beast: stuffing food into his mouth until his cheeks bulged and food dribbled out onto his clothes. And after moving to the rural group home selected by a judge because it was miles from restaurants or businesses where he could steal, Andrew morphed again, the warty monster from a Grimm fairy tale, demolishing everything in his path.

His destruction was utterly senseless yet brilliantly thorough: He submerged his computer, stereo and iPod in water; threw puzzle pieces and Styrofoam cups into the toilet and flushed them, plugging the pipes literally dozens of times a week; and urinated on every square inch of his room: bed, walls, floor, closet, everything but the ceiling and that only because he had not (yet, I suspect) figured out how.

When I asked him why he did these things he would say, eyes narrow like a night creature, "I don't like being caged."

Good golly, he's already learned passive aggression. *It's not my fault. You caged me so you are guilty of what I have done.*

Like the impoverished and violent, he steals and vandalizes, wasting all good things. He knows he cannot make them; he has no idea what it takes to make them, so they have no value to him. He would adapt well to living in a forest as a feral, destructive beast.

How does a good, mature liberal handle this collision with reality?

It was Christmas Day. I watched him enter the room and fix his gaze on my daughter. Then he rushed her, and I screamed. My husband — two inches shorter and 50 pounds lighter — somehow intercepted Andrew and knocked him to the ground. After he had been escorted from our family dinner in restraints, we sat at a table heaped with food growing cold, where my elderly parents wept and my daughter shook silently. I comforted them all and after that was done — the meal reheated and people eating — I drank every drop of alcohol in sight, even draining the half-full wine glass my mother always left.

We go into denial. Pick the easy, sociable answer — everything will be OK, don't upset the stability — and the be shocked! shocked, I tell you! when it blows up in your face.

Parallels to our society are abundant. We're engorged with the stupid, evil, parasitic and criminal, yet we insist on assuming that another course of corrective education will work magic.

We're *in denial*.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#)

Overpopulation

Mar 24th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In the news:

JONATHON PORRITT, one of Gordon Brown's leading green advisers, is to warn that Britain must drastically reduce its population if it is to build a sustainable society.

The trust will release research suggesting UK population must be cut to 30m if the country wants to feed itself sustainably.

Porritt said: "Population growth, plus economic growth, is putting the world under terrible pressure.

Population growth is one of the most politically sensitive environmental problems. The issues it raises, including religion, culture and immigration policy, have proved too toxic for most green groups.

However, Porritt is winning scientific backing. Professor Chris Rapley, director of the Science Museum, will use the OPT conference, to be held at the Royal Statistical Society, to warn that population growth could help derail attempts to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

[The Times](#)

Some signs of wakefulness here.

No matter how much we reduce emissions, each person will create a certain amount, as will the infrastructure they require.

I think most people believe that if they make themselves a tiny green apartment, they'll be fine. They forget:

- Food growth.
- Medical support.
- Roads.
- Fire, police, rescue and military.
- Stores and manufacturing.
- Libraries and government offices.
- Parking lots.
- Mail service.
- Scientific research and education.
- Cultural events, restaurants, social spaces.

All of these are needed and all require space; in fact, multiply your apartment size times ten to see the space you need.

Then take into account that for nature to thrive, it doesn't need reservations like Indians; it needs wide open spaces unbroken by fences, roads or towns. It needs its own part of the world, and we're probably selfish to touch more than one third of the open space on earth.

With that in mind, our world probably has an optimal carrying capacity of 500 million humans. Those would be able to live comfortable lives: 2500 square foot homes, families of 2-4, electric cars and culture.

If we're smart, we'll encourage everyone to not breed, except those in the 120 and above IQ range. That

will produce a society where every person has roughly comparable intelligence and so has roughly comparable earning potential, ending class war forever. It will also make a society of people who understand innately the moral and practical requirements of living life sanely, instead of living in a utilitarian-cum-individualist fantasy as we have been.

The English have taken the first step. Let's see where this goes. It's not a question of avoiding cataclysm as much as planning a better future. A planet choked with waste and piled high with stupid people, or a verdant planet with intelligent and moral guardians?

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [overpopulation](#)

Clean air extends lifespan

Mar 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

New NIEHS-supported research findings published in the New England Journal of Medicine suggest that improvements in air quality have increased average life expectancy in the U.S. by approximately five months. The researchers tracked particulate matter air pollution in 51 major metropolitan areas from 1978 through 2001 and compared those data to death records and census data. On average, life expectancy increased by 2.72 years with about 15 percent of that increase due to improved air quality. Cities that had the greatest air quality improvements saw the greatest gains in life expectancy. Overall, a reduction of 10 micrograms per cubic meter in the ambient air concentration of particulate matter was associated with an estimated increase in average life expectancy of 0.61 years.

The study signals that efforts to curtail the small, toxic particles known as PM2.5 produced by power plants, factories, cars, and trucks and inhaled by city-dwellers had significant health benefits over those two decades. Clean-air advocates and public health specialists have touted the findings and have said that even stronger standards for air pollutants are needed and justified.

Research over the past few decades, much of which has been particulate matter air pollution, has found that the foreign matter inflames lung tissue and increases the plaque that forms in arteries, contributing to heart and lung disease.

[NIH](#)

This isn't rocket science, but good to see confirmed. Ecocide destroys us, too.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Links : March 23, 2009

Mar 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I think the straight link is out of date. People need to be able to mouse over a link, or see a preview or content summary, because there's tons of stuff out there on the net and it's all shouting for our attention.

- [Barack Obama's Teleprompter's Blog](#)

Our president uses his teleprompter [more than any other president in history](#). Without it, he tends to sound like a [bumbling idiot](#). (With it, he ain't so hot either — I'm not impressed by people using "colour words," or flash emotional language, instead of communicating hard facts.)

- [I was a skunk addict, at least I think I was](#)

"I was addicted to skunk weed for four years. That it's taken me three weeks of shouty headlines about Julie Myerson's son to remember this tells you pretty much everything you need to know about dope-smokers." Out of control accuracy, and hilarity. If dope and alcohol were a great way to go through life, more people would do it. Instead, like anything else, it becomes a crutch that enslaves.

- [How We Got Here \(Rubinism Must Die\)](#)

Liberals awaken to the fact that the Clinton economic miracle, created by Robert Rubin, also created the next two depressions by overvaluing parts of our economy. "Along with former Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan, Rubin and Summers compose the high priesthood of the bubble economy. Their policy of one-sided financial deregulation is responsible for the current economic catastrophe." Even more than deregulation, they encourage asset inflation, whether Enron or the dot-com boom being irrelevant.

- [The union stranglehold on the California budget](#)

"The reason California has budget stalemate and a deficit is not because Republicans won't raise taxes (the Democrats already have), it's because Democrats have a spending problem— they can't spend enough to please their union handlers." People are afraid to attack unions because they believe they brought us deliverance from bad working conditions. What's more likely is that not being at third world levels of disorganization and undervalued labor did that. Unions are now parasites who have effectively killed our automakers.

- [US Post Service looks for new ways to cut losses](#)

A victim of affirmative action, the Postal Service did everything it could to hire people on the basis of color, gender, and so on — but not competence. As a result, it got saddled with a boatload of lazy and inefficient people who are replacing the older group, which is people who like many schoolteachers may have had more lucrative options but preferred a low-stress workplace. When people make decisions this stupid, you have to cheer the fail.

- [How many generations does it take for traits to solidify?](#)

Forty years after the start of the experiment, 70 to 80 percent of the foxes are now Class IE – the "domesticated elite". When raised with humans, they are affectionate devoted animals, capable of forming strong bonds with their owner.

These "elite" foxes also exhibit domestic features such as depigmentation (1,646% increase in frequency), floppy ears (35% increase in frequency), short tails (6,900% increase in frequency), and other traits also seen frequently in domesticated animals.

This experiment revealed how it takes only a few generations for a trait to become more prevalent given a rigorous selection attractor. But when you think about it, since populations bloom exponentially, whatever does breed takes over very rapidly. Also has interesting implications for the universal aspects of domestication.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

No-culture is still culture that wants to destroy other cultures

Mar 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

If we have categories "A" and "not A," is there a grey area?

The soldier testified that the "clear" message of literature distributed to troops by the rabbinate was: "We are the Jewish people, we came to this land by a miracle, God brought us back to this land and now we need to fight to expel the Gentiles who are interfering with our conquest of this holy land."

[The Independent](#)

Answer: there's A, not A, and no grey area.

However, this pattern iterates over every square foot of the earth.

In Israel, is a German the right person to be there? No.

In Israel, is an Arab the right person to be there? No.

Israel was founded to preserve the Jewish religion, culture, values, language(s) and heritage.

No one else but Jews should be there.

In Germany, is a Jew the right person to be there? No.

In Germany, is an Arab the right person to be there? No.

Multiculturalism is a marketing scheme. Promoted by the left as a way of increasing their demographic power, and the left borrows exclusively from marketers, entertainment figures, pundits, etc. — opinion industry people — not those who actually make things. Multiculturalism is globalism.

The globalized — those of mixed race — are a race themselves. And a religion. And a culture. True, it's a culture of no-culture, a religion of no-religion, and a race of mixed races, but it's composed of people who want to destroy anyone who is not liked them. They hate those with their own ethnic group, religion and culture, and want to replace them.

Maggie Anderson drives 14 miles to buy groceries, which might seem curious given that she lives in bustling Oak Park, Ill. She and her husband, John, patronize gas stations in Rockford and Phoenix, Ill. They travel 18 miles to a health food store in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood for vitamins, supplements and personal care products.

The reason? They want to solve what they call "the crisis in the black community." They want to buy black.

The Andersons, African-Americans who rose from humble means, are attempting to spend their money for one year exclusively with black-owned businesses and are encouraging other African-Americans to do the same. It is part experiment, part social activism campaign.

[Baltimore Sun](#)

The fragmentation of the liberal democratic mandate that everyone be equal, dovetailing with the liberal

humanist utilitarian that insists they all be treated as having the same capacities and motivations, started some time ago but now reaches new peaks.

The election of Barack Obama forced Americans to consider what type of society they want to live in. One with a culture, or one with political dogma of equality standing in for culture?

The Gaza incursions of Israel have forced another self-questioning: if Israel is there to preserve the Jewish culture, language, values, customs and heritage/people, isn't it fair that they throw out other groups — including those that will obviously outbreed them within two decades and thus gain political control of their democracy? Why, yes... a troubling question.

I've been saying this for years:

I think every ethnic and cultural group should stick together, to protect themselves from the herd of people without culture, values, religion, or heritage to protect.

If we did that, we'd have culture as a barrier to commerce and politics running roughshod over our common sense. When "whatever's popular is right" is our only rule, and is not mediated by culture, we end up in a civilization of the lowest common denominator.

Here's the other option, which reads like an absurdist comedy:

One side hurls insults at a vein-popping screech. The other side replies.

I make my way to the front. More gestures, more insults and many references to the other side and their alleged sexual orientation.

The only boundary to behaviour is the one provided by the cops.

What is this about again?

What are these people actually doing here?

Some idiot in the crowd throws a placard on a stick over hundreds of heads on the remote chance it might hit a Nazi.

It doesn't. It hits me.

The sign came from the side promoting diversity and tolerance and non-violence.

Canoe.ca

We've forgotten what we're fighting for, because we've failed to notice that the real battle is to fight actual problems, not each other. But instead, we cling to unrealistic ideas and use them to make ourselves seem clever to each other, and then bash each others' brains out for the right to deny reality.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [race](#)

The freedom-order cycle

Mar 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Let me make a hypothesis here: if you want to be an ueber-tyrant, the best way is to get your citizens involved in some drama unrelated to the actual question of how you will rule the nation.

For example, you can set up a government that makes rules, and then rule through media opinion; or you can set up a media that bloviates irrelevantly, and a government that regulates some things, and rule behind the scenes by what companies you buy and what they do. There are infinite ways.

I don't consider this conspiracy thinking because it's common sense. Once you see that power is having the ability to make a bunch of monkeys do the same thing at the same time, you can see infinite conduits to it. Money. Status. Memetics. Police states. Bribes. Heck, you could probably run a tidy tyranny with just a really good coupon program.

Most conspiracy thinkers worry about a shadow government. Most historians realize that instead there's likely to be a shifting population with enough money to get their changes into the mainstream. They don't conspire, and that's the problem. They survive off of society but have no interest in redirecting it from ruin; after all, they'll be fine, and they have money and like most people, they don't think past next week much less next generation.

The way most people approach politics reminds me of how the USA approached the Vietnam war: we were trained to face a big industrialized Army that charged at us with all that it had; instead, we were fighting a disorganized but well-trained army with grenades and AK-47s. Your planes designed to eliminate factories don't work well against places where ten guys in a cave are making the ammunition for each local region.

We look for organization and ideology in politics, but really, there's neither. The unasked question is "toward what end do we rule?" and those who rule by money don't want us to ask that. Instead, they want us to accept that there is some goal, and start fighting amongst ourselves. Why? So they can conduct business as usual, because to a businessperson, government and ideology invariably screw things up. And unlike government, business is constant and cleanly logical: make money / feed family.

Most civilizations in the latter halves of their lives loop through a cycle that gains intensity as it repeats: it's the freedom-order cycle. The people want more freedom, which in turn empowers insane, stupid and criminal people to create more socialized costs (costs passed on to everyone) and to fragment any direction the society had, which in turn causes the remaining responsible people to demand protection. So it becomes a class war, with a huge mass of irresponsible people opposing the responsible people who have money, and the society beats itself to death in a futile, all-encompassing, pointless war.

The presumption of ideology derives from this conflict. The masses always have ideology that disguises self-interest; the responsible bourgeois, middle class, etc. don't need it and don't have it. "Be responsible" isn't an ideology, it's an ethos. In the view of the middle classes, ideology is what you invent to justify having failed at life. In the view of the masses, not having an ideology means you just don't care about fellow human beings. This division enables the society to never focus on the actual issue, which is designing itself as an organism that thrives.

In exploring their environment, ants create huge trail systems like motorway networks. Many researchers have remarked that we may have much to learn from the way ant traffic flows along these trails which seem to be free of the jams that plague our roads.

[T]he average speed of the ants remains constant, regardless of the density of the traffic. There is no transition to a nonlinear flow, at least not in the conditions that this group studied.

Let's put that in perspective. Ant traffic flow is like rush hour traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike

travelling bumper-to bumper at the 55 mph.

So what's the secret? John and his mates aren't entirely sure but they've found a pretty good clue: ants never overtake. Not ever. Instead they form into platoons in which all the ants move at the same speed. Increase the density of ant traffic and the platoons simply join together to form larger groups. This is how the velocity remains the same while the density increases. That makes ant traffic significantly different from other types of traffic in which congestion occurs, such as road traffic and internet packet traffic.

[Technology Review](#)

What if instead of basing our society around uniform density, we based it around uniform velocity? Meaning that we ensure that everyone is moving in roughly the same direction at roughly the same speed, and for it sacrifice equality of distribution of energy — density.

What if instead of basing our society around the regulation of density in a static context, we based our society around having a goal and moving toward it together? That way, we would escape this endless thrashing between wealth redistribution and wealth retribution.

We could do this, and, as Plato points out, it's how civilizations in their early stages operate. Pick a working values system, religion, heritage and language, and develop it over time. That's how culture both changes radically and stays the same. And it would be relatively easy to get back to this stage. Specifically, our society is getting exhausted by the constant thrashing, and people are ready to split it up.

If we broke it into states with more power than they have now, they could define themselves, and whichever prospered would rule the new land. Technology is the wild card here, as it could make some areas disproportionately prosperous and so make the choice for us. However, that's not a show-stopper, just something to be aware of.

If not, we'll never be able to face issues like this one:

The President of the United Nations General Assembly has told delegates at the 5th World Water Forum (WWF) in Istanbul, Turkey, that, "those who are committed to the privatization of water, making it a commodity like oil, are denying people a human right as basic as the air we breathe."

In a speech delivered by his senior advisor on water Maude Barlow, UN president Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann said, "We must work quickly to guarantee that access to drinking water constitutes a fundamental right of all peoples..."

[OpEd news](#)

Here we are at the haves versus have-nots again. The have-nots want equality; the haves want to defend themselves against this. (As you know from [the civilization cycle](#), when a society grants too much power to the people, the have-nots assault the haves who then defend themselves, in a perpetual cycle where battle lines are defined more by [responsibility to reality](#) than any ideological or wealth-oriented attributes.)

Of course, the water should be viewed as a nihilist would view it: structurally. Water maintains ecosystems; it is a vital part of the landscape; humans use it too, but that usage must be in balance with the rest in proportion to the importance of humans. I rank humans pretty highly, as a species, but we need to ask ourselves whether unfettered human growth produces new heights for humanity, and then see if we want to sacrifice our environment for said unfettered human growth.

Another source shows us this conflict in bare terms:

Liberalism that was built into our Constitution, insuring that the state solely preserve our natural rights to life, liberty and property against the aggression of other individuals, and moreover against the tyranny of the majority. It was this system of government with limited powers, in

which people could choose their own form of morality over that imposed by the force of the state. This choice of what was moral could be made at one's own peril: people could choose to accumulate as much wealth as possible or sacrifice all of their wealth to charity; businessmen could operate for consumers at a profit or for the "public good" at a loss; soul-searchers could choose to live good Christian lives or become pot-smoking hippies or dwell in hedonistic communes.

The point is that people had choice, and they were responsible for their choices and protected from harmful choices of others by the rule of law.

[Socialist Watch](#)

The American right is drugged on fear of socialism. Don't let that put you off, because every society is somewhat socialistic since it shares infrastructure in common. What American conservatives would say if they had balls is that they want natural selection to return, and in order to do that, they cannot be obligated to support other *people*. They are cool with providing public services and infrastructure, but in any case where these are measured by equality of people, what happens is a subsidizing of those below the average which results in everyone else waiting on them. That's obviously a bad practice.

Unfortunately, American conservatives and Ayn Rand junkies and Ludwig von Mises types are all in denial of one basic fact: we are in a civilization, and civilizations are by their nature collectivist, which means that we must lead others to get things done and that we suffer the consequences of others. Natural selection is a broken model in this context. It only works on a pioneer, frontier basis. This is why people have not flocked to the anarchistic libertarian strain, nor have they returned to the American conservative parties. The idea of suspending social rule is not appealing to most intelligent people.

It's possible to take a middle path: we want everyone moving in the same direction, and to exile those who are not cool with that, and in the meantime, we will take care of everyone who is helping us move toward that direction. This requires us to have a goal; a goal requires a consensus about what is important; a consensus requires that individuals set aside their pretenses and selfishness for long enough to come together in agreement.

That's our only hurdle, and while it's a small one, in the fears of the underconfident, it is taller than Everest. Humanity either beats this issue or begins the long, slow, lugubrious walk down the evolutionary ladder to a comfortable existence as talking monkeys.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [anarchism](#) · [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [libertarianism](#)

How to game democracy

Mar 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Why screw around with voting machines when you can sympathizers at an unethical paper to slander your candidate?

The photos were published in the run-up to Saturday's election in the state of Queensland, in which the right-wing politician failed to win a seat.

She said she believed the photographs may have been a factor.

"I have said all week I'd be the first person in Australia to apologise to Pauline Hanson if it were proven the photographs were not of her," Neil Breen, the editor of Sydney's Sunday Telegraph wrote.

"We've proven it ourselves, so Pauline, I'm sorry," he added.

Damon Johnston, the editor of Melbourne's Sunday Herald Sun, said: "We acknowledge that Ms Hanson was right all along – and we were wrong."

[BBC](#)

And such a sincere apology! Luckily, what they did is 100% legal, so the proles won't notice, even if we still have no proof that (a) Bush stole an election (b) voting machines were at fault or (c) it wasn't a counter-tactic to the other side registering felons and other cannon fodder to vote.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

The nanny state makes its own disasters

Mar 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Running away from a problem, it caters to the mentality of those who perpetuate that problem, norming us all to their level of stupidity:

The Department of Health labelled the campaign: "Condom confidence boosts sex appeal".

The £5.2 million publicity drive tells women in their late teens and early 20s that men are attracted to girls who carry the contraceptives.

It advises that "men like nothing better than a woman who knows what she wants".

Recommended phrases include "If you make it clean, I'll make it dirty" and "Let's get you ready for the ride of your life".

Women are told that they are no longer regarded as "easy" for carrying a condom.

[The Telegraph](#)

Ah, lowest common denominator, if you were only rare — but you're not, you're the default, and the default of all things in life is basically failure.

Easy girls are only attractive to underconfident men. Women who carry around condoms in case they get lucky in the toilet paper aisle at the local grocery store are people incapable of planning their lives.

Normally we call these drones, whores, sluts, slaves, etc.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why listening to the crowd is stupid

Mar 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Point 1: **People don't know what they want**

Time and again, psychological studies have found that we overestimate how happy we will be after winning a prize, starting a new relationship or taking revenge against those who have wronged us. We also overrate our disappointment at bad test results, disability or failure to progress at work. Try as we might, we consistently fail to forecast our own emotional reactions, and we even fail to accurately remember our past experiences to be used as guides.

Gilbert says that the main reason for this is an inability to accurately imagine future events. We can close our eyes and try to picture ourselves in the future but we focus on the wrong things, we predict that our emotions will last longer than they do, and so on. Some scientists have tried to improve things by training people to mentally time-travel with more accuracy but these attempts have been largely unsuccessful.

[Science Blogs](#)

Us trying to understand ourselves is a risky proposition. First, it freaks us out that our consciousness arises from our bodies, because our consciousness "feels" more like a gift from the gods. Second, we don't know ourselves that well. Third, because we're accustomed to measuring everything by impact on ourselves, we reduce the world to a binary: me versus It. The result is a paranoid, weird, self-important overestimation of all emotional effects.

Point 2: **Everyone has something to lose**

A landmark effort to transform Southern California's coastal waters into a network of havens for marine life has sparked a fierce debate over where to locate no-fishing zones that ecologists believe are needed to replenish the surrounding seas.

"Every square foot of the Southern California coastline is somebody's favorite fishing spot," said Steve Benavides, a tax attorney and diver of 40 years who is among the group of stakeholders hashing out their differences.

[LA Times](#)

That's right: you cannot make an omelette without breaking some eggs.

To make intelligent decisions, you need to ruin someone's dream. Oh well — their dream was probably unrealistic then. Move on, instead of wallowing.

Wallowing is to demand that everyone be represented, which dooms us by another process: the arrival of the stupid.

Stupid people destroy any political system they get their hands on. Whether it's democratic, or autocratic, at some point stupidity prevails. We need more people who can recognize stupidity and beat it down.

Otherwise, when they arrive, as they inevitably do, they wreck the whole process.

Posted in: [Politics](#).
Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

Depression: a lack of goal

Mar 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Modern societies tend to produce two kinds of people: oblivious fools, or obliviots, who fail to notice failure and just blunder on like drunken gourmands; and depressed smarter people, who realize that the long-term prognosis for such stupid decisions is awful, but simultaneously note that everyone else is an obliviot, therefore there's little chance of change.

So they sink into depression and solipsism (right), or depression and narcissism (left), which in fact *worsens* the problem by removing them from interaction with reality, which is the one thing that could actually undo the problem.

It's brilliant.

Now, new research on depression shows us how it is habit-forming. Notice bad things, live in a state of terror and negativity, and soon you can't see good things — like how just acting sensibly toward a goal could remove all the problems you see, easily.

While depression is often linked to negative thoughts and emotions, a new study suggests the real problem may be a failure to appreciate positive experiences.

Researchers at Ohio State University found that depressed and non-depressed people were about equal in their ability to learn negative information that was presented to them.

But depressed people weren't nearly as successful at learning positive information as were their non-depressed counterparts.

[OSU](#)

Instead, people complain and make themselves sicker, while indulging in surrogate activities like video games and shopping as an activity and casual sex and television watching, which makes them feel more impotent and thus more depressed — but not while they're doing the activity. Like drug addiction, the activity creates its own cycle.

This feeds into one of our most primitive tendencies, one which even predates our monkey heritage: to look for threats before comforts. It's just a good idea, in the wild. In an orderly civilization, it's a good idea. In a chaotic and centerless civilization like ours, *it is debilitating*.

Imagine I show you a list of 30 words. One of the words is written in green ink. The rest are blue.

Half an hour goes by and I ask you to recall the words on the list. Which word are you most likely to remember?

The one written in green ink, of course. This is the "von Restorff Effect": Novelty grabs our attention.

It's basic cognitive hardwiring. Journalists don't zero in on "man bites dog" stories because they're perverse. They do it because they're human.

When a story breaks, grabs the media's attention, and gets people talking, something else happens. The story ceases to be about a single incident. Instead, it creates a narrative.

The absence of a narrative means a story must stand or fall on its own. And when a story runs

contrary to a narrative, it is positively resisted.

[The Ottawa Citizen](#)

Another word for narrative is “script,” as in, “since we were looking for guys dressed in black carrying bicycles, he fit right into our script.”

The media uses these means to control you: novelty and its stepchild, negativity — since evolution has primed you to first look for threats — and a script into which all news must fit. We could call that script a “justification,” as we do in our manifesto.

When those who have money and power want you to jump, they make a few calls to their friends and business associates. They put out the meme: *X* is the new threat, or *Y* is another instance of the current script of threats, whether it be global warming, hackers, racists, Satanists or godless Communism.

That’s how you keep a nation in line when they don’t have much in common as far as ideologies, values, etc. go. You manipulate them with carrot and stick: we free, they bad.

Much as democracy relies on having a horde of people who don’t read or think very deeply about issues, modern society relies on useful idiots to bleat out that the sky is falling any time such a meme comes around.

In individuals, they need an abstract future goal to follow that can always develop them. “I want to be better at my task” is even healthier than “I want to be the best at my task” because the latter compares you to others, while the former compares you to yourself.

So it is with nations.

“We are the Macedonians, and we want to make the next generation of Macedonians better than any previous generation,” is the type of message you expect from *organic society* civilizations.

[Amerika](#)

People do best when they have an abstract goal related to a values system, and a society that backs them up so they feel rewarded in pursuing those values, even if something bad happens.

Witness soldiers returning from Vietnam, and the legendary amounts of post-traumatic stress disorder they experienced. They came home to a society that shunned them for participation in what was viewed as a failed activity. They were seen as losers and failures, babykillers and primitive, violent morons.

In contrast, American soldiers returning from other wars met cheering crowds — and so found it easy to forget things like killing babies (bombing civilian areas guarantees baby death — they explode like pomegranates in the high-pressure waves of modern explosives). They had a much lower incidence of PTSD even though they often faced more horrifying circumstances.

If you have a society that encourages you forward, to positive goals, you can escape depression and feel you’ll be rewarded for the right thing.

If your society is chaotic, and unclear on its goals as [later-stage civilizations](#) are, you will find no affirmation of your attempts to do the right thing, and will feel rejected, and become more prone to observe the negative and make the negative define your narrative for the future.

As you can see, it’s easy to undo this damage: we need to start with the seeds of negativity, liberate ourselves from them, and then start looking around for the things we can do that are positive. We already know the negative too well.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Fallout of the nation-state

Mar 20th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We don't like to recognize small ethnicities. We'd rather lump them in with the geographic and political influences we think should manage them. That, in turn, causes them to detest us.

Greece has blocked the NATO and EU ambitions of Macedonia for the past 18 years over a bizarre name dispute. The ongoing controversy threatens the very cohesion of the diminutive Balkan republic, which holds presidential elections this Sunday.

At first glance, Achlada, with its snow-white church, looks like a sleepy, idyllic Greek village. During the Ottoman era, however, Achlada was called Krusoradi, named after the Slavic word for pear tree. As a result of the Second Balkan War in 1913, the village became part of Greece and was renamed, coinciding with the partition of the historic region of Macedonia among Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. This part of Achlada's history is barely spoken about.

The dispute over Macedonia has smoldered since 1991, when the republic declared its independence. Europe's problem child will soon come of age, but the argument over what its name will ultimately be remains unresolved.

According to Athens, true Macedonians only live south of the border, speak Greek and are the descendants of Alexander the Great. For this reason, the Greeks argue, Slavs, who began to settle in the historically significant region only about 1,000 years after the golden age of the Macedonian royal dynasty, cannot simply call themselves Macedonians — not across the border in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and certainly not in Greece proper.

[Der Spiegel](#)

People need a center.

In individuals, they need an abstract future goal to follow that can always develop them. "I want to be better at my task" is even healthier than "I want to be the best at my task" because the latter compares you to others, while the former compares you to yourself.

So it is with nations.

"We are the Macedonians, and we want to make the next generation of Macedonians better than any previous generation," is the type of message you expect from *organic society* civilizations like [Pan-Nationalist](#) ones.

If we all work together to ensure nationalism for each ethnicity, we lose the political drama of fighting it out as nation-states, or political entities based on geography, finance and political power, not nationality.

Here's another Nationalist who's discovered this:

I joined the Ku Klux Klan in 1984. It was one stop in my search for truth. I have always been a radical. In the late 1960's I became associated, through a friend, with members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The SDS was a college campus-based Maoist sect that was heavily influenced by the communist Progressive Labor Party. I was not a member of SDS but I consumed most of their literature and immersed myself in their philosophy, particularly in opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Believing there was no solution to be found in the middle of the road, and not finding the answers I was looking for in the radical left, I began to migrate toward the right.

The Klan in the 1920s was involved, in some parts of the country, with pro-union activities. For example, in Williamson County, Illinois back in 1922, a mixed-race crowd of union coal miners attacked strike-breakers killing 20 of them. This incident was called the Herrin Massacre. Within two years, Herrin and the rest of Williamson County backed one of the nation's strongest local Klan organizations. Many in the 1920s and 30s shared joint Klan-union membership. The United Auto Workers, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, and Akron rubber workers were all examples of unions with Klan support.

The Klan has historically tried to organize colored divisions. Klan leaders met with Marcus Mosiah Garvey and gave a monetary gift to Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. The Socialist Party and the Klan formed a 1924 alliance in Milwaukee to elect John Kleist, a socialist and a klansman, to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The Klan has at times appealed to militant workers.

I believe to be reactionary is fatal to our goals and I constantly preach against it. I encourage the study of left-wing and right-wing movements. I say we should take what we can from every source.

It was back in 1985 when I first met Osiris Akkebala, Chief Elder of the Pan-Afrikan International Movement (PAIN). Chief Akkebala hosted a radio show in an all-black community where we had a scheduled demonstration. PAIN follows a Garvian philosophy, and understanding that Marcus Garvey had met with the Klan in the 1920s, Chief Osiris approached me for a private meeting. We hit it off well and have been good friends ever since.

Sometime in 1990 we began holding joint demonstrations—the Klan in their robes and the Africans in their dashikis. Needless to say it sparked quite a backlash. Many klansmen were angry at me for even considering such a thing. In my view it was a match inspired by God. Why should we have a problem with black men who are strict racial separatists and want to establish a homeland on the continent of Africa? I have even publicly endorsed the payment of reparations to blacks but only for the purpose of repatriation back to Africa.

I believe that all people have a right to self-determination, a right to choose their own government, and their own religion. Clearly, blacks in America have not had those opportunities. As Minister Louis Farrakhan said: "If we can't get along together, then we need to separate."

[Folk and Faith](#)

What happens if there is no ethnic majority, no national consciousness, no *organic society* composed of simultaneously similar values, customs, language, culture and heritage?

Why then, society becomes a big open-air mall, and that's what [the rest of the world](#) fears from the senescent civilizations of the USA and Europe.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [nationalism](#)

Why the world fears the dying West

Mar 20th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

From travel guru Rick Steves:

When I came home after the most learning 12 days of travel I've ever had in my life, I realized this is a proud nation of 70 million people. They are loving parents, motivated by fear for their kids' future and the culture they want to raise their kids in. I had people walk across the street to tell me they don't want their kids to be raised like Britney Spears. They are afraid Western culture will take over their society and their kids will be sex toys, drug addicts and crass materialists.

I just feel we underestimate the spine of these people. They will fight and die to defend their values. And their values are not to destroy America and Israel. Their values are to defend their way of life against Western encroachment.

They've given up democracy because they know a theocracy will stand strong against encroaching Western values.

We think they're terrorists, but we have to remember that 96 percent of the planet is not American. And most of them look at us like an empire. When I write about us being an empire, it touches a nerve more than almost anything else I write. I get so much angry feedback.

But I don't say we're an empire. I say the world sees us as one. I say there's never been an empire that didn't have disgruntled people on its fringes looking for reasons to fight. We think, "Don't they have any decency? Why don't they just line up in formation so we can carpet bomb them?" But they're smart enough to know that's a quick prescription to being silenced in a hurry.

[Salon](#)

As is typical on Salon.com, they try to make the rest of the article a hit piece on Republicans. Democrats good, Republicans primitive ignorant fundamentalist terrorists. I think Steves is mostly cool with that ideology, which is shame unto him.

What if trading democracy for theocracy brought more stability? What if the biggest enemy isn't government, but a population out of control, drowning in their own desires and becoming more neurotic by the minute?

Interestingly, we heard the same thing from al-Qaeda:

"The Americans impose themselves on everyone who believes in his religion and his rights. They accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists. Those children that have no weapons and have not even reached maturity. At the same time they defend a country with its airplanes and tanks, and the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children."

"As we mentioned before, Allah ordered us in this religion to purify Muslim land of all non-believers, and especially the Arabian Peninsula where the Ka'ba is. After WWII, the Americans became more aggressive and oppressive, especially in the Muslim world. We are surprised this question is coming from Americans. Each action will solicit a similar reaction. We must use such punishment to keep your evil away from Muslims, Muslim children and women. American history does not distinguish between civilians and military, and not even women and children. They are the ones who used the bombs against Nagasaki. Can these bombs distinguish between infants and military? America does not have a religion that will

prevent it from destroying all people."

"Wherever we look, we find the US as the leader of terrorism and crime in the world. The US does not consider it a terrorist act to throw atomic bombs at nations thousands of miles away, when it would not be possible for those bombs to hit military troops only. These bombs were rather thrown at entire nations, including women, children and elderly people and up to this day the traces of those bombs remain in Japan. The US does not consider it terrorism when hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers in Iraq died for lack of food or medicine. So, there is no base for what the US says and this saying does not affect us, because we, by the grace of God, are dependent on Him, Praise and Glory be to Him, getting help from Him against the US. As for the last part of your question, we are fulfilling a duty which God, Praise and Glory be to Him, decreed for us. We look upon those heroes, those men who undertook to kill the American occupiers in Riyadh and Khobar (Dhahran). We describe those as heroes and describe them as men. They have pulled down the disgrace and submissiveness off the forehead of their nation."

"Everything is made possible to protect the blood of the American citizen while the bloodshed of Muslims is allowed in every place. With this kind of behavior, the U.S. government is hurting itself, hurting Muslims and hurting the American people."

"We were good friends. We fought together in the same trench against the Russians until Allah sent them away in humiliating defeat. You mentioned that he works for me—we do not have anyone who works for someone else. We all work for Allah and await his reward. And regarding your mention of his attempt to assassinate President Clinton, it is not surprising. I did not know about it, but it is not surprising.

As I said, every action solicits a similar reaction. What does Clinton expect from those whom he killed and assaulted their children and mothers? This is not a surprising matter."

[Al-Qaeda Appreciation Society of North America \(Aqasna\)](#)

The response is universal: the biggest player on the field is feared because he is powerful.

In the case of the West, he is also feared because he is decadent. Do you want your daughter to grow up like Britney Spears, and to know thirty anonymous men in sexual congress before marrying an idiot?

Do you want your children to drink alcohol and watch TV as a means of numbing their neurotic lives?

Do you want your kids to have advertising instead of culture, marketing instead of history, and fear of offending others instead of morality?

That's why people oppose the United States: because we have no native culture, we have become the raw force of the marketplace, destroying culture wherever we go and replacing it with Coca-Cola, Britney Spears' gaping vagina, and psychologists who tell us everything is OK but still cannot center our lives.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [jihad](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [race](#)

Apropos comment on a news blog

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Not only this paper but most media are reporting stuff that is so immaterial to what is impacting our lives, it's no wonder society is so dumbed down. It's more about entertaining us than reporting the truth.

[OCR](#)

Well, *duh* — it's a business.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Dr. Albert Bartlett Was Right

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

The 4,317,000 births in 2007 just edged out the figure for 1957, at the height of the baby boom. The increase reflected a slight rise in childbearing by women of all ages, including those in their 30s and 40s, and a record share of births to unmarried women.

But in contrast with the culturally transforming postwar boom, when a smaller population of women bore an average of three or four children, the recent increase mainly reflects a larger population of women of childbearing age, said Stephanie J. Ventura, chief of reproductive statistics at the center and an author of the new report. Today, the average woman has 2.1 children.

[+]

The arithmetic of Dr. Bartlett finally has the required evidence to prove him correct: less babies born on a percentage basis from a higher population produces a positive feedback effect which means more and more babies being born with little being done to stop it.

This new evidence should alarm anyone within the borders of the US. More US consumers wasting more valuable resources. As mentioned in earlier posts, let's do the Earth and ourselves a huge favor by reducing our population down to under 1 billion before nature does it for us.

For more, see:

[Corrupt.org interview with Dr. Bartlett on YouTube](#)

[Dr. Bartlett's video series on YouTube](#)

[Dr. Bartlett's homepage with info & resources](#)

[Corrupt.org search page of Bartlett material links](#)

Check out remarks in "The Edge" section of Boston.com for curious comments:

There is both good and bad news from the more than 4.3 million births: * The U.S. population is more than replacing itself, a healthy trend.

* However, the teen birth rate was up for the second year in a row.

[+]

Since when is the population replacing itself a healthy trend? If anything our numbers – overall, globally – should be lowered as much as possible, and Americans should be pointing the finger right at their own fellow citizens, not to far-off third world lands. Americans use many more resources on average per person and our mortality rate is much lower, so the folks doing the most damage are Americans: green lawns, supermarkets filled with products in plastic packaging, and infrastructure "needs".

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

Retreating from reality

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

It's not what happens out there in reality land; it's what I want to happen.

And by our weird logic, this "I" is not our physical brain but some weird metaphysical creation that even atheist liberals believe in.

When we go online, each of us is our own editor, our own gatekeeper. We select the kind of news and opinions that we care most about.

[T]here's pretty good evidence that we generally don't truly want good information — but rather information that confirms our prejudices. We may believe intellectually in the clash of opinions, but in practice we like to embed ourselves in the reassuring womb of an echo chamber.

Almost half of Americans now live in counties that vote in landslides either for Democrats or for Republicans, he said. In the 1960s and 1970s, in similarly competitive national elections, only about one-third lived in landslide counties.

One 12-nation study found Americans the least likely to discuss politics with people of different views, and this was particularly true of the well educated. High school dropouts had the most diverse group of discussion-mates, while college graduates managed to shelter themselves from uncomfortable perspectives.

The result is polarization and intolerance.

[NYT](#)

Welcome to pluralism. We all retreat to our own realities. Couple that with an intense belief in pleasing the self above all else, and you have some isolated people.

We even put vital issues on the backburner to retreat further into our comfortable human world of tangible numbers, objects, contracts and inclusive beliefs, far from death or natural selection or social intolerance.

For the first time in Gallup's 25-year history of asking Americans about the trade-off between environmental protection and economic growth, a majority of Americans say economic growth should be given the priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent.

Gallup first asked Americans about this trade-off in 1984, at which time over 60% chose the environmental option. Support for the environment was particularly high in 1990-1991, and in the late 1990s and 2000, when the dot-com boom perhaps made economic growth more of a foregone conclusion.

[Gallup](#)

That's downright comical. Actually, it's downright honest: people will always pick what benefits them immediately over what's right in the long term, because to be the monkey that chooses self-sacrifice first is to lose in the game of status played by the tribe.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Liberalism was originally designed to pacify the middle class

Mar 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Fascinating book, fascinating review:

Social conditions by 1848 had piled up tinder for a conflagration. Resentments over everything from unemployment and taxes to labor demands on peasants — not to mention the aspirations among regional elites for greater autonomy — had rallied support for revolution. But transforming myriad grievances into positive program proved difficult. Tocqueville saw France drifting in June from political struggle to a social war of proletariat against the propertied classes. The specter of social revolution turned many toward accommodation with governments that, however imperfect, would at least provide security.

Many older accounts of 1848 depict the year's events as a flowering of liberal nationalism crushed by the forces of order. A.J.P. Taylor described abortive revolution in Germany as a turning point that failed to turn, thereby directing Germany on a separate path — toward authoritarianism rather than liberal democracy. In "1848," Mike Rapport sympathizes with European liberals but nonetheless offers a fully nuanced portrait of a tumultuous year. Ethnic conflict and deep social tensions, he notes, complicated the task of constructing liberal, constitutional regimes. Different interests had their own agenda, and Otto von Bismarck, the German statesman, grasped an essential point when he argued that liberalism appealed only to the urban middle classes. That fact gave the revolution a narrower foundation than its architects had expected.

Ethnic conflict had a major role in the events of 1848 because nationalism served to exclude as well as unite. Liberal nationalists were caught in a now familiar dilemma: whether citizenship would rest on pluralism or require the assimilation of ethnic and religious minorities. Smaller nationalities looked suspiciously at German and Hungarian aspirations, especially when nationalist leaders spoke of Slavs with disdain. The Czech liberal Frantisek Palacky argued that Austria protected the Slavonic peoples from both internal strife and Russian domination. Localism, and loyalty to the Catholic Church, remained a strong counterweight to nationalism in Italy. Even Giuseppe Garibaldi came to see "how little the national cause inspired the local inhabitants of the countryside."

...

Conservatives before 1848 failed to implement the reforms that the most imaginative of them had envisioned to create a more flexible political order — one that would draw local elites and subjects into closer cooperation. (British leaders had managed to do just that decades before.) After 1848, the backlash against revolution brought an insistence on authority that made politics less flexible. Even where some liberal reforms survived, they operated to consolidate state power. The experience demonstrated that change with continuity works much better than revolution.

[WSJ](#)

You can find [1848: Year of Revolution by Mike Rapport](#) at your local bookstore or online.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

To the smart young people who recognize our civilization is failing

Mar 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

You will either agree, or disagree, with the statement that this civilization is failing.

Having met and known and number of highly intelligent people, especially the young, I have had first hand contact with the belief that this civilization is failing.

Items of contention:

- Idiots always win by sheer number, and stupid ideas win because they appeal to idiots.
- Truth cannot be spoken if it offends anyone, which quickly translates into truth being ignored.
- Speaking of ignored, smart people are ignored because they do not play the social game.
- Even the good life, being a doctor or lawyer and having a fat income, is laden with tedium.
- No one lives for inspiration, and people are burdened by fear, which makes them reactionary, paranoid and passive aggressive.
- The quality of industrial design, city layout, products and social systems is poor, but will never be fixed because idiots don't notice.
- Smart people, the rich, the beautiful and the independent are all loathed, or treated like celebrities who we love to see fail.
- Major problems are ignored, as is the question "Can we make life more fun to live?"
- Adults we know are in denial, oblivious to the obvious, and because they're vested in careers and politics, unwilling to consider anything with an open mind.
- Any good thing that does emerge rises, becomes clustered in imitators, and then is dragged down into a normed morass.

That's quite a list, but I'm sure I've missed a few.

If you ask the smarter kids — maybe your school has an IB, Gifted and Talented, AP or honors program — you will find that they are either cognizant of these and will not discuss them, or are troubled greatly by these.

The first group, from my experience, are the most fearful. They are aware of how badly things are turning out and are focused on having stable careers so they can have enough money to buy their way out. They get really nervous when you point out that laws depend on the society that enforces them, and that the people who police us often join revolutions.

The second group are the interesting ones. They are aware of the problems of reality, but fearless enough to believe it could easily be otherwise, and often have clear ideas how that could be achieved. Interestingly, very few of these are artists.

If you are one of these kids, of either group, this article is for you. I believe, as did Plato, that civilizations have a lifespan, and ours is in the long slow process of declining, and that most people are oblivious to this because it threatens them. Further, people are sliding backward into behaviors that are more like monkey behavior than intelligent human behavior. This means that not only is the civilization dying, but everyone behaves like a passive aggressive covert jerk and you can't call them on it because then the idiots will scream for your head.

Sounds terrible. Here's some good news:

A summary

Life sucks, sure; it sucks more now, because our civilization has gone insane.

However, most smart people freak out when they figure that out, and retreat. They withdraw into themselves.

If smart people got powerful in society instead of dropping out, met decent women/men instead of remaining single, and spread their ideas intelligently instead of having emotional reactions, this crisis would be easily solved.

But even more — it's stupid to see so many promising lives lived running away from responsibility and stupidity both, when they need to only sidestep and not retreat from the latter.

Keep an eye on the goal

[People who realize society is failing] know modern society is defined by its neurosis and the problems of its crowd-based control. As a result, it is insane, from any kind of design/results-oriented perspective, because each person is so busy justifying their individual life they cannot work together. We all know this is the path to third world decay — and I am not speaking in any way of ethnicity here. Take a group of Nords and subject them to this crap for a number of generations, and you'll get dumb people who look like Nords.

Many of the smart people I know have suicided or simply dropped out of life. They find some menial job, go to shows and buy CDs, and do things to "uplift" themselves — little rewards are surrogates for fixing the problem — and they make it by, somehow. They deny family and obligation to ideology and obligation to better themselves because they're caught in the modern neurotic fiction: reward yourself, but don't make yourself adapt, because that way you feel less in control.

In doing so, they self-defeat. They alienate themselves from the good parts of growing up, and simultaneously kill the best parts of childhood in themselves, leaving behind man-children who are really good at buying CDs, playing video games, taking drugs, getting laid, etc. but are ineffective at fixing the problems they describe. Thus they end up getting more and more bitter as they get tired of the same problems, talk a good game, and sooner or later, end up being hipsters: people who adorn themselves with ideology and art to hide their lack of solutions.

Here's that conversation:

Me: people who are not outright dumb are generally good, but they need an outlet, and some direction, because none of us has enough time to figure all this out for ourselves. If they were to apply themselves to making ideals real, they'd feel better about life.

Other dude: People feel bad because society sucks. All we've got is to make pleasurable things for ourselves, like video games and hanging out with friends. Basically, anything that claims it has hope is a lie.

I guess I'm eternally on the side of "it's better to light a candle than curse the darkness," because cursing the darkness has to my knowledge never fixed a goddamn thing on Earth.

There's a lot of people like this: smarter than average, basically nice, but because they're depressed, kind of screwed up and prone to lash out.

I would like to reach out to these people and help them see a few things:

- You're going to get old, so pick the best parts of growing up, and face them and make good of them.
- Society sucks ass but can be fixed and it actually does not take much effort.

Doing things to please yourself only kills your ability to reach out to things of greater beauty in the world at large, so you end up killing your dreams and hopes in order to feel good for a few moments.

- Pretending that you're cool by shrugging off all obligation is a path to impotent hipsterism.
- If you feel insignificant, it's because you are. Find truth, join truth and work for truth, and you get a reward not in your ego but in your brain as a whole: what I'm doing is important and correct.
- The illusion is that we're free of nature and have God-like control of ourselves. We aren't. We don't. We're glorified monkeys struggling to reach the next phase of evolution before we destroy ourselves.

I think we need re-engagement; reconnecting to life through things larger than oneself, hopefully abstract but realistic things like ideology, structured philosophy or religion, or nurturing of organic patterns. Sitting back and saying "society sucks" makes you impotent. Finding a way to engage, and start the *kaizen* process of improving the non-optimal is not only healthy for you but leads humanity toward a possible survival.

The gloom and doom that oppresses smart spirits is unnecessary. Things are bad; things are always bad. It takes good people to get out of themselves and re-engage with a clear idea of what they do want, as opposed to simply knowing what they do not want, to reverse this pattern.

Give up on yourself as an exclusive goal; reach out to the world, and put yourself into it.

You will feel better, be more effective, and escape the ghetto of individualism which is the hallmark of all dying societies — whether in this modern time or not.

The Manteen Ghetto

There's something I call The Manteen Ghetto

It's where adult men, ages 18-48, continue trying to act like children. They do this to defer the questions of life. When you realize society is fucked up, and you don't want a part of it, you have three basic choices: say nothing, become an "activist" outsider who agitates to destroy it, or join it — and then change it from within.

Of course, we all know that "I'm Changing It From Within" is an excuse for many. I'm changing it from within — by buying this Mercedes-Benz. But... what idea cannot be inverted by hipsters, who use it as a justification and not a reason why? There are ecofascist hipsters, too. Traditionalist hipsters. Anarchist hipsters. National Socialist hipsters. Zionist hipsters. Zoroastrian hipsters. Rastafarian hipsters... the list is infinite, because any idea can go from being an "end" (abstract, ongoing goal) to a "means" (justification for an existence of poverty and self-indulgence, hiding one's ordinary unexceptional disillusioned underachiever-ness).

In contrast to joining humanity, gaining power in society, and using that to influence people closer to truthful ideas — a process called *kaizen* or incremental improvement as a method of design — activism and shut-in-ism allow you to drop out. Over time, even if your original motivation was to change the world, you find yourself falling farther away from what anyone can relate to, and so you start using your Motherfucking Important Ideology (MII) as a justification and not a reason why. Soon you're a hipster by accident, but a hipster nonetheless.

Joining society takes some balls if you're not going to compromise your ideals, but life was never made for fence-sitters, nancypants, metrosexuals and emos. Joining society requires that you join your ideology to action that also makes itself pragmatic. You live for something outside yourself: family, friends, culture, heritage and ideology, all together at the same time. (And I don't include in this the odious hybrid of "activist businesses" like eco-coffee and vegetarian restaurants where you pay what you think you owe... the only good examples of this, like

Rutamaya Coffee and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, put business first.)

It's easier, actually, to live for something outside yourself. That way, when you act, you're not acting selfishly, but to assert a positive order around you. Family. Community. Eugenics. Art. All of these fit those profile.

Your alternative is to be one of those people who has fallen into their own self-conception, and is now using the external world to try to create a self-identity. E.g. a hipster.

These people strand themselves in The Manteen Ghetto. They act like teens, but are grown men and women. They use art, music, ideas, etc. to justify themselves, to hide the fact that they're living lives of pleasuring themselves alone and are not contributing anything. They are the opposite of living for something outside the self, like joining society so you can have a family, a career, and power and influence to enact your ideology. They're drop-outs.

What does it mean to mature past teenage years? Back to living for more than yourself.

You start to realize you're a gradient. From the time you are born until death, you're slowly eroding. If you make it to old age, you slowly erode before you die, and then at some point, death is a release. So it goes. But you need to plan for the whole lifespan, and you start to see how acting like a teen will be stupid. So there's a 65-year-old hipster next door who's still really into punk rock... pathetic. He dropped out, and now he wants you to see how cool he is so he feels better about having nothing in life and having influenced nothing, because he has nothing. Food is wealth, wealth is power, and power is how you change ideas... changing ideas is how you make society better without you and fifteen hundred of your grubby friends grabbing rifles and rushing at the gov't troops.

You also start to realize that the best rewards are outside the self. Like making change, making a family means you're populating earth with better people. Only idiots say "don't breed" to the best and smartest nations on earth. Only idiots insist that, because they are retarded, everyone must be and so they should not spawn. If you've got a brain, find someone else with a brain, and make more beautiful, smart kids. Fuck the doubters. Like making change, contributing to your community — gaining power, having people trust you and your wisdom, and thus having Memetic Influence — means you're living for more than yourself.

There are many ways to start. I know that many of you will offer up that tired modern excuse I'm Busy but I'm sorry to tell you: you're full of shit. Every person I've known who was heading anywhere in life spent some time in unrecognized volunteer efforts. Even when they were in graduate school, launching careers, etc. "I'm Busy" is a coverup for your own disorganization, or your pursuit of dead-end self-stimulus, like masturbating, video games, movies, etc. You can sacrifice some of that time and you won't miss it, because you'll have replaced a closed-circuit reward with an enduring one.

Things that unite the self and the world are rare, but they are fulfilling, and make you regret death less. Family, culture and healthy activity come to mind. Working for [a good charitable activist group] also comes to mind: it's something you can do for a few hours per week or day, see immediate effect as healthier memes dominate over shitty ones, and gain experience you'll use your whole lifestyle.

Anything else is an excuse to remain in The Manteen Ghetto, pleasing no one but yourself, and being correspondingly empty as a result.

The Remnant

I think there's only about 5% of the population which realizes how completely screwed this society is.

Not simply "inconvenient to me" or "has problems" but "moribund," as in on its way to failure, and hell for anyone with any brains in the meantime.

These are the kind of people who tune in to Nietzsche, Burroughs or Slayer.

Unfortunately, they are caught in a horrible dilemma: how to have hope? They are suspended between total hopelessness, and a sense of illusory happiness that they can never fully trust.

It's tempting to chuck in the towel and say, "Everything is fucked, so I'm just going to survive marginally and take any pleasure I can find." That's basically what Satanism, Randism, etc. are. Fuck you, I'm going to get my pile, and stay away. It's what the hippies did and why those hypocrites became a generation of bankers.

I guess if I could pass on the knowledge of the last two decades, it'd be this: just like a death metal band, you have a choice. You can either decide life is too hard and chuck it all away, or realize that "the end is near" describes a long slow process that can be averted and/or survived by a bottleneck remnant who then dominate in the next cycle of history. If you get bitter, you sacrifice your best years of creativity and end up with nothing AND no power to change anything AND a legacy of even greater bitterness, resentment, and excuses made for poor performance at life. Congratulations, you've become an irresponsible disillusioned underachiever like 99% of the people in modern society. It's like joining a club with no entrance requirement.

All that matters in life is the end result. There will always be bad stuff. Life is always going to be precarious. And idiots will always ruin everything they touch. Societies come and go, and civilizations die. But if people keep on making art, technology, culture, learning, wealth and warfare, there's a future. But that only happens if they don't give up.

And it starts with you — the kid reading this — not giving up.

[MH](#)

Some things to think about for young people.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Anti-racism for Conservatives

Mar 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The principle of conservatism is that we conserve, or protect and nurture, the good things in life.

What's good generally doesn't change through the years. We will always like brave, honest, forthright, honorable, gentle, assertive, intelligent, healthy, attractive and morally upright people. We will also always like the great works of culture from ancient Rome and Greece, the classical and Romantic periods of European art, and others. We don't throw out these good things when the trend changes, because they are eternally good.

When it comes to race, Conservatives face a quandary.

We don't like racism, because racism is the idea of a universal preference against a certain race. Wherever you are on earth, whatever the circumstance, you don't like X race and prefer Y race. With that tends to come scorn, cruelty and violence. Even worse, we see that our young men who get caught up in racist movements tend to become embittered, adjusted to futility and violent.

However, we conserve. And part of conservation is saying that any ethnic group should be able to preserve itself. Sounds OK so far, but then you realize that part of self-preservation is not outbreeding. In turn, that requires not letting other people into your local area. And so conserving ethnic groups is inevitably accused of being racist.

The real racism however is insistence that there's one superior race everywhere on earth, at every time, and that it's always preferable to pure ethnicity. That superior race is the mixed race, which is both convenient for industry and gives us warm fuzzies because it means no more ethnic conflict, or so we think. But in order to demand that this race exist, we must also become racists and demand the forced destruction of all ethnic groups in the name of diversity and anti-racism.

As a Conservative, I loathe well-intentioned attempts by a small minority to "fix" what nature has created. I loathe them mainly because they don't work. They always end up creating a public dogma that because it's unrealistic, creates a witch-hunt for people rational enough to deny it. I fear anti-racism is one of these because of the paradox I relate above.

My solution is to stop pushing an agenda on people. Stop the diversity mania, because it's actually racist. Instead, conserve culture and heritage everywhere on earth. Thank you for reading.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Evolution versus Creation: a false dilemma

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A common logical fallacy is bifurcation: distill a complex scenario into two logical choices, and try to force your audience to pick one.

"Have you stopped beating your wife yet? Answer YES or NO only."

"Are you Progressive, or a regressive truck-driving beer-chewing trailer-dwelling redneck uneducated impoverished neanderthal racist?"

"Are you pro-Zionazism or anti-Semitic?"

All of these are to put it mildly, crocks of shit. If you never beat your wife, you cannot answer the first question. The second question oversimplifies a vast political landscape in order to make its point. The third is a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't select that mischaracterizes both approaches. But people will talk this way to you and be outraged if you point out they're behaving illogically.

"But it's my right to argue however I want! If you can't rebut it, it means the problems is yours! The burden of proof is on you!"

One of the biggest wastes of time in politics is Evolution versus Creation. To my mind, there has never been an issue; evolution is a method, creation is the process that uses that method. Luckily, others agree:

Dr. Davies asserted in the article that science, not unlike religion, rested on faith, not in God but in the idea of an orderly universe. Without that presumption a scientist could not function.

There is in fact a kind of chicken-and-egg problem with the universe and its laws. Which "came" first — the laws or the universe?

If the laws of physics are to have any sticking power at all, to be real laws, one could argue, they have to be good anywhere and at any time, including the Big Bang, the putative Creation. Which gives them a kind of transcendent status outside of space and time.

On the other hand, many thinkers — all the way back to Augustine — suspect that space and time, being attributes of this existence, came into being along with the universe — in the Big Bang, in modern vernacular. So why not the laws themselves?

Plato and the whole idea of an independent reality, moreover, took a shot to the mouth in the 1920s with the advent of quantum mechanics. According to that weird theory, which, among other things, explains why our computers turn on every morning, there is an irreducible randomness at the microscopic heart of reality that leaves an elementary particle, an electron, say, in a sort of fog of being everywhere or anywhere, or being a wave or a particle, until some measurement fixes it in place.

[NYT](#)

What a great summary from a scientist. Science is faith, too.

Even more, we believe in an orderly universe because it acts orderly, even if we cannot predict it.

Naturally, cynics like me think that much of our lack of perception of order is in our own heads. With the sheer amount of error, bungling, incompetence and confusion involved in just registering a vehicle, how is our species ready to tackle anything bigger?

Now from the other side, those weird "Religious" people:

That's the question John Haught has set out to answer by proposing a "theology of evolution." Haught is a Roman Catholic theologian at Georgetown University and a prolific author. His books include "God After Darwin," "Is Nature Enough?" and the forthcoming "God and the New Atheism." He's steeped in evolutionary theory as well as Christian theology. Haught believes Darwin is "a gift to theology." He says evolutionary biology has forced modern theologians to clarify their thinking by rejecting outdated arguments about God as an intrusive designer. Haught reclaims the theology of his intellectual hero, Jesuit priest and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who died more than half a century ago. Teilhard believed that we live in a universe evolving toward ever greater complexity and, ultimately, to consciousness.

Haught is an intriguing figure in the debate over evolution. He was the only theologian to testify as an expert witness in the landmark 2005 Dover trial that ruled against teaching intelligent design in public schools. Haught testified against intelligent design, arguing that it's both phony science and bad theology. But Haught is also a fierce critic of hardcore atheists like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, who claim that evolution leads logically to atheism. He says both sides place too much faith in science. "Ironically," Haught writes, "ID advocates share with their ideological enemies, the evolutionary materialists, the assumption that science itself can provide ultimate explanations."

...

The traditional view was that nature emanates from on high, so that when you get down to matter, you have the least important level. Above that there's life and mind and God. But in the new cosmography, it seems that mindless matter dominates the whole picture. And many scientists, like Dawkins and Gould, have said evolution has destroyed the notion of purpose. So one thing I do in my theology is to say that's not necessarily true.

...

He put the Darwinian story of nature in the larger context of cosmic evolution. He saw the emergence of what he called "more" coming in gradually from the time of the big bang. Atoms become molecules. Molecules become cells. Cells become organisms. Organisms become vertebrates with a complex nervous system. Nervous tissue developed and eventually became complex in humans. He saw this process of growing complexity as something that's still going on. This planet is itself becoming more complex. And the process is accelerating today at an enormous pace because of communications technology, engineering, economics and politics. The globe is shrinking. We're able to connect instantaneously with other parts of the Earth, in the same way that nerve fibers carry an electronic message from one part of the body to the other. We should place what's happening now in the context of the previous phases of evolution and the cosmos. And we should expect — and hope for — the universe to keep becoming "more."

[Salon](#)

I guess the problem isn't science or religion, but people interpreting them to be things they are not. If that isn't a call for more morally attentive, intelligent and inquisitive people, I don't know what is.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Anyone but ourselves is to blame

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In a desperate attempt to come up with a politically-acceptable scapegoat for the recession, Pam Martens attributes this to Jon Stewart:

For example, the mortgage and debt securities were, in reality, junk bonds but they were traded as triple A.

[Counterpunch](#)

Wait a second: when the economy was booming, and all of us seemed to be making money, people wanted less accountability and more inflation of value, which includes rating junk bonds highly because their estimated worth is higher.

Now we're looking for someone to blame. Sorry, Mr. Stewart, but you don't fool me. The problem runs deeper than a convenient symptom, a conveniently wealthy group to blame it on, and a convenient sidestepping of accountability for their greed, stupidity and inattention by the irresponsible.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Sexual liberation makes bad sex

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Only one in four women and one in three men enjoy 100 per cent sexual satisfaction following a romp beneath the sheets.

Women's biggest complaint is that men lack imagination and go through the same routine time and time again.

Men reckon most women are in too much of a rush to get things over and done with, are over-demanding and more interested in pleasing themselves.

[The Metro](#)

[Sexual liberation](#) means we have many partners.

At that point, sex does become rote. There's nothing sacred or artistic left in it.

Women are encouraged to be aggressive and seek sex for their own ends. So they become selfish; men follow.

And with all this rhetoric booming around us about how great sexual liberation is, people aren't having fun and they're creating [third world breeding standards](#):

In the book, she asks herself whether she conceived 'accidentally on purpose'. The sex in question, she insists, was purely for pleasure. But was there a secret agenda at work?

More than half of all conceptions are outside marriage, for a start. Couple that with the fact there has been a sharp increase in the number of children born to those in the 35-39 age group, and you get the picture.

Some of these women approach the task in a far more ruthless manner than Mary Pols did, purposefully going out and sleeping with men when they know they are at their most fertile. Many of the women involved deliberately avoid birth control and have no intention of letting their unwitting bedfellow know this.

So few relationships are perfect these days. We do not live in a society where everything is neat and tidy any more. Sometimes, desperate measures are called for if you want to get pregnant. And, if the woman has any sense, one hopes she will have chosen someone who is going to deal with the consequences in an adult way.

There's a pop star I can think of, for example, who had several women in his harem and when one of them got pregnant, another of his groupies was outraged that she had lost the race. The pregnant one, meanwhile, became the wife.

[Daily Mail: Femail](#)

What misery we've found in seeking ourselves as the center of life, and denying the obligation brought on by any larger need.

Of course, there's a countermovement which gains momentum as modern society shamelessly and thoroughly debunks itself at every chance it is given:

The trend marks a reversal for women who put careers over families after Japan implemented

equal labor rights 23 years ago. The number of marriages in the following decade slid 4.5 percent to an annual average of 746,000 compared with the decade before. Despite equal rights, women still make 43 percent less than men, giving them more reason to seek a partner during recessions.

"I know women before my generation worked so hard and pursued their careers so they could prove they're just as good as men," said Reiko Kubo, 25, who bought a good-luck charm at Tokyo Daijingu shrine. "They didn't have to depend on men and that's cool, but it's not the path I want to follow."

[Bloomberg](#)

These young women have very sensibly found a way out from the oppressive thumb of dogma: style it as a non-necessary decision.

It's a choice. A preference. An aesthetic vision, an emotion. But it's not a binary choice, as passive-aggressive dogma tries to make itself out to be: progressive or regressive, feminist or chauvinist, multiculturalism or racist redneck trailer dweller, and so on.

Good work.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#) · [reproduction](#)

Europe faces beaucoup ethnic unrest

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Not to say "I told you so," but:

Two out of three serious teenage criminals are children of parents born outside the Netherlands. In most cases, no prison sentence is imposed, it emerges from a study sent to parliament by Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin.

Only just over one-third (37 percent) of the convicted youngsters are white Dutch. Two-thirds are of immigrant origin, meaning that they themselves or their mothers were born abroad.

"The most prevalent group of youthful immigrants (among the perpetrators) are young Moroccans (14 percent)," according to the report. For another 14 percent, the parents' country of birth could not be determined. A further 8 percent of the young criminals came from Turkey, 7 percent from Surinam and another 7 percent from the Netherlands Antilles, 9 percent from the category 'other non-Westerners' and 4 percent, 'other Westerners.'

[NIS](#)

How can this be? When you create a culture of pity, where the script reads that the minority is always oppressed by the majority, you let the minority get away with murder. Unfortunately, that doesn't make them fit in or have the capacities common in their new homeland, which dooms them to be serfs.

Today Rosengård's population consists to nearly 90 percent of immigrants, originating mainly from Palestine, former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Iraq, and Poland. Unemployment hovers around 38 percent, and 20 percent of the population subsists on welfare. It is a neighborhood where fire fighters dare not go without police escort. The fire brigade has responded to assaults against its trucks by developing a new "methods of dialogue" with Rosengård's youths.

In December, the neighborhood was shaken by violent riots after a so-called basement mosque was not extended a new lease agreement. In response, local youths occupied the mosque, set cars on fire, and fired rockets at the police. In the Swedish media the riots were largely described as an expression of frustration and anger, due to social inequalities.

But Rosengård lies in the world's most generous welfare state. Those who cannot provide for themselves and their families have a right to social welfare, which according to Swedish law must cover the cost for food, clothes, shoes, leisure activities, health and hygiene, health care and medicines, a daily newspaper, a phone, living expenses, electricity, commuting to work, home insurance, membership in a workers' union and unemployment insurance.

The frustrated and angry youngsters in Rosengård get health care at a minimal cost, free dental care, free school, and free college and university education, with the right to student benefits and loans. Social inequality is, therefore, a poor model for explaining not only a rise in crime the neighborhood has seen in the last few years, but also in political radicalization.

[The Weekly Standard](#)

In the meantime, France is wracked by more demonstrations:

Up to two million people were expected to take part in more than 200 demonstrations protesting against President Nicolas Sarkozy's handling of the global financial crisis.

A spokesman said: "The warm, sunny weather is likely to bring out very big crowds – we are on

full alert.' They were hoping to prevent a repeat of the violence which followed the last general strike in France on January 29.

Then, luxury cars and designer goods shops were attacked by a mob which was held back from the Elysee Palace by police barricades.

[The Telegraph](#)

The photographs of these events are always intriguing. They show some native French, but they are dwarfed by the number of immigrant youth, many of whom are responsible for the past five years of burning cars and injured French police officers.

The worst part is, that even if our narrative goes really well and ethnic groups are able to establish themselves, they will most likely wage political war against the majority, as happened here:

As soon as leaders of Chicago's black community began standing up and embracing him, all of the Burris-should-resign talk by the likes of Gov. Pat Quinn and Sen. Richard Durbin went silent.

There's something deeply satisfying about that: A once-despised and disfranchised group has learned how to wield its electoral power and command respect in the political marketplace.

There also is something profoundly sad and disturbing in it.

Even giving him the benefit of the doubt, Burris misled the Illinois House—and the people of Illinois—on at least two accounts when he testified before the committee investigating possible grounds for impeaching the governor. He failed to mention three contacts—and very recent ones—with the governor's brother, Rob. And he failed to mention that he actually tried to raise money for the governor, although he failed.

But if the game is always played as a cynical, zero-sum, our-loss-is-their-gain affair, can we ever hope to elevate it to something more than mud-wrestling?

[Chicago Tribune](#)

I have to ask Europe: why did you engage in this experiment? To prove you're as morally upright as the racially-mixed USA? It would have made sense to wait for the results instead.

Here's why it's a problem:

A U.S. researcher found a powerful link between financial security concerns and satisfaction with one's life.

"Even if you are making a hundred grand a year, if you are constantly worried that you are going to get fired, that you are going to lose your health insurance or that you are simply not sure you are going to 'make it,' you are not going to be happy," Miron-Shatz said.

[UPI](#)

If you import a new group of people to work at lower costs, you subject them to misery through poverty, and subject your native people to misery through competition by the desperate, who by their very nature cut corners and endure privations. In short, you destabilize two populations at once and make them hate each other.

This happened in the USA, and now it happened in Europe. I'm reconsidering my previous praise of human intelligence.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

How we'll move into tyranny

Mar 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Plato predicted that democracies, by splintering the [consensus](#) that founds a civilization into atoms formed of individual wills, become so chaotic that at some point, tyranny is desired by the citizens and so comes to pass.

Every civilization has a life cycle, from birth to death, says Plato. At birth, it has the simplest form of rule, which is aristocracy, or a hereditary group of its morally best and smartest people. When they run down or are overthrown, in comes military rule. After that, it's oligarchy, which roughly corresponds to a libertarian ideal — those who have money rule, like a Southern Plantation culture. But that gives way to democracy, he says:

The oligarch changes into the democrat in the following manner: — The youth who has had a miserly bringing up, gets a taste of the drone's honey; he meets with wild companions, who introduce him to every new pleasure.

[Plato, *The Republic*](#)

As soon as democracy comes about, Plato writes, there are numerous changes in the attitudes of the population that end up being a complete fracturing of the consensus that holds that society together. Instead of one set of values, rules, customs and goals, there are now as many as there are citizens. We call this process atomization.

And if any offer of alliance or parley of individual elders comes from home, the false spirits shut the gates of the castle and permit no one to enter,—there is a battle, and they gain the victory; and straightway making alliance with the desires, they banish modesty, which they call folly, and send temperance over the border. When the house has been swept and garnished, they dress up the exiled vices, and, crowning them with garlands, bring them back under new names. Insolence they call good breeding, anarchy freedom, waste magnificence, impudence courage. Such is the process by which the youth passes from the necessary pleasures to the unnecessary.

Plato is critiquing the psychology of the democratic man at this point. He describes something not unlike the Norse vision of *Ragnarok* or the Hindu vision of *Kali-Yuga*: an end times where trust is impossible, people are corrupt, everything is crass and gross and commercialized, and in this whoring all values have been inverted and replaced with an ethic of convenience that leads to long-term destruction.

Let us now inspect the individual democrat; and first, as in the case of the State, we will trace his antecedents...Necessary pleasures are those which are good, and which we cannot do without; unnecessary pleasures are those which do no good, and of which the desire might be eradicated by early training...the drone, as we called him, is the slave of these unnecessary pleasures and desires, whereas the miserly oligarch is subject only to the necessary.

The distinction he's drawing here is between first-world and third-world behavior. First-world people can put off pleasure until after they've accomplished something; third world people are slaves to the short term, and to their pleasures, and so never build infrastructure, develop learning, etc. That sounds more un-PC than it is, because if you read [Toynbee](#) and [Spengler](#) you will see that third world states are basically failed attempts at first world states, and that the reason they seem exotic ethnically is because they are remnants of cosmopolitan mixed-race populations blurred into a monoculture.

Plato describes a neurosis we can observe in our current society:

After a while he divides his time impartially between them; and perhaps, when he gets older and the violence of passion has abated, he restores some of the exiles and lives in a sort of

equilibrium, indulging first one pleasure and then another; and if reason comes and tells him that some pleasures are good and honourable, and others bad and vile, he shakes his head and says that he can make no distinction between them. Thus he lives in the fancy of the hour; sometimes he takes to drink, and then he turns abstainer; he practises in the gymnasium or he does nothing at all; then again he would be a philosopher or a politician; or again, he would be a warrior or a man of business; he is 'Every thing by starts and nothing long.'

Ever notice how our time is choked by New Age-y pursuits? People are looking for that Next Big Thing, whether it's Yoga or fire-walking or Acai berries or whatever; they want to find the one thing to give their lives meaning, because they're adrift in the meaningless void of having no direction, no script, and no narrative to move them forward, because they're in a time that has inverted all values.

Plato's description of democracy is unflinching in its critique:

The manner of life in such a State is that of democrats; there is freedom and plainness of speech, and every man does what is right in his own eyes, and has his own way of life.

Hence arise the most various developments of character; the State is like a piece of embroidery of which the colours and figures are the manners of men, and there are many who, like women and children, prefer this variety to real beauty and excellence.

The State is not one but many, like a bazaar at which you can buy anything.

That's his description of atomization: every person trying to do something different and special, thus there's zero consensus.

The great charm is, that you may do as you like; you may govern if you like, let it alone if you like; go to war and make peace if you feel disposed, and all quite irrespective of anybody else.

In dysfunction, there is no accountability. That feels good until you see the consequences.

When you condemn men to death they remain alive all the same; a gentleman is desired to go into exile, and he stalks about the streets like a hero; and nobody sees him or cares for him. Observe, too, how grandly Democracy sets her foot upon all our fine theories of education, — how little she cares for the training of her statesmen! The only qualification which she demands is the profession of patriotism. Such is democracy; — a pleasing, lawless, various sort of government, distributing equality to equals and unequals alike.

Whether you're right or left, you have allegiance to the ideals of your state, and so you are patriotic — which is the only requirement. You do not have to actually engage in society at large. Just wave the flag, even if a flag of protest, and you're accepted into the group.

How does democracy come about?

The sturdy pauper finds that in the hour of danger he is not despised; he sees the rich man puffing and panting, and draws the conclusion which he privately imparts to his companions, — 'that our people are not good for much;' and as a sickly frame is made ill by a mere touch from without, or sometimes without external impulse is ready to fall to pieces of itself, so from the least cause, or with none at all, the city falls ill and fights a battle for life or death. And democracy comes into power when the poor are the victors, killing some and exiling some, and giving equal shares in the government to all the rest.

Sounds like the French and Russian revolutions, or the bloodless [revolutions of 1968](#). Plato then sounds a note of warning about how democracy leads to the next stage, tyranny:

Tyranny springs from democracy much as democracy springs from oligarchy. Both arise from excess; the one from excess of wealth, the other from excess of freedom. 'The great natural good of life,' says the democrat, 'is freedom.' And this exclusive love of freedom and

regardlessness of everything else, is the cause of the change from democracy to tyranny.

This is Plato's description of what is going to come. It's a subtle "meta-thesis": that by focusing on freedom, and ignoring other vital parts of society, people encourage downfall. It's like the farmer who thinks the vital thing is to get seed in the ground, and then is dismayed to find a conspiracy of details like drainage, pests, drought and other things not related to planting bring down his crop.

Plato then describes the mentality of late stage democracy — a demand for "freedom" bordering on anarchy:

The State demands the strong wine of freedom, and unless her rulers give her a plentiful draught, punishes and insults them; equality and fraternity of governors and governed is the approved principle. Anarchy is the law, not of the State only, but of private houses, and extends even to the animals.

Father and son, citizen and foreigner, teacher and pupil, old and young, are all on a level; fathers and teachers fear their sons and pupils, and the wisdom of the young man is a match for the elder, and the old imitate the jaunty manners of the young because they are afraid of being thought morose. Slaves are on a level with their masters and mistresses, and there is no difference between men and women.

At last the citizens become so sensitive that they cannot endure the yoke of laws, written or unwritten; they would have no man call himself their master.

This state of duality is completely neurotic: people are in a civilization, which requires collectivism, but they insist on anti-collectivism as their organizing principle. Even more, since their principle (freedom) sounds positive but really is a negative (freedom from x, y or z) they are prone to strike against those who do not support freedom as the absolute goal. Like most universals, or absolute and contextless demands, freedom obscures the need for other parts of a civilization, like a goal, order, learning, culture and so on. In fact, by the very nature of its negative inclination, "freedom" is opposed to ever having a goal.

Such is the glorious beginning of things out of which tyranny springs. 'Glorious, indeed; but what is to follow?' The ruin of oligarchy is the ruin of democracy; for there is a law of contraries; the excess of freedom passes into the excess of slavery, and the greater the freedom the greater the slavery.

You will remember that in the oligarchy were found two classes—rogues and paupers, whom we compared to drones with and without stings. These two classes are to the State what phlegm and bile are to the human body; and the State-physician, or legislator, must get rid of them, just as the bee-master keeps the drones out of the hive. Now in a democracy, too, there are drones, but they are more numerous and more dangerous than in the oligarchy; there they are inert and unpractised, here they are full of life and animation; and the keener sort speak and act, while the others buzz about the bema and prevent their opponents from being heard.

And there is another class in democratic States, of respectable, thriving individuals, who can be squeezed when the drones have need of their possessions; there is moreover a third class, who are the labourers and the artisans, and they make up the mass of the people. When the people meet, they are omnipotent, but they cannot be brought together unless they are attracted by a little honey; and the rich are made to supply the honey, of which the demagogues keep the greater part themselves, giving a taste only to the mob.

Plato introduces two psychological archetypes here and two social archetypes:

Psychological archetypes

- Drones: clueless, perpetually impoverished people who cannot plan for the future and so squander whatever they have and then need a bailout. Trailer parks and urban ghettos provide a modern example.

Rogues: these are passive aggressive thieves, or wolves in sheep's clothing, who act for their own selfish gain in every situation, and so wreck civilization by sowing distrust and socialized costs. Modern examples might include Bernard Madoff and Rod Blagojevich.

Plato thinks a healthy society will remove both rogues and drones, because drones through stupidity empower rogues with their greater numbers, and rogues through their single-mindedness victimize people with more ambitious, whole views of life. Too much of these people and a society collapses, as [Jonathan Haidt explains](#).

What has happened is the laying of a foundation for class warfare. Let's look at the two class distinctions:

Social archetypes

- Bourgeoisie. Plato says "respectable, thriving individuals" and by this he means the middle class, conventionally called bourgeois because at this stage their entire morality is to earn money and buy their way out of social decay. If you're reading this and understanding it, your parents probably belong to this group.
- Working classes. These are called labourers and artisans, but nowadays we'd know them as people who work in factories, restaurants and with machines at semi-skilled jobs. This group is often confused with the drones because there is so much overlap between the two; one way to view it is that some of the working classes are drones because of their psychology, while all of the working classes end up labourers and artisans because it is the kind of work to which they are drawn.

So about that class war: the drones and rogues conspire to mobilize the working classes to demand free stuff from the government, a process called entitlement. It is this class war, coming up against the boundaries of a civilization that demands freedom but not order, that shapes the tyrant:

Their victims attempt to resist; they are driven mad by the stings of the drones, and so become downright oligarchs in self-defence. Then follow informations and convictions for treason. The people have some protector whom they nurse into greatness, and from this root the tree of tyranny springs.

The nature of the change is indicated in the old fable of the temple of Zeus Lycaeus, which tells how he who tastes human flesh mixed up with the flesh of other victims will turn into a wolf.

Even so the protector, who tastes human blood, and slays some and exiles others with or without law, who hints at abolition of debts and division of lands, must either perish or become a wolf—that is, a tyrant.

Class war drives the upper half of the middle classes — in modern terms, this is households clearing more than \$140,000 a year — into a defensive position, at which point they start to be winner take all. A modern example is the bonuses on Wall Street that are most of each employee's salary; they reward themselves handsomely because they know that without a half-million-dollar house, private schools for the kids, private medical plans and organic food, they're going to get dragged down into the social morass of the drones.

During this class war, because the crowd comprised of drones and labourers, egged on by rogues (demagogues), will demand everything it can get, the bourgeois start to fight dirty. They start hiding money and hiding behind private security. It's slowly dawning on them that the crowd of irresponsible people hates them for being responsible, and they're going to do their best to take the fruits of that responsibility and throw out the responsible people if not outright kill, rape and maim them.

I call the bourgeois reacting to a class war second-stage oligarchs. They're not like the oligarchy stage that precedes democracy, which I equate to something like the Mafia or Southern Plantation style living: although the big boss takes a lot, and may spread corruption in the "official" government, the official government is useless and the big boss gets stuff done and takes care of his people. In Sicily, the Mafia at least used to be a net positive; in the South, the planter social hierarchy kept everyone fed, which was not the case after the war (skipping for a moment other questions and concerns about the South's political structure).

At that point, The People appoint themselves a guardian and protector who promises to bring equality — or revenge upon the rich, since they have something to lose where no one else does. Of course, the wealthier people don't take this lying down, and so the protector is unable to protect himself, and asks for a private army:

Perhaps he is driven out, but he soon comes back from exile; and then if his enemies cannot get rid of him by lawful means, they plot his assassination.

Thereupon the friend of the people makes his well-known request to them for a body-guard, which they readily grant, thinking only of his danger and not of their own.

Now let the rich man make to himself wings, for he will never run away again if he does not do so then. And the Great Protector, having crushed all his rivals, stands proudly erect in the chariot of State, a full-blown tyrant.

Bang.

In that final step, you have reached a Soviet/French Revolution style state. These in turn collapse because, since all of their goals like freedom are negative, they have no actual plan and end up dividing up the wealth and infighting while the country collapses around them.

However, since the tyrant already has the power... well, there's not much chance of him or her being overthrown. In fact, The People have put him in power and for at least the first few decades find it hard to admit they've screwed up, which gives the tyrant a free ride to strengthen the centralized power of the state.

Modern people, who have the attention span of gnats and cannot think past a two-week period (paycheck to paycheck), imagine that a tyrannical state comes about because the state demands more power to accomplish the goals of the state. What is important about the knowledge Plato brings us is that it shows that tyranny comes about through the state being divided, so that its two parts can play good-cop/bad-cop much as the Democrats and Republicans, respectively, seem to in our media.

Are there any signs of aggressive protectors on the horizon?

James Hansen, a climate modeller with Nasa, told the Guardian today that corporate lobbying has undermined democratic attempts to curb carbon pollution. "The democratic process doesn't quite seem to be working," he said.

Speaking on the eve of joining a protest against the headquarters of power firm E.ON in Coventry, Hansen said: "The first action that people should take is to use the democratic process. What is frustrating people, me included, is that democratic action affects elections but what we get then from political leaders is greenwash.

"The democratic process is supposed to be one person one vote, but it turns out that money is talking louder than the votes. So, I'm not surprised that people are getting frustrated. I think that peaceful demonstration is not out of order, because we're running out of time."

[The Guardian](#)

This is just one such example. Other recent threats have included: Hitler-like dictators, racism, drugs, and Communism.

Hansen is speaking in code. Peaceful protests are legal and socially acceptable; he's hinting to his fellow scientists and listeners that democratic process is not working and is not going to work. Why? Well, those second-stage oligarchs are tired of the drones massing together and making grabs for their wealth, so they're doing their best to pollute and neutralize public opinion. In many ways, welfare lines next to fast food joints and liquor stores are the ultimate weapon of the second stage oligarchs; keep the drones

stoned, fat and spaced out on television. Our country would probably run a lot better if we advertised incorrect voting dates on television.

It's possible global warming is a power grab. It's possible it's not. Even more likely is that it's both: one group is ready to grab power, and gets an opportunity that, by blowing it out of proportion or demanding unreasonable action, can be used to corner the populace into a state of revolt. The above statement by Hansen would be setting the stage; if we get some weird hurricanes or ice storms in summer that kill lots of people and make life inconvenient, the rogues are going to start bloviating about how it's global warming and we need to overthrow the bourgeois.

Here's another part of that hammer:

Growing world population will cause a "perfect storm" of food, energy and water shortages by 2030, the UK government chief scientist has warned.

Demand for food and energy will jump 50% by 2030 and for fresh water by 30%, as the population tops 8.3 billion, he told a conference in London.

Climate change will exacerbate matters in unpredictable ways, he added.

"My main concern is what will happen internationally, there will be food and water shortages," he said.

[BBC](#)

It's the resource wars, he's saying. There's not going to be enough water and food, and with our growth in the third world (the industrialized world has negative growth) there will be a Malthusian conflict between the number of people we have and the resources available to sustain them. This will bring about struggle, which will in turn bring about population bottleneck.

Example of struggle: 2,000,000,000 starving Asians charge into Eastern Europe looking for resources. 1,000,000,000 starving Africans surge into the Middle East. All of central and south America explodes up through the Yucatan Peninsula toward Texas. That kind of thing.

Common sense tells us, of course, that [Malthus was right](#): Earth has a fixed output capacity that we can't dicker with too much. Even more, common sense tells us that this same limited capacity causes us a pollution problem: if the Earth can process so much pollution, and we don't know that number, at some point as we grow and dump even more in, we'll [reach that point](#) and then excess pollution will pile up. This points back to our real environmental problem, which is [overpopulation](#), specifically by those without any strategy toward a [lasting, forward-moving civilization](#).

Common sense also tells us that there's a secondary problem, which is that no scrap of earth is untouched by humanity. This means habitats are disrupted, divided by roads and fences, limiting the flexibility of animal populations and ecosystems. Even more foreboding is that since we have made an ethic of convenience for ourselves, we don't mind calling utilitarian consumerism "capitalism" and ignoring the fact that we've put a price tag on everything. The only thing that keeps a piece of ground from being developed and its trees cut down is that no human yet has the money to do it. Frightening, isn't it? There are no brakes on the human growth cancer.

The European Environment Agency...released a report yesterday warning that Europe is "living beyond its means" when it comes to water use.

Increasing demand and prolonged periods of low rainfall and drought have helped reduce river flows, dry out wetlands, and lower lake and groundwater levels, the report says, predicting that "climate change will almost certainly exacerbate these adverse impacts in the future, with more frequent and severe droughts in Europe."

Meanwhile, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said yesterday that by

2030, about half the world's population — 3.9 billion people — could be living in water-stressed areas.

[NYT](#)

Here you see the wonderful paradox of democracy and consumerism, which both being utilitarianism have a common ancestor: we will ignore a problem for decades and then, by making it trendy because it empowers the have-nots to hate the haves for producing carbon, suddenly we can't get away from it. It inundates us. Even if it doesn't succeed because [people cannot react to it](#), we are saturated in it, dripping guilt and foolish pretense.

Check this out:

"We are responsible," Loïc Fauchon, president of the World Water Council, said during opening ceremonies Monday. "Responsible for the aggressions perpetrated against water, responsible for the current climate changes which come on top of the global changes, responsible for the tensions which reduce the availability of fresh water masses so indispensable to the survival of humanity."

Drama! O rich drama!

Plato's words ring true for us today: we are facing a corner. On one side is the damage we've done to our environment; on another, a burgeoning population, most of whom are irresponsible; on another, a political tendency to mobilize the [irresponsible](#) against the responsible for a power takeover the likes of which we've never seen before.

The origin of this, of course, is globalism. Where Plato wrote about Athens, we're now writing about the world. Our drones may live in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but they have planes and rifles now, too. The pattern will occur in staggered loops: China will have its transition to tyranny, become a drone state, and then enforce tyranny on the bourgeois states, and so on.

We're all in one society now. Our economies, politics and militaries are linked. When we fall, we fall together. Luckily, individuals and small groups will — as they did when Rome and Athens fell — sneak out and make their way to safer but less convenient places to live. More on that later this week.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

The brain as a computer

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Giulio Tononi, a University of Wisconsin neuroscientist, suggests that the secret of anesthesia may not in fact lie in any single clump of neurons. It may lie instead in the conversations that take place between many clumps in the brain. Normally information from our senses races from one region of the cortex to another, getting processed in different ways in each place. Some regions help us recognize faces in a scene, for example, while other regions help us figure out what emotions those faces are expressing. The sensory signals travel through a mass transit system made up of long branches of neurons that crisscross the brain. This system has a few hubs through which many connections pass. One is the thalamus, but certain parts of the cortex also serve as hubs.

Although the brain may become less active under anesthesia, it usually doesn't shut down completely (if it did, we would die). In fact, when scientists played a tone into the ears of an anesthetized cat, its cortex still produced strong bursts of electricity. But its responses were different from those of a waking cat. In an anesthetized cat, the brain responds the same way to any sound, with a noisy crackle of neurons. In a waking cat, the response is complex: One brain region after another responds as the animal processes the sound, and different sounds produce different responses. It's as if the waking brain produces a unique melody, whereas the anesthetized brain can produce only a blast of sound or no sound at all.

Tononi suggests that this change happens because anesthesia interferes with the brain's mass transit system. Individual parts of the cortex can still respond to a stimulus. But the brain can't move these signals around to other parts to create a single unified experience.

[Discover](#)

Our scientists always start looking for a singular locus of anything.

A race gene. A consciousness center. A regulatory organ.

What they're finding instead is that our most fascinating properties are [emergent](#), not discrete.

There is no race gene; race arises from a compilation of genes, acting like computer code.

There is no consciousness center; consciousness arises from the interaction of parts of the brain.

There is no single regulatory organ; many organs work together like a drum circle, making other systems work at the right time.

The problem is in our heads. We look for the discrete, but our world doesn't work that way.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The plunge into low-quality populations

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

First, you let the native population dumb themselves down with television, beer, moronic jobs, political lies and stupefactive small talk.

Next, you import random people because they work cheaply, and thus make the native population absolutely hate them:

Preliminary results show that people – especially in Oakland’s ethnic neighborhoods – want bustling neighborhoods with services that remind them of their native land.

Residents in the heavily Latino Fruitvale district enjoy the pedestrian-friendly International Boulevard, where sidewalk vendors sell everything from tacos to toys. In Chinatown, residents say they like the elbow-to-elbow crush of people on the sidewalks shopping at produce stores and other shops, and they like the cacophony of cars and bicycles because it reminds them of big-city life in China.

The bottom line, Lemon said, is that Oakland and other cities need to get beyond one-size-fits-all city planning and architecture and pay heed to individual neighborhood needs.

“I wanted to find out if Hispanics, Chinese, African Americans or Caucasians prefer different types of space,” Lemon said. “Would a city’s resources be better used designing a picturesque park or put into a better streetscape or fields for soccer or football? It’s more than an academic exercise.”

[SFG](#)

Then, you make the native population feel guilty for reacting, and encourage reconciliation that always puts them in the wrong:

Bowman lacks academic credibility on race issues and media/games, yet many gamers have wholeheartedly embraced his uninformed opinion despite the existence of knowledgeable commentary from anti-racist gamers and people from within the industry who have been critical of Resident Evil 5. Why? Because Bowman tells them what they want to hear, and doesn’t challenge their views.

You’d be hard-pressed to find mature, critical discussion about race and Resident Evil 5 taking place in mainstream gaming communities.

[Racialicious](#)

(They are complaining about a video game that opens with a sequence set in Africa where, not surprisingly, you kill Africans, before moving on to kill Caucasians, Asians and people of indeterminate heritage in other parts of the game. They don’t find it racist that for all these years we’ve been killing white people in games.)

The result: the only culture in common is a lowest common denominator comprised of commerce and individualism. That culture becomes egomaniac:

These days, “narcissist” gets tossed around as an all-purpose insult, a description of self-aggrandizing, obnoxious behavior. Unfortunately, the same word is used to describe a quality that comes in three gradations: a characteristic that in the right amount is a normal component of healthy ego; a troublesome trait when there is too much; and a pathological state when it

overwhelms a personality. Narcissism fuels drive and ambition, a desire to be recognized for one's accomplishments, a sense that one's life has meaning and importance. The problem occurs when narcissism becomes the primary principle of someone's personality. Its most extreme form is narcissistic personality disorder, a psychological condition that impairs a person's ability to form normal relationships and wreaks havoc on those who have close encounters with it.

A recent study titled "Leader Emergence: The Case of the Narcissistic Leader" describes how narcissists have skills and qualities—confidence, extraversion, a desire for power—that propel them into leadership roles but that when true narcissists are in charge, other aspects of their makeup—a feeling the rules don't apply to them, a need for constant stroking—can have "disastrous consequences." Yes, we're talking about you, former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich. After Blagojevich was caught on tape trying to sell a Senate seat, he reveled in the opportunity to appear on talk shows, making the case that he himself was a victim—self-pity being a favorite narcissist refuge.

NPD is one of fewer than a dozen personality disorders described by the American Psychiatric Association. These differ from the major mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and manic-depression, which are believed to have a biological origin. Personality disorders are seen as a failure of character development.

People with NPD act as if they are special beings who are exceptionally intelligent, accomplished, beautiful, or sexy (or all of the above), to whom lesser people (pretty much everyone else) must bow.

Psychologists Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, authors of *The Narcissism Epidemic*, who obviously have a stake in proving there is one, estimate around 10 percent of today's young people have clinical manifestations of NPD. They believe narcissism is a cultural virus that has spread throughout the population over the past several decades.

[Slate](#)

As a result, it cannot hold itself to any standard. People do not trust people. They cannot follow through on any task not involving themselves wholly. The family breaks down, and the nation plunges into a third world population (that is also and coincidentally of uniformly mixed-race, or a generic population):

More babies were born in the United States in 2007 than any other year in the nation's history — and a wedding band made increasingly little difference in the matter.

While it shows the U.S. population is more than replacing itself, a healthy trend, the teen birth rate was up for a second year in a row.

The birth rate rose slightly for women of all ages, and births to unwed mothers reached an all-time high of about 40 percent, continuing a trend that started years ago. More than three-quarters of these women were 20 or older.

The new numbers suggest the second year of a baby boomlet, with U.S. fertility rates higher in every racial group, the highest among Hispanic women. On average, a U.S. woman has 2.1 babies in her lifetime. That's the "magic number" required for a population to replace itself.

[Seattle Times](#)

It's a shame, but that's how nations fail.

No matter what political system you have, unless you have morally aware and smart people in it, it gets co-opted by the corrupt.

No matter how much power you have, unless there are people with brains and souls, you get corrupted.

This could easily be reversed by making social values prize a single consensus among our society, and by encouraging people to shun the morally defective or oblivious.

Maybe they'd all move to one of the good times capitals of the third world, where such behavior is expected.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

The values of 1968 have triumphed

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Forty years ago, in the summer of 1968, leftist radicals fought the police outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

The radical Left was a fringe movement in the late 1960s, comprised of politically marginalized and socially outcast racial minorities, feminists, homosexuals, environmentalists, student radicals, leftist intellectuals, counterculturalists and the antiwar movement. Now, forty years later, what was marginal in 1968 is normal, mainstream and a cultural majority at the end of 2008.

The electoral victory of Barack Obama symbolizes the culmination of the long march from the streets of Chicago to full institutionalization of the radical Left of a previous era. That Obama, the individual, is more of a centrist than a leftist and was only a child in 1968 is less significant than what he represents. The 68ers have now seized the establishment and those who insisted the establishment could never be trusted have become the establishment.

On virtually every issue, the radical Left of the 1960s has either won or is in the process of winning. Racism? Despite the claims of "anti-racist" professionals who insist that Nazis are hiding under every bed, racism is at an all-time low. Blacks are only 12.5 percent of the U.S. population, and have a lengthy history as an outgroup, yet a black man wins the presidency. If hatred of blacks was particularly common, the Obama presidency would be impossible.

Student radicalism? Many of the student rebels of the 1960s are now tenured academics, and there is no place in American society where the far Left is more secure than in academia. The sexual revolution? This has proven to be every bit as enduring as the civil rights revolution. Very few Americans even remember that some states had laws prohibiting contraceptive devices in the 1960s. Pornography and adult entertainment are now almost as mainstream as rock and rap music.

Indeed, even the "conservatism" of the present time is "liberal" compared to the pre-1960s period. Ronald Reagan did not govern appreciably to the right of John F. Kennedy. Reagan's wars in Central America were simply a repeat of Kennedy's Bay of Pigs and early involvement in Vietnam. George W. Bush has not governed to the right of Lyndon Johnson, presiding over the same kind of failed combination of joint extension of the warfare and welfare states as LBJ. The present day leadership of the Republican Party are the neoconservatives, who were on the far left end of the Democratic Party in the 1960s, the so-called "state department socialists." What about the Religious Right? There is no group around more consistently demonized by the Left, and the literature of the Left is full of wild claims concerning an imminent theocratic coup by the Religious Right. The reality is that the Religious Right are simply convenient scapegoats for the Left and useful idiots for the Right.

Prior to 1965, the U.S. maintained a racially restrictive immigration policy, which has since been liberalized remarkably. America was ninety percent white in 1960. Today, the U.S. is only sixty-eight percent white, and proposed policies to so much as deny welfare state benefits to illegal immigrants are denounced as racist and xenophobic.

Though the Left has achieved complete or nearly complete victory on just about every issue, the Left will never admit as much. Sixties radicalism has become what any other movement becomes once it is institutionalized. The purpose of the Left today is to simply perpetuate its own existence and its own vested interests. For this reason, invisible armies of racists, sexists, homophobes and theocrats must constantly be said to be hiding behind every rock or tree. Heretics who dissent from left-wing orthodoxy on any number of matters must be constantly

sought out for denunciation, repression or persecution.

[Attack the System](#)

The 1968 radicals have won, as Michel Houellebecq has said.

What was once far-left is now the norm, much as it became normal in France and Russia following their revolutions.

Thanks to the political system of our ancestors, the American Revolution (as opposed to the war of independence from Brokeback Island) was a bloodless coup; however, no system designed to minimize a method (bloodshed) can turn aside moronic or destructive intent.

If the right is to survive, it needs to get back to conservation conservatism. Family. Nature. Values. Communities. You can't beat the defense drum any more, gents, and you've got to prove you're not bought and sold by lobbying. You need to work harder and smarter and focus on the American middle class, who are always the people who elect you — until a leftist media, leftist academics, and leftist social groups turn their minds away because your presidents do the unpopular but necessary.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

You mean radiation is bad for the animals?

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

From the Leap into Life department:

Radiation has affected animals living near the site of Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear disaster far more than was previously thought, a study showed Wednesday, challenging beliefs that local wildlife was on the rebound.

The study showed that numbers of bumble-bees, butterflies, spiders, grasshoppers and other invertebrates were lower in contaminated sites than other areas because of high levels of radiation left over from the blast more than 20 years ago.

The researchers also found that animals living near the Chernobyl reactor — which was covered in a protective shell after it exploded in April 1986 — had more deformities, including discoloration and stunted limbs, than normal.

"Usually (deformed) animals get eaten quickly, as it's hard to escape if your wings are not the same length," Moller said. "In this case we found a high incidence of deformed animals."

[Reuters](#)

You mean all of those uplifting stories about Chernobyl wildlife being happy were a bunch of hooey? How could it be that we were mislead, and so willingly, too.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

The culture of victimhood

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The campus rape industry's central tenet is that one-quarter of all college girls will be raped or be the targets of attempted rape by the end of their college years (completed rapes outnumbering attempted rapes by a ratio of about three to two). The girls' assailants are not terrifying strangers grabbing them in dark alleys but the guys sitting next to them in class or at the cafeteria.

Koss's method produced the 25 percent rate, which Ms. then published.

Koss's study had serious flaws. Her survey instrument was highly ambiguous, as University of California at Berkeley social-welfare professor Neil Gilbert has pointed out. But the most powerful refutation of Koss's research came from her own subjects: 73 percent of the women whom she characterized as rape victims said that they hadn't been raped. Further—though it is inconceivable that a raped woman would voluntarily have sex again with the fiend who attacked her—42 percent of Koss's supposed victims had intercourse again with their alleged assailants.

All subsequent feminist rape studies have resulted in this discrepancy between the researchers' conclusions and the subjects' own views. A survey of sorority girls at the University of Virginia found that only 23 percent of the subjects whom the survey characterized as rape victims felt that they had been raped—a result that the university's director of Sexual and Domestic Violence Services calls "discouraging." Equally damning was a 2000 campus rape study conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. Sixty-five percent of what the feminist researchers called "completed rape" victims and three-quarters of "attempted rape" victims said that they did not think that their experiences were "serious enough to report." The "victims" in the study, moreover, "generally did not state that their victimization resulted in physical or emotional injuries," report the researchers.

[City Journal](#)

If you tell people they're victims, and give the "nuclear option" of claiming race when accusing another or using it to justify low performance, how can they say no? Just say that word and you're off the hook.

As a result, the culture itself creates a dangerous inflation of results. Dangerous because after two semesters of this stuff most people tune out, and because the results are unreliable, law enforcement and others are leery of acting on them.

It would be better to be honest about rape and when and where and how and by whom it occurs, than to try to inflate figures to make it seem more serious.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

As the West gets neurotic, the East surges ahead

Mar 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Might as well just send Ghengis Khan a "Missing You" Hallmark card:

China's economy is showing "early signs" of stabilizing as government-backed investment counters a slump in exports, the World Bank says.

The lender cut its forecast for the nation's economic growth this year to 6.5 percent in a quarterly report released in Beijing today. Its estimate was 7.5 percent in November.

China is weathering the global slowdown better than many nations because its banks were largely unscathed by the financial crisis and the government quickly implemented a 4 trillion yuan (\$585 billion) stimulus plan, the lender said.

[Bloomberg](#)

And now that they're on the mend, they're doing what all smart people do during a downturn — snap up investments that will magically get more valuable when the economy recovers even a fraction of its value:

Chinese companies have been on a shopping spree in the past month, snapping up tens of billions of dollars' worth of key assets in Iran, Brazil, Russia, Venezuela, Australia and France in a global fire sale set off by the financial crisis.

The deals have allowed China to lock up supplies of oil, minerals, metals and other strategic natural resources it needs to continue to fuel its growth. The sheer scope of the agreements marks a shift in global finance, roiling energy markets and feeding worries about the future availability and prices of those commodities in other countries that compete for them, including the United States.

[WAPQ](#)

The balance of power shifts to the East, because the West is neurotic and, dependent on neurotic lowest common denominator public opinion, can't make the decisions necessary to act intelligently and decisively.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Biological determinism as we learn about consciousness

Mar 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We discover that consciousness is a brain looking at its own actions and concluding that the mind directing those occurs elsewhere because the brain is not visible, but that to prevent people from having mental breakdowns, that assumption is hardwired:

Electrodes implanted in the brains of people with epilepsy might have resolved an ancient question about consciousness.

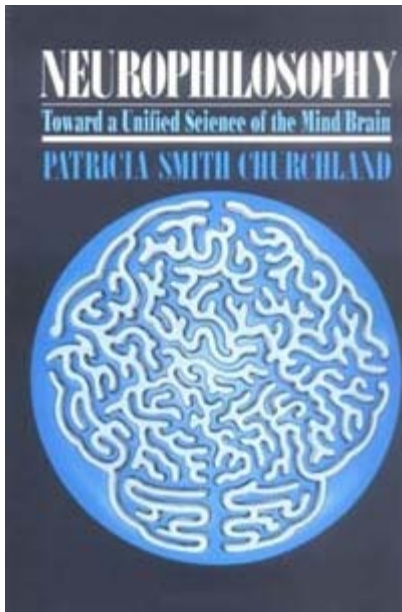
Signals from the electrodes seem to show that consciousness arises from the coordinated activity of the entire brain. The signals also take us closer to finding an objective "consciousness signature" that could be used to probe the process in animals and people with brain damage without inserting electrodes.

Previously it wasn't clear whether a dedicated brain area, or "seat of consciousness", was responsible for guiding our subjective view of the world, or whether consciousness was the result of concerted activity across the whole brain.

[New Scientist](#)

Most of you would like to read that consciousness of self was not a biological process, but a computational one, or even better, that you decided to think that way. You flatter yourselves thinking you are a discrete thing in control, and get queasy when the methods of the brain are dissected.

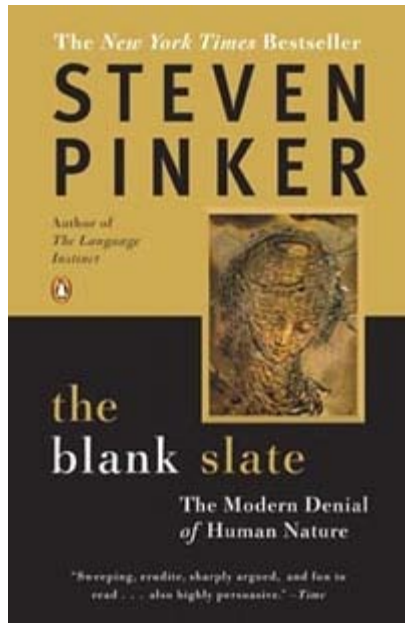
Let me point you to two books that will absolutely level that assumption:



[Neurophilosophy](#), by Patricia Smith Churchland

This insightful work shows how the workings of our brain, from basic biochemical reactions all the way through observable larger patterns, is reflected in many of the common philosophical notions we have. When you are done with this book, you will realize that with the exception of a rare few individuals with

disciplined minds, people are monkeys reacting to stimulus with no idea of the consequence. You will also become aware of certain traps that are perceiver illusions because they are convenient for the perceiver's brain, and so a conclusion is projected onto reality that does not exist in it. More than one person has backed away from this book as if it were *The Satanic Bible* because it smashes many of the illusions we have about our own mental sovereignty.



[The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature, by Steven Pinker](#)

Without directly attacking the manifestations of the predominant modern illusion, Stephen Pinker slices into the nature/nurture debate by pointing out that to science, it's clear that nature is the winner — but that in popular lore, this is feared, demonized, made taboo and denied. Why would people deny this? Well, because if you read this book, you'll see how your genes and ancestors define your personality more than choices "you" thought "you" made. In combination with *Neurophilosophy*, it's a leveling blow to the ego. After reading this, you will realize that you are a creation of your historical environment, not a product of your contemporary environment or your own wishful thinking that "you" are in control.

With those out of the way, here's some more interesting research about the possibility for us to master nurture in service of nature:

Researchers have found a telltale mental signature that predicts whether an experience will be remembered. Once deciphered, the signals could be used to help people know when their brains are primed to remember, perhaps using an iPhone app.

"Instead of looking at how the information is being processed, we're looking at how the brain prepares to process the information," said study co-author Emrah Duzel, a University College, London, neuroscientist. "It may be that the state we look at prepares the memory system for a relevant event."

Duzel's team found the signal in the medial temporal lobe, a region of the brain associated with memory formation.

[Wired](#)

So what we remember is semi-arbitrary, depending on our brain state? What about willing to remember?

Like all things human, first we must discipline ourselves to recognize the signs of our own machine being ready, and then we can give it the order to respond as we'd like.

This clashes with our post-Enlightenment (and what prick calls something The Enlightenment; it's the height of pomposity only matched by the depth of its false humility) view of ourselves as mental kings who can create anything, be anything, do anything! All that matters is the individual monkey.

And that monkey is a genius monkey, even if he or she does nothing important and lives on welfare while doing covertly passive aggressive, secondarily/long-term destructive things.

Maybe this is why you don't see more of this research in the mainstream media.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

The racial divide in America

Mar 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Interesting comments on a new book:

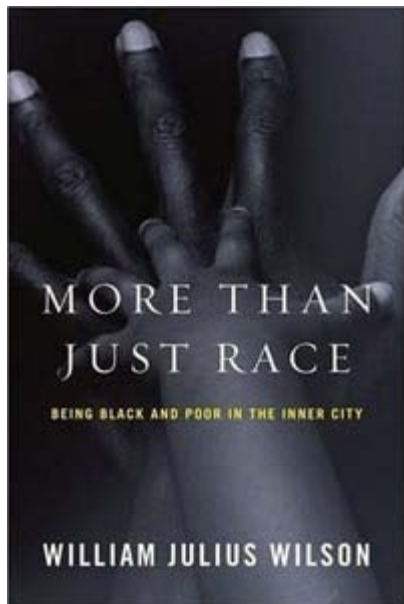
The wider disputes the Moynihan Report set in motion are anything but ivory-tower squabbles. Liberals charged that the senator's theory gave ammunition to right-wing arguments for diminished government support of anti-poverty programs. They watched, with growing helplessness, as a crescendo of Republican voices began invoking Moynihan's writings to defend reduced funding for Head Start, job training, adult literacy, and welfare. Simply put, conservatives argued that blacks needed to change their behavior before money could do any good.

In this way, a deep American schism was born. Liberals believed that black poverty was caused by systemic racism, such as workplace discrimination and residential segregation, and that focusing on the family was a form of "blaming the victim." Conservatives pointed to individual failure to embrace mainstream cultural values like hard work and sobriety, and intact (read: nuclear) families. It's like Yankees vs. Mets, and for 40 years there has been no middle ground. (That the current generation of college students might not necessarily share this polarized view may augur an important shift in the years ahead.)

[Slate](#)

That statement really nails the divide on race in America, doesn't it?

Conservatives say blacks don't fit with white values; liberals blame white actions.



There's no reconciling it. The book cited, [More Than Just Race, by William Julius Wilson](#), pretends to be a new thesis but is a variant on the nurture argument above: white actions caused ghettos to which minorities have adapted, and in doing so, have taken on bad behaviors.

Barring the absolutely vile racist arguments and the equally off-base "scientific" justification of equality, why not look at the obvious — different populations, evolving in different climates and places, produced genetic inclinations toward different behaviors and values.

Hasse Walum at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, and colleagues looked at the various forms of the gene coding for a vasopressin receptor in 552 Swedish people, who were all in heterosexual partnerships. The researchers also investigated the quality of their relationships.

They found that variation in a section of the gene called RS3 334 was linked to how men bond with their partners. Men can have none, one or two copies of the RS3 334 section, and the higher the number of copies, the worse men scored on a measure of pair bonding.

Not only that, men with two copies of RS3 334 were more likely to be unmarried than men with one or none, and if they were married, they were twice as likely to have a marital crisis.

[New Scientist](#)

There are even differences within populations, but these differences are more pronounced between populations, in addition to other differences that might arise. Those disclaimers out of the way, it's fascinating that these genes exist, and their tendency to control our behavior explains why we're afraid of them: maybe we're not actually in control of ourselves, but are simply machines acting out their programming.

And this cuts to the core of why people adopt the nurture dogma as opposed to others: if we believe in nurture, we get to believe we're each in control, and that with the right opportunities — not the right innate abilities — we become successes. It gives us a reason to feel humble if we do succeed, and something to blame if we do not.

We love the immutable and tangible nature of this opportunity game. We can justify away any failures by blaming someone else. We can even use it to demonize society at large and claim we do not want to succeed. The possibilities are endless, and our accountability is greatly reduced.

When we apply this to race, it forms a discussion neatly bracketing the issue: whose fault is it? Not the vital question: what's the best way forward?

In the meantime, in the racial dialogue, there is an unheard voice of the silent majority who want to live with people like them — in race, ethnicity, class, caste, values, customs, and outlook.

A state appeals court in San Francisco today upheld a Berkeley Unified School District policy that considers neighborhood racial composition, but not the race of individual students, when assigning students to schools.

The school district policy classifies students into three diversity categories according to their neighborhoods, which are geographic areas of four to eight city blocks.

Racial composition — or the percent of students of color living in the area — is one of three factors used to determine the neighborhood's diversity category. The other two factors are average household income and average education level of adult residents.

Steele said, "I think the Berkeley policy charts a path that can be used by other districts that would like a voluntary desegregation plan."

[SJMN](#)

Why does this come up, again and again? Because we insist that all people are the same, when the truth is that we're different, just as our ethnic groups are different. Instead of trying to make them equal, implying that if they're not there's a problem, why not just *accept the differences* and then move forward?

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Recognizing passive aggression

Mar 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Baby screams. Onlookers glower. Mom gives in — even when she's a monkey.

Rhesus macaque mothers are about twice as likely to let a howling infant have its way during very public tantrums than during more private moments, says Stuart Semple of Roehampton University in London.

Research has found that nonhuman primates pay attention to eavesdropping bystanders, “but this is the first demonstration that communication between mother and infant is affected by an audience,” Maestriperi says.

[Science News](#)

That's passive aggression: leverage the expectations of other people to manipulate others. It takes a low IQ to do it, obviously, or an unformed brain, since human kids do the same thing, and not all of them are stupid.

“Don't rock the boat” is the principle that makes passive aggression work. If you don't live up to social standards, even if you're being manipulated, it's inconvenient for the other monkeys. So they take it out on you because you are the one who can make the problem go away.

Even if it's a screaming brat, or a manipulative parasite of a human being, that's attacking you — they're portraying themselves as the victims. “Mommy, I want that toy!” and “This doesn't represent **my rights!** I'm gonna sue!” are on a philosophical level the same wolfish bleat.

More passive aggression:

Swedish men are less intelligent, lonelier and fatter than their female counterparts, a new study claims. Boys have fallen way behind in school, and there are more women than men studying some traditionally male university subjects.

“In twenty years men's dominance will be broken and women will have more power in society. There will be more female CEO's and the wage gap will favour women,” researcher Ingemar Gens told magazine Att:ention.

[The Local](#)

How did “we want equality” become this jubilation, revenge and hatred?

What bad psychology and mental sickness this is. These people are motivated by hatred.

But, that's passive aggression for you. Claim you're the victim, and use that to justify cruelty and revenge.

But, as you well know, there's secondary consequences. It makes society alienated from itself. And things start to fall apart as trust dissolves.

Here's another one:

European countries that have offered to help the Obama administration close the detention center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, by resettling detainees have begun raising questions about the security risks and requirements if they accept prisoners described by the Bush administration as “the worst of the worst,” according to diplomats and other officials on both sides of the

Atlantic.

[IHT](#)

European powers used Guantanamo as a way to get back at the Bush administration. Why: they want Europe to be #1, so they oppose strong leaders (it was also a trend that all the monkeys thought was important).

That was passive aggression.

Now, they're reconsidering, because they're realizing that their symbolic act of accepting these prisoners was a stupid idea.

1% of the voters will notice, at most, and those will forget within the obligatory two week period (paycheck to paycheck mentality). So it's moot, I'm sure.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

How society organizes itself without traditional culture

Mar 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The problem with diversity: a lowest common denominator of culture and genetics is reached.

In practical terms, that means the nation-state becomes an open-air bazaar, because the only values we can agree on are:

- Freedom. Leave me alone, I leave you alone.
- Money. I want to make it. Leave me alone.
- Populism. Individuals are sacred. Do not offend others.

In short, you create a society where everything is permitted, but there may be unintended consequences if another person is inconvenient, annoyed or an idea becomes unpopular.

That's a marketplace.

My basic libertarian leaning is this: make it clear what's expected, make it clear what's destructive and otherwise, leave people alone. They need room to experiment and learn, to make some mistakes, and so on. That's the oldest definition of freedom.

Do not, however, tolerate behaviors just because the only victim appears to be the individual; there are secondary effects. If someone smokes crack in his house, sooner or later bad stuff is going to happen; exile the idiot.

People can spread poison with bad behavior. If a slut moves into your town, rest assured she'll start trying to make others like her. That in turn produces social upheaval. Eject her.

But never, ever lay a minefield where behaviors are deemed OK and then suddenly the crowd turns on someone. If you declare a behavior OK, you need to defend that person.

Even more, make those behaviors which are forbidden relate to a goal the society has. If your goal is to produce higher learning and society, and smoking salvia does not conflict with that goal, it should be legal.

But in a marketplace, you can do none of that, and so society continues to degenerate into a lowest common denominator.

And that's what the United States and Europe have become today: places unfriendly to the oldest kind of freedom, which is the freedom to not be obligated to stupidity.

We are so afraid of offending, and thus failing at democracy and making unnecessary products that we convince others to buy with slick marketing, that we have become a society of lies and mediocrity. It's more important to palliate each other and buy each other off, which means that reality is ignored. We have become wholly anthropocentric.

Someone finally pointed that out:

In short, the United States will never be Europe. It was born as a commercial republic. It's addicted to the pace of commercial enterprise. After periodic pauses, the country inevitably returns to its elemental nature.

Washington is temporarily at the center of the nation's economic gravity and a noncommercial

administration holds sway. This is an administration that has many lawyers and academics but almost no businesspeople in it, let alone self-made entrepreneurs. The president speaks passionately about education and health care reform, but he is strangely aloof from the banking crisis and displays no passion when speaking about commercial drive and success.

But if there is one thing we can be sure of, this pause will not last. The cultural DNA of the past 400 years will not be erased. The pendulum will swing hard. The gospel of success will recapture the imagination.

[David Brooks](#)

Modern libertarians and conservatives have been hoodwinked by this dogma. They like to think that if they support commerce, they'll be OK. They didn't realize that when Nietzsche praised competition and commerce, he did not say that was where our thinking should stop. In fact, he pointed out that it could become like other things a tool of the lowest common denominator tastes, at which point the society collapses.

On the other hand, Ayn Rand took Nietzsche's ideas and super-simplified them. Work hard, and you deserve what you get, and you shouldn't worry about anyone else. Don't worry when they starve, and don't worry about anything they do. This idea seems smart to those who haven't read history deeply enough, and realize that when the herd turns toward illusion, because civilization is inherently collective, others get dragged down into the morass.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Our design is backward

Mar 17th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Invent product first, then invent need and only then wonder if it has bad side effects.

An international group of scientists is calling on Canada and other countries to bring in tougher safety standards for cellphone use after a Swedish team found a fivefold elevated risk of malignant brain tumours in children who begin using mobile phones before the age of 20.

The plea — and the science underlying it — is published in the forthcoming edition of *Pathophysiology*, devoted to peer-reviewed research about the biological effects of the global explosion of wireless technologies and devices like cellphones, cordless phones, wireless Internet and cell towers.

The findings of 15 studies from health researchers in six different countries, looking at the effects of electromagnetic fields and radio frequency radiation on living cells and on the health of humans, should jolt government agencies into action as a precautionary measure, Dr. David Carpenter, director of the Institute for Health & the Environment at the University at Albany, and one of the co-authors, said in an interview.

[Montreal Gazette](#)

Come off it: you were all drugged on how important you felt to be part of the Cell Phone Revolution.

Parents felt progressive and brave for buying their brats the gadgets.

Manufacturers saw profit, which let their middle management move to the suburbs.

The media saw something new to chatter on neurotically about.

Was anyone watching the road ahead?

Monkeys. You're just monkeys with language.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Red light cameras: like the drug war, a slippery slope

Mar 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I've noticed these annoying little gadgets in the news more lately. They're our latest fascination because they make it so easy to do something — but the definition of that something keeps expanding.

It's what they call a "slippery slope" because once you start descending it, you slip and slide and gain speed and soon you're into a much more serious business than you started out with.

Chicago could rake in "at least \$200 million" a year — and wipe out the entire projected deficit for 2009 — by using its vast network of redlight and surveillance cameras to hunt down uninsured motorists, aldermen were told today.

An estimated 24 percent of all vehicles on the nation's roadways are not insured, adding \$100a year to the annual insurance rate paid by responsible motorists.

But, aldermen clearly had dollar signs in their eyes after hearing InsureNet's pitch to enlist the city's entire network of surveillance cameras — and install new ones at high-traffic locations — in the hunt for the uninsured.

[The Sun Times](#)

When there's a hammer lying around, the temptation to use it occurs — even if that use is to bash someone's head in. We either try to target the tool, or the temptation.

With automated ticketing cameras, as with most technology, we have a tool that carries temptation in itself: without anyone even having to use it, it automagically gets those bad guys and makes life cheaper for the rest of us.

We knew that this would happen because these cameras have two temptations:

1. Get the bad guys
2. Hey, a little profit never hurt anyone, and we're broke

But being broke for a government is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Get more money, spend more money, thus need more money. It's like expanding your farm: every time you add an acre, you need more money to plant, water, dig, etc. that new acre.

At the nexus of "profit" and "bad guys" is a dangerous interzone where no one really cares about the victims, and everyone wants the cash or cash saved. Sin taxes. Prison rape. Even internet piracy. Our moral justifications become weapons because by assessing someone as a bad guy, we make it OK to take from them.

As more cities sign up and others invest their profits into more cameras, those companies expect increased revenue for years to come.

What's less clear is whether the cameras improve safety. While studies show fewer T-bone crashes at lights with cameras and fewer drivers running red lights, the number of rear-end crashes increases.

The largest red-light camera company, Redflex Traffic Systems of Scottsdale, operates red-light or speed cameras in 22 states, and added 79 cities last year. It signed a \$32 million

maintenance contract with Chicago last fall, and in just the last three weeks of last year, Redflex added five new cities.

Redflex saw net, after-tax profits of \$10.6 million in fiscal year 2008, up from \$7.3 million the year before.

That ticket in Clive shows why: More than half of the \$75 fine went to Redflex.

[SJMN](#)

Half of the profit goes to the corporation that installed the cameras. But still, “new” money goes to the city.

And when they spend more money, they need more money, and start looking for a way to add more to their coffers.

Have we seen this pattern before?

The Drug War cost law enforcement agencies lots of money to fight everyday. When they seized guns and drugs, those items get destroyed, but what happens to money and cars impounded from these crimes? It actually gets reinvested to get narcotics off the streets,

This equipment was made possible through drug forfeiture money that comes from car auctions and money seizures.

“We’ve been able to buy equipment if the city itself were having to fund it we would not be able to get,” Chief Torres said. “They just would not be able to afford it.”

Some critics accuse these officers who regularly patrol roadways of being highway pirates, but top-ranking officers said they make sure the seizures are tied to drugs.

In Jim Wells County, nearly \$300,000 bought new patrol cars, laptop computers four drug dogs and a bomb sniffing dog.

[KIITV](#)

The war on some drugs (conspicuously, alcohol and tobacco were left out) introduced this concept of zero tolerance seizure: if we find any drugs or drug money on your property, we seize it.

Boats. Cars. Houses. Even business complexes. Where does it end? Well, we always need money, and they’re still bad guys.

I am not against destroying parasites, or exiling bad guys. I am not really against confiscating their property. But I would like to point out that it’s a slippery slope. The first generation sets it up, and uses it responsibly. When there’s new personnel, or new budget shortfalls, the use gets expanded. Inch by inch, it creeps outward.

Red light cameras are going the same way. At first the justification was that we would bust those who run red lights and make the streets safer... and profit. But that cause/effect gets reversed, and so when we need some profit to fill up budget shortfalls, we go looking for new bad guys.

There’s a disturbing possibility that search doesn’t end. Using non-green lightbulbs? Smoking in bed? Haven’t paid your TV tax? Here they come, because you’re now a source of profit, having made yourself a “bad guy” by the ever-increasing definition of the hour.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

How the third world wages war on the first world

Mar 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Hamas is beginning to see something else. At this point, the best way to destroy Israel, is to leave it exactly as it is.

Titrate, adjust the flow of rockets fired at Israeli civilians to a level which is thoroughly acceptable to the rest of the world, but which is also entirely unbearable to Israelis.

Then, sit back and watch demographics and despair work their magic. No wonder Hamas officials who are seen as moderates urge a 50-year truce. By that time, Israeli Arabs will be able to simply vote the Jewish state off the map.

[Haaretz](#)

You rarely see it said so plainly: impoverished people wage war on wealthier people by trying to provoke them with passive aggression, thus building a crowd opposed to them, all while outbreeding them.

Gypsies in Europe.

Mexicans in the USA.

Vietnamese in China.

It's all the same, and it doesn't end until things get so out of hand a war is required. We could avoid that war, but we'd have to get over our personal pretense as saviors of the third world, and relegate them to a proper sphere.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Scientists always miss the big picture

Mar 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

This is great comedy:

SCIENTISTS say they are haunted by the failure to convey to the world just how close Earth is to climate catastrophe.

Top researchers who gathered in Copenhagen for a climate change conference said they were worried that people could not psychologically deal with the enormity of the problem and were reverting to doing nothing.

French glaciologist Claude Lorius, one of the first scientists to publish in 1987 evidence that global warming was real said he despaired of getting the message across.

"At first, I thought that we could convince people. But there is a terrible inertia," he said.

"I fear that society is not up to the challenge of a crisis like this. Today, as a human being I am pessimistic."

[The Daily Telegraph](#)

Glad you've come along to the party, Dr. Lorius. Let me explain a few things:

- People are accustomed to being manipulated by the media. They don't trust you to be telling the truth and not just tweaking all of us for your own gain. For example, it'd be convenient to demand action on global warming to equalize rich countries with poor and create a powerful world government. Many of us don't want that.
- You have a terrible track record. The last 20 crises came and went and we're still here. Nuclear war, drugs, hackers, Nazis, Satanists, UFOs, global cooling, etc. Some of these were just crises we blew off that got worse — pollution, overpopulation and nuclear proliferation — but in general, we're not motivated to act.
- People are individualists. They're not lazy; they're self-centered. They act as if the world is there for their benefit, and all that matters is that they get what they want. They don't care if society falls down as long as it doesn't happen during the years when they're young. Global warming will take another 20 or 50 years to really get cooking? Well, deal with it then, they say, feeling wiser for having ducked a bullet.
- People fail it. Most people have no money, no power, and can barely live their own lives coherently. In fact, numerically most of them live as disasters. You expect them to do what... sell all their stuff, buy new stuff, and devote themselves to being green? They can't put dinner on the table every night and end up ordering pizza twice a week. They can't pay their taxes on time. Their homes get repossessed. It's not that they lack the money — they've spent it on other things, or lost it due to their own stupidity. You want them to do what again? By the end of this paragraph, most people, like 90%, will have forgotten the topic.
- Our economic and social system forbids it. We can't tell others what to do or talk about offensive truths. Furthermore, we cannot do anything that causes us to lose money, or someone else not doing that thing will come in and wipe us out. How do you explain that to your family?

So in other words, even if we accept what you're saying as truth, our dysfunctional society has failed us. Remember all those old people in the past dozens of generations telling us stuff was getting worse? Looks like they were right. But not for the reasons you mention, Dr. Lorius.

In general, the academics I've met have been strikingly clever but not smart at all. They know the right specialized vocabulary, usually an additional 5,000 words; they know the topics of currency and have a

thesis to handle each of the five big issues in their discipline. But beyond that, they're useless. They have no knowledge of the world. This is why all philosophers should be thrust into the world to make their own way, according to the wisdom of an ancient philosopher.

Yet academics kept this society surging forward as much as anyone else. You supported political correctness. You supported big industry. You supported fond notions that if we stop all offensive words, we'll turn out OK, and that those words can be defined subjectively. You supported relativism. And now you want us to snap to your command?

Forget it — you blew it years ago, Dr. Lorus. But you didn't notice because you were in your lab, thin intelligence that you are, looking at partial representations of reality. Go back.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Cosmosexuals

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I learned a new word today, as I often do, by listening to others have conversations. The average conversation is *fascinating* to a voyeur, but only so meaningful if you're part of it, because you're re-arranging tokens you already know.

Cosmosexual, *n.* kahz-moh-zek-schwual. (From "cosmopolitan" and "metrosexual.") One who is open to any sexual partnering, whether homosexual or heterosexual, from any ethnicity or culture or religion, in any location or method, oral or anal or vaginal, so long as it is socially advantageous.

It's kind of amazing, but somehow that last part had to be there after the first parts were. I can't imagine living life for a physical sensation.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The USA is failing

Mar 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I use the shock headline because this other dude is really worried about this problem:

Is America really in serious decline?

Hardly a day goes by that I don't hear someone say so. Even President Obama captured this anxiety in his inaugural speech, pointing to a "nagging fear" that America's "decline is inevitable."

[CSM](#)

For starters, it's illusion to assume that any society exists in the present time is going to last forever. Theoretically, it's possible to design a society with longer-term potential, but nothing we have now seems to have the depth of thought required to produce that.

1.The United States still has the most competitive economy in the world.

According to the most recent Fortune Global 500 report, the US hosts more of the world's major companies (153, to be exact) than any other country.

Data crunching reveals that in 1992, US companies accounted for about 27 percent of the Global 500.

The USA is huge. Also, he's assuming that companies hosted here means our economy is successful. It doesn't necessarily mean that — these companies are successful, and they're hosted here for convenience. It makes sense that we have a lot of them because we have a lot of consumers and huge land-mass. Of course Germany or Japan aren't going to compete... they're tiny! But all of Asia, or all of Europe, versus North America? Ah.

2. The US is still a major international power broker...And that critical role enables it to capitalize on globalization better than can most major countries.

We are assuming that globalization is the way forward and will be successful, not like most large alliances in history a suicide pact, right?

That's a big step there, sailor.

All dying civilizations have reached their apex of raw power. However, they have lost the wisdom to use it well. As a result, they take on lots of enemies and once and cannot keep tabs on their friends, so they get bled dry.

Nations don't fall because one guy comes along and takes them out. At least, not big powerful nations. Empires fall because they become decadent and unrealistic, and then take on thousands of tiny tasks, and bleed through the death of a thousand microfailures. It doesn't happen quickly. It happens over centuries. When the Vandals finally show up at the gate and set the place on fire, it's a welcome anticlimax.

3. The US military is without parallel...As just one indicator of its high-tech advantage, it has mastered stealth flight, while the Russians and Chinese are still in the theoretical planning stages for such technology.

First, we don't know for sure exactly what the Russians and Chinese have, and our espionage is not so superior we can claim this objectively.

Next, the problem is not that our military is bad. The problem is that our leadership is bad. Bad leadership cannot be compensated for with a strong military, nor can a strong military do much when it's outnumbered. There's a lesson from the Russian steppes of 1944 here somewhere.

4. America's competitors lack good allies...in NATO, the European Union, the G-7 industrialized countries, and elsewhere that help it meet its national and international goals.

They don't need allies; as Samuel Huntington points out, they're going to pick people similar to them in values, culture, language, customs and heritage. That means Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America are all going to stick together internally. Comparing America to any one country makes us look good; comparing us to the allegiances that are going to form, and we look really not so good.

For example, Latin America is steadily turning toward socialism. Having a socialist-friendly (Democratic) president in the white house is going to just encourage this. They will also stick together. What are we going to do if 100 million Bolivians, Argentines, Mexicans, Venezuelans and Brazilians with a mid-leftist ideology come charging over the Rio Grande? Try to hire them to cut our lawns?

5. American ideals are becoming universal. Slowly but surely, self-government, free enterprise, and individual liberty are gaining ground around the world.

But these ideals aren't new. Free enterprise and consumerism have existed as long as democracy and individual liberty; as many philosophers allege, these are signs of societies that have lost vital consensus so make every issue a battleground because no one any longer agrees what the goals or values of that society are.

There's no reason to suspect these won't be a trend, as they have been previously in history, culminating in ruined republics now turned into Crowdist paradises.

6. The US attracts the world's best workforce. With global birthrates down, competition for the most educated workers has become more important. Many of the globe's best and brightest still seek to learn, work, and live here, creating a wellspring of American renewal.

However, when they feel like it, they move back, and take away their expertise. I have not seen a shortage of quality native-born workers; what I have seen is a shortage of management who can tell the difference between an idiot and a craftsperson. That's a huge problem right there. When idiots and geniuses seem the same, you know your society is circling the drain.

At bottom, America's remarkable – and remarkably diverse – capabilities will ensure that today's crises are merely temporary setbacks.

Diverse just means you have many different methods for tackling a problem. It doesn't guarantee one will be right. In fact, since the diversity is made up of elements from other places, it's possible that we'd do great if we faced the problems those other places have — but we have our own set of problems, so that seems moot.

It seems to me we should really worry when pundits are bloviating about the end, and offering so many irrelevant deflections as got thrown up above without mass voices in unison shouting them down as babbling bobbleheads.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Crowdism

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Crowdism is the opposite of parallelism, which is a kind of holism designed to take into account human perception of mind and body as separate. What's crowdism?

The belief, whether known in language to its bearer or not, that the individual should predominate over all other concerns is Crowdism. We name it according to the crowd because crowds are the fastest to defend individual autonomy; if any of its members are singled out, and doubt thrown upon their activities or intentions, the crowd is fragmented and loses its power. What makes crowds strong is an inability of any to criticize their members, or to suggest any kind of goal that unites people, because what makes for the best crowds is a lack of goal. Without a higher vision or ideal, crowds rapidly degenerate into raiding parties, although of a passive nature. They argue for greater "freedom." They want more wealth. Anything they see they feel should be divided up among the crowd.

Crowdism strikes anyone who values individual comfort and wealth more than doing what is right. People of a higher mindset leave situations in a higher state of order than when they were found. This requires that people form an abstraction describing how organization works, and create in themselves the moral will to do right, and thus embark on a path that is not accessible to everyone: the smarter and more clearheaded one is, the greater likelihood exists that one is realizing things that an audience of average people have not yet comprehended. For this reason, Crowdists hate people who leave situations in a higher state of order than when they were found. These people threaten to rise above the crowd, and thus fragment the crowd by revealing individual deficiencies again, and that steals the only method of power the crowd has: superior numbers and the illusion that everyone in the crowd is in agreement as to what must be done.

In short, a crowd does not exist except where underconfidence unites people who, being unable to lead on their own, find solace in the leadership and power of others. They want to be in control, but they are afraid to lead, and thus each person in the crowd delegates his authority to others. The crowd therefore moves not by choices, but by lowest common denominator, assessing each decision in terms of what all people in the crowd have in common. Predictably, this makes its decisions of such a base nature they can be guessed in advance. A crowd derives its momentum from the need of its members coupled with their fear of their own judgment. Taking impetus from the need, it asserts itself violently, but because its only mechanism of decision-making is radical compromise, it moves passively toward predictable resolutions.

[Crowdism](#)

Crowdism underlies all ideologies today. As Plato noted, as a society ages, its people become increasingly less aware of what is required to keep it operating. They take it for granted. And so they create power structures independent of reality, and therefore fragment that social consensus that originally brought people together into one whole organic group united by language, culture, values, customs and heritage.

Our society is currently Crowdist because it is aging rapidly, accelerated by technology, and it is in denial. Want to defeat Crowdism? Speak the truth. Get realistic language out there on the playing field. Make fun of the insane and point out the failures of those ideas in the past. And, in the words of Gandhi, "become the change you seek in the world." Transcend your own drama. Look at life from a realistic vantage. Act for what is good and sane and not what is convenient or makes your friends laugh.

In a strange way, this is how you keep both your maturity and your childhood. You gain maturity by becoming a good organism and adapting to reality; you keep childhood by preserving your innocence by

seeing only what you need to in reality, and keeping neurotic and deceptive adult behavior away. It's not just victory for humanity, but victory for you.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [hipsters](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Why international finance is tricky

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The international angle is very important. Geithner and Bernanke keep saying that the problem is that no one knows how much the toxic assets are worth. But that's not the full story. If the counterparties and beneficiaries of the toxic assets held by American banks are also American, it would be relatively easy for Geithner and Bernanke to gather them in a room and make them come to a 'reasonable' agreement about how much these securities were worth. After all, even the most powerful hedge funds must ultimately bow to the power of the Fed and Treasury, especially in a crisis.

But with most of the counterparties in other countries, the job becomes much more difficult. There's no way for Bernanke and Geithner to force European banks, for example, to accept any particular valuation of derivatives or bank bonds—not without the cooperation of the foreign regulators.

In fact, right now we have the worst of both worlds. U.S. banks own securities which may or may not obligate them to pay a large amount of money to foreign investors. And foreign banks have assets on their books which no one trusts are worth what they say. The uncertainty is killing both the borrowers and lenders.

[Business Week](#)

Great article. Foreign investors have both the advantage of being able to buy our stuff, and the advantage of being able to isolate themselves behind their local legal systems. That doesn't make it easy to gain agreement.

For legal purposes, we should probably create an imaginary nation for all international purchases to take place in. Its rules would apply as the properties would technically be "in" that country, and its purchasers would be required to set up a proxy company of some sort there.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Why I'm not in Austin for SXSW

Mar 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Let me count the ways.

1. Austin, by being tolerant, encourages parasitism.

Hey man, are you going to eat those fries?

Does anyone have some change? Anything would help. I don't have any money and any money I did have I just left in Seattle.

Can I have a sip of your beer? We're all in this SXSW thing together.

– Brought to you by the committee for realism

Posted by: The Real Austin Experience(tm) | Mar 15, 2009 6:57:39 AM

[Wired](#)

A city that builds itself on the idea of tolerating everyone quickly encourages people to abuse that idea, since it's brainless. You don't want tolerance — you want to celebrate the good, and junk the bad, just like you do in every other part of life. Books? Keep the good, pitch the bad. Refrigerator? Keep the fresh, toss the stale. Ideas? Keep the realistic, eject the delusional. Friends? Keep the faithful, chuck the leechy.

Austin is world famous for moochers. But these aren't even good moochers. They're "friends" who hit the bathroom when they see the bill coming from the register. Buddies who never bought a computer so need to use yours — five times a week. And random people on the street, many of whom are trust fund babies, who want to borrow a cigarette, have the fries you're not yet eating, get a slice of your pizza, or just outright ask you for money. You can't hit them because Austin is tolerant.

No thank you. I already know that most honest homeless people are that way because they're insane, criminal or stupid; a few just hate society almost as much as I hate a delusional, end-stage civilization. I don't want to go someplace that legitimizes leechy behavior.

2. Popular music is trivial crap

In the 1980s, someone invented indie rock. Musically, it's the same stuff the big label bands put out in the 1970s. But it's on a small label. And artier, more selfconscious. So it must be new... and because it's new, you need it, so you can talk to your friends about it. Right?

No. I've broken free. True freedom consists of knowing what you want and throwing away the rest. I don't want to enslave myself to the novelty of music that, when compared from a distance, is all basically the same stuff. I value my time and I want more from life.

So you can take your SXSW and put it in the same place you put that Deerhoof CD.

3. Austin is full of hipsters

What is the disease of the modern time? Linear rational thought, or taking one aspect of a situation and comparing BEFORE and AFTER a process, and letting that single aspect stand for the many aspects of the situation.

For example: I shot this deer and got a neat new deerhoof. But I am not thinking about the deer carcass rotting in the sun, the depletion of the deer population, the destruction of populations that depend on deer, or even where the bullet went after it sailed through the deer's neck.

The hipster pretends to be above all this, but because hipsterism is based on joining a crowd yet being an individual, it requires you to use a single aspect: external appearance.

So hipsters flounce and mince past, each in some different "radical" (ho hum) combination of things that don't fit together. Day-glo tennis shoes, ironic shirts, emo haircuts, makeup and random neckties. No thank you.

I don't want the trivial imposing it on me in any way. I don't want network television, avoid advertisements if I can, duck out of vapid conversations and don't buy junk products. My time is valuable; I'm not going to let anyone, even an anti-corporate hipster, impose on it with their trivial need for attention and control.

4. **Crowds spread contagion**

When you get people together, you are not going to get any kind of organized action unless there's a leader.

Crowds have no leader, and since that feels good because it means no rules, they behave like children to enforce that. Passive aggression in spades.

The more people you have together, the more they'll resist anything resembling a direction. It's like you're taking the consciousness of a person and *dividing*, not multiplying, it by the number of people there.

Thanks, Austin, but not thanks. I have a nice book, friends and family, and plenty of Deerhoof here if I ever need it. I can also mooch a bite of my own pizza, borrow a cigarette from myself, and blame someone else for my problems, and yet when I get over that moment of pique, I can live comfortably in reality without requiring the presence of others to make me feel my lifestyle choice was a legitimate one.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [hipsters](#)

The war against all but the material

Mar 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

How might most of us experience the effects of the mind on the body?

In an average week you probably experience numerous examples of how what's going on around you affects your subjective health. Most people instinctively know that when bad things happen, they affect your body. You can't sleep, you feel anxious, you've got butterflies in your stomach... you feel awful.

When does that turn into an illness?

Such symptoms only become a problem when people get trapped in excessively narrow explanations for illness – when they exclude any broader consideration of the many reasons why we feel the way we do.

...

We also don't know why people who have had depression are twice as likely to develop CFS. I get cross with people who want to explain one and not the other. Some people take too psychiatric a view of CFS and ignore the infective trigger, whereas others want to think only about the infection.

[New Scientist](#)

We know that [a third of patients can be cured with fake medicine](#) and many allege that prayer, meditation and positive thinking can help patients overcome even the worst diseases. Why do we shrink away from these ideas?

The material is tangible. We can imagine it in our hands. We can imagine it under our control. We like feeling in control, because that counterbalances our vision of our mortality. That's why we like to think we're all equal; we're in control, so if we will ourselves to be brain surgeons, we'll be there — we just don't do it because it's not our thing, although we'd sure like the income. Control is also why we militantly demand rights and that others stay back. We want to defend our material turf.

We want no obligations. We want others to be obligated to leave us alone even if we're doing something stupid. We prefer stupid people who can't see past next week and so will ignore our stupidity. We are so obsessed by the fear of our stupidity and loss of control that we will even obliterate reality from our memories and live in a dreamworld.

Has it made us happier? No, but... we want control. Individuals, governments, laws, memes and ideas. Control. We want it. Now.

And this is why we rebel against the idea of religion or philosophy: they're not tangible. "Science" is tangible, especially the kind most people prefer, where they read the study that is closest to affirming their views, and declare everyone else an idiot for not seeing it their way. They may not be popular, but at least they have control and a reason to scorn others.

We like secular versions of this religion. After all, secular humanism is Christianity morality without the God. Do unto others as you'd like them to do unto you. Every person is important. Do not kill. God loves us all equally... I mean, we're all equal. And so on. Philosophers and theologians, who study the structure of argument, see that; no one else does, and they consider themselves wise for telling you that you're stupid if you do. Monkeys throwing poo.

Onward to religion:

A judge in Wake County said three Raleigh children need to switch from home school to public school.

Venessa Mills was in the fourth year of home schooling her children who are 10, 11 and 12 years old. They have tested two years above their grade levels, she said.

Her lessons also have a religious slant, which the judge said was the root of the problem.

[WRAL](#)

The case in this article is messy and involves a divorce, but I cite it so you can see the reaction.

Close your eyes, clear your mind, and for just a moment, imagine telling someone else the headline. Try several someone elses.

What's the consensus?

Most people think it's great the kids got removed from that Neanderthal religious education and put into public school, even if public schools are an educational failboat when compared to schooling worldwide.

An unconscious bias against the non-material, perhaps. All for control. The illusion of control.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [control](#) · [tradition](#)

The split between responsible and irresponsible

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. – Neil Postman

You have to be aware of passive aggressive types. They tend to assert that a condition is true, and then if you don't go along with it, condemn you for reacting against "what everyone else knows" or a social common standard.

Bums capitalize on passive aggression quite a bit. See a young man with a girl? Watch the bum: he's going to hit up the young man — not the girl — because the young man has a choice: either give the bum money, and look like a Good Guy, or turn him down and introduce the doubt that he may be possibly heartless. So over comes the cash.

Check out passive aggression here — the writer is capitalizing on the known urban versus rural conflict:

When Barack Obama ended the Bush stem-cell policy last week, there were no such overheated theatrics. No oversold prime-time address. No hysteria from politicians, the news media or the public. The family-values dinosaurs that once stalked the earth — Falwell, Robertson, Dobson and Reed — are now either dead, retired or disgraced. Their less-famous successors pumped out their pro forma e-mail blasts, but to little avail. The Republican National Committee said nothing whatsoever about Obama's reversal of Bush stem-cell policy.

Americans have less and less patience for the intrusive and divisive moral scolds who thrived in the bubbles of the Clinton and Bush years. Culture wars are a luxury the country — the G.O.P. included — can no longer afford.

In our own hard times, the former moral "majority" has been downsized to more of a minority than ever. Polling shows that nearly 60 percent of Americans agree with ending Bush restrictions on stem-cell research (a Washington Post/ABC News survey in January); that 55 percent endorse either gay civil unions or same-sex marriage (Newsweek, December 2008); and that 75 percent believe openly gay Americans should serve in the military (Post/ABC, July 2008).

[NYT](#)

This man is a slick manipulator.

He knows that every person on earth prefers the illusion of personal autonomy, and so they resent any attempts to control them outside of the most basic parts of the social contract: no murder, rape, pedophilia, and so on.

Unfortunately, that sort of logic places us between worlds. We're obligated to the collective that is civilization, but acting as if we're free agents outside of a civilization. That means that huge costs for our reckless behavior, and the social resources to save us, get passed on as "socialized costs" that we collectively pay. This means the smart become obligated to the dumb.

Rural people tend to have conservative logic, and that's a lowercase-c conservative. If your science doesn't

understand it 100%, don't jack with it. Stick to traditional moral values because those produce healthy generations. Don't be afraid to kill your enemies, even if they call you names and say you'll be unpopular. People need guns in the home in case lunatics show up. And the big taboo: not everyone can figure out how to run a farm, and some people are just born bad, like some piglets in a litter are just born weak and angry. Drowning time.

That sort of logic shocks people in cities. They don't do anything with their hands; their labor consists of moving around symbols in order to make other people do things. Their wealth is paper wealth, which is why they suffer the hardest numerical losses during a recession. But they don't understand the process by which we get steaks on the table, and they don't want to know. Because they thrive by moving symbols around, they also thrive by being polite: pacifying others, complimenting them, getting along with them at all costs, and so on. Urban people are a nation of salespeople.

Let's look at another vision of this same conflict:

Mr. Rogers, whose previous political involvement amounted to little more than writing a check to a favored candidate — has suddenly become a leader in a secessionist movement bent on cleaving California in two.

"Those Hollywood types don't have any idea what's going on out here on the farms," said Mr. Rogers.

Frustrated by what they call uninformed urban voters dictating faulty farm policy, Mr. Rogers and the other members of the movement have proposed splitting off 13 counties on the state's coast, leaving the remaining 45, mostly inland, counties as the "real" California.

The reason, they say, is that people in those coastal counties, which include San Francisco and Los Angeles, simply do not understand what life is like in areas where the sea breezes do not reach.

"They think fish are more important than people, that pigs are treated mean and chickens should run loose," said Mr. Rogers, who said he hitched a ride in 1940 to Visalia from Oklahoma to escape the Dust Bowl, with his wife and baby son in tow. "City people just don't know what it takes to get food on their table."

[NYT](#)

The point that's important here: there's two economies at work, and two cultures have grown up around them. In the city, there's a salesperson economy and culture. In the country, there's a producer economy and culture. While in the city people can bundle together in groups and use the weight of their opinion, and [passive aggression](#), to force others to act, in the country it requires people to engage with the problem head on and come up with some sort of solution, even if it's not socially acceptable or polite.

Of course, not every person in the city is fooled, but the human illusion that we all have free will and kinglike pick our ideologies is just that, an illusion — we pick ideologies like we pick clothing, to cover up our weaknesses and adorn ourselves, for the most part.

We can frame this conflict to include both the city folks who agree with the country folks and the suburban folks I have not mentioned. People in the suburbs generally are more successful than other groups, and have made the commitment to sacrificing things like being near downtown and its shopping/"culture" in order to raise kids in a safe place. (That's the case for nice suburbs. There are many suburbs in sprawling cities like LA that are just repositories for those with no other direction.)

If we include these groups, we rapidly see the approach of a divide between the responsible and irresponsible. Responsible people have the producer mentality; irresponsible people are used to angling for what they need by getting it from other people, usually by convincing them with a shell game of symbols. Irresponsible people solve problems by clumping together like dough and using their collective weight to

force other people to give them things... and if that causes socialized costs down the line, well, they're not thinking about that.

Here's an instance of this kind of thinking:

Emboldened by a new leftist constitution, Bolivia President Evo Morales on Saturday handed over ownership of farmland seized by the state from wealthy estate holders to poor indigenous people.

Morales handed out around 94,000 acres of lands recently confiscated from five big ranches in Bolivia's wealthy eastern lowlands, a stronghold of his conservative political opponents. The ranchers have been accused of employing workers in conditions of semi-slavery.

"Private property will always be respected but we want people who are not interested in equality to change their thinking and focus more on country than currency," said Morales, flanked by military and police personnel.

[Reuters](#)

When I lived among the surly urban poor of Los Angeles, I learned one thing that I have seen confirmed time and again about poverty: its origin is in cluelessness, disorganization and lack of impulse control, **not oppression**.

A friend of mine in Austin who grew up in a trailer park because his parents were alcoholic pointed this out to me, saying that despite his liberal beliefs, he knew why the poor were poor: "Everyone in that trailer park belonged there." They were unable to stop drinking or taking drugs, having children or flaking out on work. They were chronically disorganized, so that when they got that job, the car had been taken apart for the fuel pump to be used to clean the kitchen sink that they meant to unclog last week but just hadn't gotten around to it.

In his eyes, the place was hell. I've since heard the same from many friends, whose parents followed the baby boomers to their doom but didn't realize it was a scam and pull out in time to become bankers. I've seen the same in impoverished places on three continents.

Ask yourself: if the poor are poor, why do they always seem to have \$5 for cigarettes, \$5 for the lottery, \$5 for alcohol and \$25 to watch the sports event or rock concert du jour? Why do you see people wearing \$200 tracksuits and \$200 shoes walking around the ghetto?

To be poor, you need to be irresponsible. Spend that \$400 now on flashy things instead of on building infrastructure; spend \$40 per day on cigs, lottery and booze instead of infrastructure; even more, with what you have, junk it and don't care for it, and don't keep it organized, so that whenever opportunity does come you're unable to take advantage of it.

The single mother of six children said when she saw the pitch for the adorable puppies last summer on the popular classified ad site Kijiji she was excited to welcome the brother and sister dogs named Nelly and Kelly into her home.

St. Amand says she sent upwards of \$2,000 for the dogs she is yet to see except for photos sent to her by email.

St. Amand is on welfare, and along with her children ages two to 11, shares her home with her boyfriend and six pets – including two mixed breed dogs.

Money in St. Amand's household is so scarce she was going to have to pawn two small rings to come up with the gas money to have a relative take her to the airport to get the dogs.

[Canada East](#)

(I can't tell what's more appalling — that she performed the ultimate act of stupidity in sending her welfare money to get these dogs, the way she lives as a six-child welfare mom with a boyfriend on welfare and four dogs, or that she was willing to admit this to the world via the press. If this family dies in a fire, we can all agree that the gene pool will be clearer.)

The poor in Bolivia live in near-slavery conditions because when given wealth, they squander it. They will squander this gift too. And instead of concentrating power in the hands of people who could get responsible, their president is now declaring dominion of the irresponsible over the responsible. (This is the ultimate state of Crowdism: when the irresponsible, produced by the wealth created by the responsible, band together to take that wealth from the responsible, and thus kill the goose that laid the golden egg and plunge themselves into a third-world military junta dark ages.)

And yet another example:

A former busker, Aubrey Meyer, thought up what is increasingly regarded as the long-term solution to global warming – and, through relentless campaigning, he has managed to get his idea adopted as policy by many governments, especially in developing countries. Dubbed “contraction and convergence”, it starts from the principle that everyone on Earth is entitled to emit the same amount of carbon dioxide. It then determines the level of emissions low enough to avoid dangerous climate change. The total amount put into the atmosphere worldwide each year must then be made to “contract” until it reaches this point. Simultaneously, the totals of individual countries have to “converge”, so that each emits the same amount for every one of its citizens; rich countries would have to reduce their totals very heavily, while some poor countries could actually be able to increase theirs. Most experts agree that it is the fairest framework. Persuading Americans to agree to emit the same amount as Ethiopians is another matter.

Felling forests, especially in the tropics, is the second biggest cause of carbon dioxide emissions after burning fossil fuels, accounting for a fifth of the world's total. But people and governments have no incentive to leave them standing when they can make money by selling the timber, or farming the cleared land. Now international negotiators are beginning to work out how the world as a whole could compensate them for setting aside the chainsaw. In practice, of course, the money would end up coming from rich countries.

[The Independent](#)

The passive aggression assumption here: technology does not require wastefulness. We can limit the waste and pollution generated by technology, but on a practical level, there will be CO2 emissions no matter what we do.

Curiously, while the first world can measure its CO2 emissions, the third world cannot, so we do not have figures for slash and burn agriculture, torching garbage, running primitive equipment without catalytic converters, etc. — even though the third world outnumbers the first world nine to one, and so if they produce one ninth the emissions, they're on par for the problem.

The right distrusts global warming because all of the solutions end up being like this: penalize the first world, and thus give a giant free gift of money, power and technology to the third world, even though their greater numbers means they'll be a climate wrecking ball unlike anything before. Never mind that the most atrocious uses of power in the first world involve the activities preferred by the working classes and lower middle classes, like fast food restaurants, big engines, cheap consumer products, disposable goods, and so on. The wealthy don't screw around with those things. They appeal to those for whom “good deal” is like a light to a moth; they can't think past the next two weeks, so always buy the cheaper gadget and then throw it out, even if the gadget that cost twice as much would have lasted ten times as long.

This is why the smartest people among us are turning to whole or organic ideologies that include knowledge of the inherent hierarchies among humanity. They're allying some goofy ideas together in order to do it so that we get the concept of whole. Whole means every factor at once, not one factor — who has

money and who doesn't — at a time. That's why, for example, many environmentalists are embracing alternative medicine:

Environmentalism is, or should be, a movement led by scientific findings. I see the role of environmentalists as being to explore and explain the implications of what the science — whether on climate change, habitat loss, biodiversity, fisheries, pollution or resource depletion — is saying, and how this should translate into public policy. We should try at all times to be rigorous. And we should kill our darlings — our enthusiasm for solar panels, for example, or our rigid opposition to nuclear power — if the facts demand it.

This doesn't mean that we have to be motivated by the science. My environmentalism arises from both a deep love of the natural world and a strong sense of the injustices done to vulnerable people: it's an emotional impulse, in other words.

[The Guardian](#)

He's not listening to Prince Charles. The Prince of Wales is pointing out that [modernism, or the assumption of linear rationalism, is the root of our problem](#).

If we're going to get environmental, he thinks, in order for us to succeed we must fix our thinking first. So — alternative medicine — why? It embraces a simple concept: holism. Where modern medicine tries to find a symptom and hammer it, alternative medicine tries to put the whole system in balance.

And that's Prince Charles's message: put the system in balance, in harmony, as a whole. Do not just hammer a problem and ignore the consequences. Do not be blind to context, or to reasons for things like poverty versus wealth. Take in all factors at once and come up with a balance solution. Yes, it's intellectually harder — but it's a longer-term fix to the ongoing human problem of modernism as described by Huxley: overwhelmed with too much information, we pick an ethic of convenience that leads to a celebration of the trivial, including ourselves as individuals with no cause for said celebration.

Here is why:

"He sold his boat for me." These are my six words. He sold his boat and it was a lifetime ago, ancient history now. And it was a little boat. But it was a big act of love that I didn't recognize for a long, long time.

For the boat was just a boat in my eyes. But in my husband's? He could tell you the horsepower and the color of the seats and how many people it held and how much he paid for it and how much he got for it — because it was his youth, his plumage, a speedboat that he hitched to the back of his shiny GTO. It turned heads. It made girls notice him. He was 19 and he liked that.

He was 24 and I was 23 and we had an 8-month-old whose bedroom had been our family room. I said, "We need more space." And he said, "I'll sell my boat."

And that was that. He never moaned about giving up something he loved, and I never said, "Don't" or "Are you sure?"

Everyone who is married or living together or just going together started off sweet-talking. What do you need? How can I help? I can do that. No problem! Flowers for no reason. Poems. Chicken soup when you're sick. Ice cream just because. Phone calls that are more than traffic reports.

It's all sunshine and roses. Until it isn't.

That's when it's important to remember the beginning.

"He sold his boat for me." This was my beginning.

[The Boston Herald](#)

That's holism in action: realizing what is more important than immediate needs, transcending the individual and reaching for a greater future state, even if it is not recognized right away. Not demanding the money of others. Not farming out your selfishness as a socialized cost to the rest of society. Not calling folks ignorant for wanting to keep traditional values. Not living by selling people short-term illusions and pleasing symbols; instead, embracing reality good and bad alike, and as a painter with a canvas and paint, making a beautiful future of it.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [modernism](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [rationalism](#)

The article New Scientist yanked

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Amanda Geffer

New Scientist

Sat, 28 Feb 2009 22:35 UTC

As a book reviews editor at *New Scientist*, I often come across so-called science books which after a few pages reveal themselves to be harbouring ulterior motives. I have learned to recognise clues that the author is pushing a religious agenda. As creationists in the US continue to lose court battles over attempts to have intelligent design taught as science in federally funded schools, their strategy has been forced to... well, evolve. That means ensuring that references to pseudoscientific concepts like ID are more heavily veiled. So I thought I'd share a few tips for spotting what may be religion in science's clothing.

Red flag number one: the term "scientific materialism". "Materialism" is most often used in contrast to something else – something non-material, or supernatural. Proponents of ID frequently lament the scientific claim that humans are the product of purely material forces. At the same time, they never define how non-material forces might work. I have yet to find a definition that characterises non-materialism by what it is, rather than by what it is not.

The invocation of Cartesian dualism – where the brain and mind are viewed as two distinct entities, one material and the other immaterial – is also a red flag. And if an author describes the mind, or any biological system for that matter, as "irreducibly complex", let the alarm bells ring.

Misguided interpretations of quantum physics are a classic hallmark of pseudoscience, usually of the New Age variety, but some religious groups are now appealing to aspects of quantum weirdness to account for free will. Beware: this is nonsense.

When you come across the terms "Darwinism" or "Darwinists", take heed. True scientists rarely use these terms, and instead opt for "evolution" and "biologists", respectively. When evolution is described as a "blind, random, undirected process", be warned. While genetic mutations may be random, natural selection is not. When cells are described as "astonishingly complex molecular machines", it is generally by breathless supporters of ID who take the metaphor literally and assume that such a "machine" requires an "engineer". If an author wishes for "academic freedom", it is usually ID code for "the acceptance of creationism".

Some general sentiments are also red flags. Authors with religious motives make shameless appeals to common sense, from the staid – "There is nothing we can be more certain of than the reality of our sense of self" (James Le Fanu in *Why Us?*) – to the silly – "Yer granny was an ape!" (creationist blogger Denyse O'Leary). If common sense were a reliable guide, we wouldn't need science in the first place.

Religiously motivated authors also have a bad habit of linking the cultural implications of a theory to the truth-value of that theory. The ID crowd, for instance, loves to draw a line from Darwin to the Holocaust, as they did in the "documentary" film *Expelled: No intelligence allowed*. Even if such an absurd link were justified, it would have zero relevance to the question of whether or not the theory of evolution is correct. Similarly, when Le Fanu writes that Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* "articulated the desire of many scientists for an exclusively materialist explanation of natural history that would liberate it from the sticky fingers of the theological inference that the beauty and wonder of the natural world was direct evidence for 'A Designer'", his statement has no bearing on the scientific merits of evolution.

It is crucial to the public's intellectual health to know when science really is science. Those with a religious agenda will continue to disguise their true views in their effort to win supporters, so please read between the lines.

This article was removed by New Scientist because of a user complaint.

I think they did the right thing. The article is too narrow in scope, when it should focus on the multiple ways we are manipulated by media, especially those — corporations, political organizations, religious groups, governments — with the money to get crafty.

I hope they edit it to expand coverage and include the following:

- Critical analysis. How to spot motive and understand argument, and read *cui bono* into any document that is not fully sincere toward truth in a scientific context.
- Categorical logic. People need a refresher on how to distinguish between categorical logic that is accurate, and the creation of false or deconstructive categories to separate cause from effect.

I'd love to see that, maybe including a list of the top ten manipulators. I think many of the Good Liberals cheering this one on would then become very quiet.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Consequences of the free will illusion

Mar 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A fast-food restaurant within about 500 feet of a school may lead to at least a 5 percent increase in the obesity rate at that school, according to a study released on Friday.

The researchers looked at how proximity to the restaurants affected obesity rates among 3 million ninth graders at California schools, and more than 1 million pregnant women in Michigan, New Jersey and Texas.

In December, a study found that youth who study within a half mile from a fast-food outlet eat fewer fruit and vegetables, drink more soda and are more likely to be obese than students at other schools.

[Reuters](#)

The human dogma: we all have free will, and we are all sage and wise individuals who will do the right thing, so back off because we are defending our territory and so will insist on maximum rights even if we don't use those rights, but others use them to damage society at large. We will not back down. Having territory gives us the illusion of control, which makes us not think we're mortal, and that feels pretty good. Back off!

The sad reality: people are animals, and animals function by stimulus-driven reactions. See prey? Seize. See larger monkey? Attack. Lose? Complain that monkey violated your rights.

What we can learn from a few hamburgers.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [free will](#)

More on MP3s: what won't work

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I disagree with this intelligent and well-written article:

The details of how this will work, who will bill the end-user, the sorts of restrictions that will be applied—all this remains to be worked out, but the idea of a flat fee payment for access to (nearly) all recorded music has won the conceptual war. Ad-supported streaming and paid single downloads will continue to exist, but neither model seems able to change the behavior of music lovers who have grown up using P2P to discover new tunes.

The most radical of such schemes would see some kind of monthly payment made in exchange for total access to music. Those who pay could legally use any ISP and any P2P network to share music legally, with the money being split up among artists based on the popularity of their music.

[Ars Technica](#)

The problem with this is that competition is inherent to life and business. Artists want to do better if more people like them; they want the feedback, and the glory. And the reason we have people rushing into music is so they can do a winner take all.

What no one wants to mention, but is obvious, is the problem Hollywood, the book publishing industry, and the music industry all face: they were based on novelty, or the idea that something being new and different could substitute for it having eternal qualities that would make people want to keep it around at any time.

Literally, they've scammed us for so long they can't stop. Paying four morons to make a rap/rock record is cheaper than finding a classical musician, folk musician, prog rocker or honest niche musician to make a quality record. So they build a business model upon having flavor of the month, but now that people can sample it in advance, they're learning that the magic doesn't last — all these innovative musics, uplifting books and daring movies all resemble each other once you've seen, heard or read enough of them — and so their business model has fallen apart.

A subscription service won't save that. Technology is requiring them to both move forward and move "backward" to the quality levels of previous times. I guess some values are just eternal, huh.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Whole behaviors strengthen families

Mar 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I talk a lot here about the organic society and the idea of whole logic.

Modern logic, or rationalism, takes a single factor of many and lets it stand for the whole situation.

It's derived from the populist religious/consumer tendency to assign *good* or a dollar value to any item in an absolute, universal context.

For example, "Turnips are worth \$5" makes zero sense to a man starving on a desert island — turnips are worth whatever he has at that point.

Or even, "Killing is bad," from a society that then kills killers. Or even exterminates a species or 8,057.

Whole logic means that every factor is architectonically balanced, meaning that each factor supports all others. The act or object makes sense on its own and in its context as a result.

Whole logic is an outgrowth of parallelism, or the belief that properties emerge situationally, and must be considered as competing solutions derived from a universal but immanent order. Parallelism rejects symbolic logic and rationalism in favor of whole logic, or making sure that every act and principle is *reverent* and coherent with both context and focal point.

Someone else understands:

Working away from the farm means working apart from the family unit and poses a real threat to the Amish way of life that is centered on family and faith.

When the Amish go off to work each day in an outside business, they fall prey to the same social ills that are problems for the outside world, he said. Amish children, in particular, who weren't raised in farming were adopting an attitude that, "the world owes me something," Wengerd said.

The farm keeps the family together with Amish values intact, a point that Wengerd said illustrates with the example of his younger brother, Henry "Junior" Wengerd, who operates a dairy farm in Dalton with his wife and four children. "They are the farm. The farm is them," he said.

Organic farming is a return to practices that even the Wengerd's father had abandoned when he bought the family farm in Dalton, Ohio, in 1964.

[Anniston Star](#)

I am sending warm love to anyone who thinks such a thought. This person understands how to worship the cosmos, and how fortunate we are to even exist, and how the only fitting gift for such a universe or God is worship by whole, organic actions in everything we do.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [reverence](#) · [tradition](#) · [transcendentalism](#)

It wasn't discrimination, after all

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Women tend to choose non-math-intensive fields for their careers — not because they lack mathematical ability, but because they want flexibility to raise children or prefer less math-intensive fields of science, reports a new Cornell study.

"A major reason explaining why women are underrepresented not only in math-intensive fields but also in senior leadership positions in most fields is that many women choose to have children, and the timing of child rearing coincides with the most demanding periods of their career, such as trying to get tenure or working exorbitant hours to get promoted," said lead author Stephen J. Ceci, professor of human development at Cornell.

[Science Codex](#)

I thought it was oppression. If I can ever find it, Anne Fisher of Fortune/CNN Money wrote a great article about how women are not behaving as aggressively as they need to in order to get equal results.

I think that women's unwillingness to "rock the boat" is a big reason why, according to the Economic Policy Institute, the wage gap between college-educated women and their male counterparts has actually gotten bigger since the mid-'90s. A decade ago, women earned 75.7 cents for each dollar paid to a man. Now it's 74.7 cents.

"Talk to your sister and help her try to figure out why she puts up with this," suggests Barbara Stanny (www.barbarastanny.com), a writer and speaker based in Port Townsend, Wash., who specializes in women's pay issues. "Women often get paid less because we allow it. Why doesn't she value herself enough to mind that she's making less money than her peers?"

Encourage her not to put off dealing with this. At one of her speaking engagements, Stanny says, "I met one woman who tolerated being paid less than the men she worked with for decades, until she was 48. When she finally got around to confronting her boss about it, he said, 'You're right.' This woman said to me, 'Just imagine how different my life would be now if I'd done that 20 years ago.' "

[Ask Annie](#)

Another point she makes — women aren't as comfortable with the idea of hierarchy:

The fault could lie, in part, with the way girls are—or used to be—brought up. "Men grow up in hierarchies and understand how power is wielded," notes Pat Heim, author of a book called *Smashing the Glass Ceiling*. "Girls grow up sharing power equally. There never was a 'boss doll player.' " Well, in my neighborhood there was, but Heim makes a good point.

[Ask Annie](#)

I always had a similar problem in the workplace; waves of apathy followed by a tendency to let idiots rush ahead and ruin things so I could fix them. Now I'm more aggressive without being a soulless manipulator devoid of ethical or natural selective considerations: I smash idiots wherever I find them.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [sexism](#)

Sexual revolution was legal rape

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

All that loosening up ultimately contained just more male insistence, a sense that the real problem with society was that women just weren't putting out enough! The journey to sexual liberation was sold as a step forward for women, but it was also a clever way to eliminate the option of saying no.

[Reason](#)

It's a form of passive aggression: imply that having sex is something you do to be polite and egalitarian.

Then, demand it. That way if you're one of those hopeless people who thinks quantity overshadows quality, you get to have them all and feel victorious over them, like you conquered them.

In the meantime, [women get more alienated](#) and less likely to breed sensibly. Society pays.

Does this remind you of anything? Maybe [r-K strategies](#), and how if you breed by *r* strategies, rape fits right in. Where are *r* strategies found? In the [third world, which is also a rape epidemic](#):

Rape has been used as a brutal weapon of war in Congo, where conflicts based on tribal lines have spawned dozens of armed groups amid back-to-back civil wars that drew in several African nations. More than 5 million people have died since 1994. Women have become even more vulnerable since a rebel advance at the end of last year drove a quarter-million people from their homes and fighting this year left another 100,000 others homeless, according to aid workers.

Fistulas usually result from giving birth in poor conditions. In Congo, they are caused by violent rapes that tear apart the flesh separating the bladder and rectum from the vagina.

"Yesterday I did five fistula operations and we have more than 100 women waiting here and who knows how many out in the bush who never ever get to a hospital."

Kinoma says it has become the norm for armed men to use guns, knives and bayonets to rupture their victims' bodies. Sometimes they shoot bullets up women's vaginas. Victims often are rejected by their families, contract HIV, and are left to live in pain and shame.

Also treated last week was a 4-year-old whose mother sent her across the road to get something from a neighbor. She was kidnapped by soldiers and gang-raped.

[AP](#)

It would be comical if it weren't so brutish:

A decade ago, illegal migration was dominated by men. Now more women are making the journey, risking rape and even death to support their families.

Rape has become so prevalent that many women take birth control pills or shots before setting out to ensure they won't get pregnant. Some consider rape "the price you pay for crossing the border," said Teresa Rodriguez, regional director of the U.N. Development Fund for Women.

"The normal rule, according to women who migrate, is that before leaving their countries they have to take the pill for at least one to three months to ensure that they will not get pregnant after a rape," said Aguilar, of the group Carecen Internacional.

Many Central Americans crossing Mexico hop cargo trains, where Aguilar said "there's almost a 99 percent chance that a woman will get raped."

"The risk of rape is very high, not only by smugglers or by men in their same group, but also by criminals on public buses or on the cargo trains," he said.

[WAPO](#)

Legal rape and illegal rape both contribute to a breakdown of the family and a [dysgenic bottleneck](#) reducing the quality of the population.

Why would we tolerate either form of rape? Rape is rape is [destruction of good things in life](#), like happy women and happy families and innocent children with innocent mommies and daddies who would never do such a thing. Shouldn't we strive for that, instead of fighting for equality?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#) · [reproduction](#)

Useful idiots

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I certainly don't mean to discount the very real occurrences of violence against any woman but all this reading of non-proven incidents of rape brings to mind the term "useful idiot." It's a term I heard used in a 1984 news program featuring Soviet KGB defector Yuri Bezmenov. In that interview, Mr. Bezmenov described how our country would be demoralised and ripped at the seams by useful idiots who parrot in news articles tripe fomented by those with larger agendas. That idea that some women are raped while attempting to cross the border should never be discounted; I don't doubt there is rape and other violence in some situations. The idea of panties in trees being proof of widespread rape is what is laughable. The conjectures without victims, witnesses or other proof make a mockery of the very real subject of abuse and the people who copy and paste such nonsense in blog posts are either well meaning idiots or idiots with an agenda, but idiots nonetheless.

[Last Free Voice](#)

She has a point. People parrot, don't analyze, and then other people without the capacity of analysis repeat and cause problems. It's like shouting fire in a theater.

Imagine I show you a list of 30 words. One of the words is written in green ink. The rest are blue.

Half an hour goes by and I ask you to recall the words on the list. Which word are you most likely to remember?

The one written in green ink, of course. This is the "von Restorff Effect": Novelty grabs our attention.

It's basic cognitive hardwiring. Journalists don't zero in on "man bites dog" stories because they're perverse. They do it because they're human.

...

When a story breaks, grabs the media's attention, and gets people talking, something else happens. The story ceases to be about a single incident. Instead, it creates a narrative.

The absence of a narrative means a story must stand or fall on its own. And when a story runs contrary to a narrative, it is positively resisted.

[The Ottawa Citizen](#)

Another word for narrative is "script," as in, "since we were looking for guys dressed in black carrying bicycles, he fit right into our script."

The media uses these means to control you: novelty and its stepchild, negativity — since evolution has primed you to first look for threats — and a script into which all news must fit. We could call that script a "justification," as we do in our manifesto.

When those who have money and power want you to jump, they make a few calls to their friends and business associates. They put out the meme: X is the new threat, or Y is another instance of the current script of threats, whether it be global warming, hackers, racists, Satanists or godless Communism.

That's how you keep a nation in line when they don't have much in common as far as ideologies, values,

etc. go. You manipulate them with carrot and stick: we free, they bad.

Much as democracy relies on having a horde of people who don't read or think very deeply about issues, modern society relies on useful idiots to bleat out that the sky is falling any time such a meme comes around.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [censorship](#) · [useful idiots](#)

Breeding a generation of narcissists

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The growing expectation placed on schools and parents to boost pupils' self-esteem is breeding a generation of narcissists, an expert has warned.

Dr Carol Craig said children were being over-praised and were developing an "all about me" mentality.

She said teachers increasingly faced complaints from parents if their child failed a spelling test or did not get a good part in the school pantomime.

She told head teachers the self-esteem agenda, imported from the United States, was a "a big fashionable idea" that had gone too far.

She said an obsession with boosting children's self-esteem was encouraging a narcissistic generation who focussed on themselves and felt "entitled".

[BBC](#)

If you pick an unrealistic goal, you contort everything else to not contradict that goal.

So when you declare everyone equal, you're pretty much forced to destroy anything to the contrary.

This means that when there's a race at physical education, you reward the kid with the most average time.

When there's a test, you make sure everyone gets a B+ and a few kids get As for extra effort.

Eventually, you've so saturated everyone in false positive assessment that people lose impetus to perform, much as they do under socialism.

It's the same psychology, just transferred between grades and money.

A better way is to say that everyone has a place in a complex hierarchy unless they do a few taboo things, like murder, rape, smoke in bed, etc.

Our current society is based around the idea that everyone is equal, and every action is equally OK, until it offends someone else. That's a minefield. It makes no sense.

To counter it, we're trying to make everyone feel OK with themselves, which doesn't help them when they need to change their behavior because they're screwing up.

How societies decay. Plato predicted it:

Next comes democracy and the democratic man, out of oligarchy and the oligarchical man.

...

The manner of life in such a State is that of democrats; there is freedom and plainness of speech, and every man does what is right in his own eyes, and has his own way of life. Hence arise the most various developments of character; the State is like a piece of embroidery of which the colours and figures are the manners of men, and there are many who, like women and children, prefer this variety to real beauty and excellence.

...

The only qualification which she demands is the profession of patriotism. Such is democracy;—a pleasing, lawless, various sort of government, distributing equality to equals and unequals alike.

[Plato, *The Republic*](#)

Modern people are so trained by rationalism that they reject any idea which has one (1) aspect they do not like, and they never assess whether on the whole it is more or less truthful than what they know now. Truly they have been domesticated.

Plato's point is a good one, however. A state based on equality removes the impetus toward excellence that makes a nation healthy, and so all that's left is commerce, conformity and patriotism — which even our left has in disgustingly powerful portions.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [devolution](#) · [eugenics](#)

Synonyms

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

People don't realize that many words are "conflatable terms," meaning that they either have the same meaning as another term or describe something that immediately becomes what that term describes.

- Civilization/Collectivism – People like to talk about how bad collectivism is because you know, it's what those Soviets and Nazis did. Give us a break. Collectivism means you don't just act for yourself, but support society as a whole. We're just afraid of it because society has redefined moral codes to prevent us from discriminating against parasites, leeches, liars, cheats and con-men.
- Diversity/Multiculturalism/Globalism – these mean the same thing: every nation becomes a place where every type of person can live, with every background and ethnicity. This quickly destroys the dominant ethnicity in each place, the dominant religion in each place, and the dominant values system. What's left? Watching TV for your culture and morals, and being ruled by commerce.
- Stupidity/Ignorance/Criminality – Stupid people can't think past tomorrow as far as their actions go. So when they see something they want, they take it. They have trouble thinking ahead to their possible arrest, or the damage they do, so they don't think about it.
- Poverty/Disorganization – how do you get wealthy? Get organized. Make sure the seeds go into the ground and no one eats the seed corn. Compile knowledge and use it. Have people work together. Without these things, poverty exists.
- Corruption/Politeness – The old form of politeness was an elaborate ritual. Now, politeness means pandering and giving in to what others want, then screwing them on the back end. Customer demands a free meal? Great, give it to them — we've got some old food hanging around. We can't say no and violate the new Crowd-approved social contract, so instead we strike back while technically fulfilling the demand. This kind of politeness so quickly leads to corruption there's no point distinguishing the two.

When you recognize the truth of our subdivided vocabulary, which is that it is used to assign new symbols to *separate* some ideas from their consequences, you can more appropriately translate the news from comforting babble into realistic approximation of future events. You're on your way to transcending this insanity.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Monkeytime

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

What's sad about a dying civilization is that the only people who see it are those who have these traits:

- Intelligent. 125 IQ points or above. It helps to have real-world experience, but that cannot substitute for what Nietzsche calls "sensitivity," or a fineness of discernment.
- Sincere. They believe in the scientific method of finding truth and value truth and believe pursuing it is their salvation.
- Moral. They are, as a great author paraphrased said, at a state of moral attention at all times, being aware of how people's actions will impact the world at large as well as other humans.

Everyone else is oblivious to consequences beyond the next paycheck, and cannot predict the outcomes of more than a single factor over more than a few days anyway. Thanks to the [Dunning-Kuriger effect](#), they have no idea they're incompetent, so they pick theories that make them sound smart (to them) but in fact disregard whole ranges of vital data. They are quintessential sophomores.

They like to use one-sentence, glib answers where thought is required; in that alone they reveal they are not sincere, intelligent or moral. But they think their cleverness hides the truth. It's no wonder these things run in cycles: society gets wealthy, this enables people who are at the moral level of monkeys to become parasites, and then the parasites band together and make it illegal to point out truth, reality or other things that make unstable individuals experience self-doubt. They make monkeytime, or an age of irresponsible lack of accountability, the law of the land, even though it's contrary to the laws of mathematics, information and nature.

As a result, the society plunges into dark ages for a while until a strongman comes along who legalizes reality and boosts people out of denial. Then the process of civilization can restart.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Still no solution for MP3 crisis

Mar 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The music industry is in crisis.

Their business model, for the last 50 years, has been based on novelty. That hot album by that slick band is new; get it while it's new, and you can talk to your friends about it. You can talk to girls about it. Rock music is a social surrogate for teenagers to introduce them to small talk and, ultimately, sexuality.

But if a month goes by, that album is no longer new, and then, it has lost its hip. You are no longer in the know by talking about it. You don't impress friends, you don't impress girls, and you don't get entrance to all the hip clubs and places. You have no *social currency*.

That album will sell most during that first month, and then sales will taper off, first with the less clueful buying it, and then eventually, to the bargain bins where only chubby basement-dwellers pick it up, thinking: "I heard this was really hip when I read something some time ago, so maybe it's still cool!"

When you get the CD or record home, and put it on, you find out that it may have some cool and "new" (new to you, but not new to music) techniques and ideas, but basically it's just rock n roll or jazz or rap. The novelty was what sold the CD or record; not the quality. If they wanted quality, they'd buy classical. Even jazz, which promises to be "more musical," is advanced musical theory applied to unstructured improvisation to a linear harmonic line. It's music designed to be like our machines: interchangeable parts, small upgrades in technique to make new versions of the products, with a huge profit margin.

This is why the record labels have been so profit-steady for the last five decades: they're making junk and selling it at high prices when you consider what you get. Sure, a CD is cheap... but you have to buy 30-60 of them a year to feel that sense of novelty. And these tend to last you between the years of 18 and 28, and then you go on to other things. During that time, you made someone a handy profit for things you eventually totally discarded.

Radio used to be their guide for the kids. A signal went out from one place, with one corporation behind it; the kids received and heard one-eighth or one-tenth of the new material in a form they couldn't copy.

The problem is that now, there's so many ways to hear music that you will get exposed to stuff early and have it in a better form than AM radio quality.

This is why record labels are panicked about MP3s. The problem is, however, that there's no putting the cat back in the bag, because what really drove this situation was the rise of computers and the net. With a CD drive, an internet connection and a computer powerful enough, anyone can pass music along. Anything can be copied.

This is why, perhaps, older societies strove for products that lasted longer than a month or a year, like epic symphonies and literature, instead of candy-pop rap/rock and cheesy sentimental books.

Instead of facing this reality, and the higher costs thus lower profit margin it demands, record labels are wasting their time with an end-run action — bust the "pirates":

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles are pursuing a 6-month prison term for a Los Angeles man who pleaded guilty in December to one misdemeanor count of uploading pre-release Guns N' Roses tracks, according to court documents.

Kevin Cogill was arrested last summer at gunpoint and charged with uploading nine tracks of the Chinese Democracy album to his music site — [antiquiet.com](#). The album, which cost millions and took 17 years to complete, was released November 23 and reached No. 3 in the charts.

[Wired](#)

The dumbest part of this is that Cogill is a Guns N' Roses fan, and had this to say about the album:

I always said that the more that Axl and Geffen jerked around trying to figure out how to release this finally finished album that we've all been waiting over 13 years for, the greater the chances would be that it would slip out of a pressing plant or office somewhere and wind up in the hands of some asshole with a blog...if you ask me, Guns N' Roses are back, and they'll be just fine.

[AntiQuiet](#)

Even more ironic is that he was providing the role of radio. He used an Adobe Flash-based music player that provided mySpace quality compressed music, which is a notch above AM but not up to decent FM quality, from my experience. I can't tell if people were able to download the tracks as well, although some seemed to have, probably by using a script ripper, but they got them in the same low quality.

In retrospect, we can see it would have been more productive for him to simply act like a radio, and put a player on each page containing a few GNR songs and some others from the other "artists" scattered around his pages. That would complement the methods used by the record label.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Climate change may cut population to one billion

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A scientist known for his aggressive stance on climate policy made an apocalyptic prediction on Thursday.

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, said that if the buildup of greenhouse gases and its consequences pushed global temperatures 9 degrees Fahrenheit higher than today — well below the upper temperature range that scientists project could occur from global warming — Earth's population would be devastated.

"In a very cynical way, it's a triumph for science because at last we have stabilized something — namely the estimates for the carrying capacity of the planet, namely below 1 billion people," said Dr. Schellnhuber, who has advised German Chancellor Angela Merkel on climate policy and is a visiting professor at Oxford.

[NYT](#)

This would prevent further ecocide, and reduce the number of humans to a manageable level. It could be the greatest event in human history, especially if it happens in a way to enforce a bottleneck by intelligence, killing off the irresponsible, stupid, lazy, delusional, etc.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Guilt and passive aggression

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Passive aggression: using the assumption of rights or privileges to force someone else into a situation of guilt, or feeling they owe another person something in order to comply with social rules.

“Hey man, my car just broke down, and I see you’ve got ten bucks there with which you were going to buy lunch. I work as a teacher of orphaned minority poor retards, and I need money to get back to the city. For all I’ve given society, you wouldn’t cut me out of ten bucks, would you?”

Here’s another instance:

Don’t make it a whacking huge deal if you say something racist, or something others perceive as racist. Apologize, move on, and consider the criticism seriously so that you can improve your thinking, if need be.

[&](#)

So you should apologize, which is akin to admitting fault, even if you weren’t at fault.

Sounds like collective guilt to me.

It’s also passive aggression since it assumes that you agree with this weird social dogma. Many of us get by simply on politeness, avoid racial humor or comments, but know from reading history that diversity is a racket and a precursor to civilization failure.

We don’t feel the guilt, so why would we apologize?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [race](#)

More musings on nihilism

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I don't see the point in not jumping into the void. That's pure nihilism: nothing has any inherent value.

After that, you reconstruct values around the good/bad that makes the good that is life. I guess you have to believe in the good that is life.

It's like a journey. Suppose several members of your family die, you're broke and unloved... you reach the point where you could just off yourself (nihilism; total motherfucking nihilism).

Then you build back, this time with none of the illusions. That building back is also nihilism; nihilism is a cycle that returns to itself, clearing your brain so you can (a) see clearly reality with a scientific method and (b) create new conjectures, ideas, playthings of the mind, hypotheses and ideals. Then you apply the same nihilism to them and destroy the ones that don't fit, then restart the cycle again.

It is liberating. Of course, when you're on the other side, society seems like a giant fuckup and most people seem to be seeking truth in irrelevancies, but at the same time, you are freed from the drama. Finally free of the drama of karmic attachment.

At this stage, you have opened the doors of perception. You can see the structure of life, the bones beneath the skin, the hidden order of design which pervades all life. You are closer to God and farther into atheism than ever before. You are able to navigate the universe as an independent particle, but only because you understand that independence and freedom are simply lies. You can step over the bodies of what did not thrive and wish them well on the return cycle.

People spend so much time trying to cut themselves free of the process of life because they are afraid to die. But when death is understood, and life is understood, the task becomes plain and so do the joys. And without the mental drama, it is all simply a joy to fulfill.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [nihilism](#)

A pathogen of ideology

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

An interesting if tongue-in-cheek hypothesis from one of my favorite writers, Martin Regnen:

In the “not as wacky as it sounds” department, I propose that the primary driving force of the successes of progressive liberal ideology over the past 100+ years is not philosophy or politics, but an unknown pathogen picked up by Europeans from the native tribes of North America.

[CORRUPT](#)

It's not entirely implausible, but more important symbologically: when the West reached the height of its expansion, it faced guilt — brought on by both Christianity and enlightenment-era humanism — for exterminating that which had already failed. Instead of making a clear decision, its bloated democracies backed up into their choice, making a messy horrible end instead of a decisive battle victory.

From that, we've gotten a primal guilt which has underscored all of our actions since. We need to throw out the past, guilt, shame, fear and all other gross things about humanity, and reach toward new heights instead. I know it's what motivates me to write and cook and do all of the things I like doing: I want to advance what I and we know. I and I have a bright future, if we are willing to discard our fear and walk the path of fire.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Multicultural Marketing

Mar 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

There's a great demographics shift:

Wal-Mart plans to open its first Hispanic-focused supermarkets this summer in Arizona and Texas as the largest US retailer continues its drive to expand its dominance of the US grocery business.

Wal-Mart's Sam's Club warehouse store also plans to open a 143,000 sq ft Hispanic-focused store called Más Club in Houston this year.

Several leading regional US supermarket chains already operate Hispanic store brands, including Publix in Florida, which operates three Publix Sabor markets, and HEB in Texas, which opened a Mi Tienda store in Houston in 2006.

[ET](#)

This means that the empire that was once inaccessible to third-world populations has opened up and wants them in. But what's happening while that goes on?

So what did \$1,900 buy? The run-down bungalow had already been stripped of its appliances and wiring by the city's voracious scrappers. But for Mitch that only added to its appeal, because he now had the opportunity to renovate it with solar heating, solar electricity and low-cost, high-efficiency appliances.

Buying that first house had a snowball effect. Almost immediately, Mitch and Gina bought two adjacent lots for even less and, with the help of friends and local youngsters, dug in a garden. Then they bought the house next door for \$500, reselling it to a pair of local artists for a \$50 profit. When they heard about the \$100 place down the street, they called their friends Jon and Sarah.

Like the unemployed Chinese factory workers flowing en masse back to their villages, artists in today's economy need somewhere to flee. But the city offers a much greater attraction for artists than \$100 houses. Detroit right now is just this vast, enormous canvas where anything imaginable can be accomplished. From Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project (think of a neighborhood covered in shoes and stuffed animals and you're close) to Matthew Barney's "Ancient Evenings" project (think Egyptian gods reincarnated as Ford Mustangs and you're kind of close), local and international artists are already leveraging Detroit's complex textures to their own surreal ends.

In a way, a strange, new American dream can be found here, amid the ruins of industrial decline.

[IHT](#)

As the horde floods the once-good places, the people who feel a power in creation and not simply taking part of are heading out to new frontiers, new wildernesses, to create new spaces that someday too will age and be flooded with those who could not create them on their own.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

How safe is your information?

Mar 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People live under the assumption that everything in life is going to be OK if they do what society at large seems to demand from them. Just obey, you'll be OK; but what if underneath that skin of safety, there's a world of doubt and fear — like wolves at the gate of the fence that keeps the sheep safe, or even wolves in sheep's clothing?

In [Stealing MySpace: The Battle to Control the Most Popular Website in America](#), Wall Street Journal reporter Julia Angwin paints an unflattering portrait of MySpace co-founders Chris DeWolfe and Tom Anderson.

The pair ran a shady operation called eUniverse, which sold wrinkle cream and ink-jet cartridges over the Internet; they lifted most of MySpace's features from another social-networking service, Friendster, but skirted privacy issues; and the roots of MySpace, which now reaches an estimated 133 million active users worldwide, are in spam and porn.

[USAT](#)

Great guardians of your personal data there. They seem to care first about the cash they get, and only secondarily about the industry or what effects it would have on others.

Two separate research teams, from the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne and security consultancy Inverse Path have taken a close look at the electromagnetic radiation that is generated every time a computer keyboard is tapped. It turns out that this keystroke radiation is actually pretty easy to capture and decode — if you're a computer hacker-type, that is.

The Ecole Polytechnique team did its work over the air. Using an oscilloscope and an inexpensive wireless antenna, the team was able to pick up keystrokes from virtually any keyboard, including laptops. "We discovered four different ways to recover the keystroke of a keyboard," said Marin Vuagnoux, a Ph.D. student at the university. With the keyboard's cabling and nearby power wires acting as antennas for these electromagnetic signals, the researchers were able to read keystrokes with 95 percent accuracy over a distance of up to 20 meters (22 yards), in ideal conditions.

[IT World](#)

Let me tell you something: this technique is not unknown to spy agencies, law enforcement, and big corporate "security" firms that specialize in grabbing business secrets. It was easily discovered, which means it has been known for years by those with more resources to throw at the problem.

And finally, to chill your bones:

Reporters Without Borders today issued a report entitled "Enemies of the Internet" in which it examines Internet censorship and other threats to online free expression in 22 countries.

Reporters Without Borders has placed 10 other governments "under surveillance" for adopting worrying measures that could open the way to abuses. The organisation draws particular attention to Australia and South Korea, where recent measures may endanger online free expression.

"Not only is the Internet more and more controlled, but new forms of censorship are emerging based on the manipulation of information," Reporters Without Borders said. "Orchestrating the posting of comments on popular websites or organising hacker attacks is also used by repressive

regimes to scramble or jam online content."

[RSE](#)

And these are the ones that made it into print.

Trust where trust is right. Trusting people with profit models, or those who have to supervise 300 million unruly people of conflicting ideologies... is unwise.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

It's all in our heads

Mar 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Philosophers have often said that much of what we take for granted as reality is illusion, and much of what we consider as illusion is actually more real. If we inverted our logic for some reason, for example to please others with offerings of politeness, that could cause us to have such an inverted sense of reality.

Let's explore it.

Boys with ring fingers longer than their index fingers run faster, a new study finds.

Finger-length ratios have been related to a host of things good and bad, from fertility and disease vulnerability to test scores and personality traits. In fact, you'll need the digits on both hands, regardless of their length, to count all the correlations that have been made.

Researchers say exposure to testosterone in the womb is behind the speedy kids and their finger-length ratios.

Kids with longer ring fingers are likely to have higher SAT math scores than literacy or verbal scores, while children whose index fingers are longer are more likely to do better at reading and writing, or verbal, rather than the math tests.

[LiveScience](#)

They didn't mention this part:

The length of a man's fingers may predict his success in the City, research findings suggest.

Scientists at Cambridge University found that financial traders whose ring fingers are longer than their index fingers make the most money.

The link could be down to testosterone exposure in the womb, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences says.

[BBC](#)

Why is our society so biased in favor of long-fingered people?

We give them more money, higher test scores, and assume they run faster. This supremacy of long-fingered people is most assuredly a social construct, and as a result, it's unfair to short-fingered people.

Dr David Batty, a Wellcome Trust research fellow at the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit in Glasgow, and colleagues, found that a lower IQ was strongly associated with a higher risk of death from causes such as accidents, coronary heart disease and suicide.

The researchers studied data from one million Swedish men conscripted to the army at the age of 18. After they had taken into account whether a person had grown up in a safer, more affluent environment, they found that only education had an influence on the relationship between IQ and death.

The researchers say the link between IQ and mortality could be partially attributed to the healthier behaviours displayed by those who score higher on IQ tests.

[Science Daily](#)

Here's another one: why are we biased in favor of higher-IQ people, since IQ is a social construct that doesn't correspond to anything meaningful?

Probably the reason they live longer is that we give them better treatment, believing them to be more important or more competent or something. The rest of us get slighted, which is unfair.

As such it narrows down, perhaps even begin to dismantle, the concept of our consciousness – our 'we'-ness, as a separate entity from our brain. We know this because we can change components of ourselves through physical or chemical means.

"We" are very much hardwired into our brain; 'we' are our brain.

Evidence suggests that we're living closer to the answer of our existence than we think; whether we like those conclusions or not, they're very – physically – real.

[Evin Daly](#)

We get used to backward logic early.

When we look out at the world, we are not aware that we are the looker; it just appears to be there. Even more, we're able to see our body, so we assume it is part of the world and not of us, that abstract thing that seems unrelated to physicality because it is not constrained by it. In our minds, we can imagine anything. We can even alter what we know so that it doesn't seem as grim as it may be.

When we do that, we think backward. We assume that what we "know," including memories we've altered, are real, so we use all new data to justify those memories by contorting the new data until it fits in with the old. It takes a lot to jar us out of that mode, like a tragedy or big failure.

So when we see that long-fingered people do well, our first thought is that it is irrelevant. Why? Because very few of us are really living like kings. Most are somewhere between pauper and king, which means we have regrets and failures. In order to not look too deeply into those, we have invented mythologies of why others succeed: they're lucky, they had more opportunities, they're whiter or have longer fingers.

We seize eagerly on any opportunity that shows IQ tests are bunk, so we can explain away the fact that the guy two doors down is really smart and is making a ton of money when we're barely making it in our job as assistant editor at a Green books publisher.

But really, our logic is backwards. We're altering data in our minds, not the world itself, which will keep doing what it was doing. We don't all live in separate worlds where we can think whatever we want to. Reality is out there and it's more powerful than us, and we will face the consequences of our actions, as individuals and as a civilization.

But that makes us feel small and mortal, so it's antisocial to mention it; reality *must be* a social contract for us *all* to feel good about ourselves.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [self-deception](#)

Can't make up our minds on global warming

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Someone last night finally explained the right wing argument against global warming to me: in their view, the irresponsible masses who create Revolutions want a good excuse for one world government with massive powers, and global warming is the justification that racism and terrorism haven't been.

I shrugged that one off with the Platonic knowledge that one world government is inevitable, and whether or not it's abusive depends on who runs it. However, I think most people like to point fingers at abstract things instead of engaging with the reality of needing good leaders with sensible ideologies.

So it's not surprising the Neue Droit-ish Brussels Journal is defecating on Global Warming:

The climate 'experts' in attendance — such as Tony Blair and Kofi Annan — all took human-caused global warming for granted and potentially catastrophic. The debate at Davos was whether Europe and the world should submit to an 80% emissions cut, a 20% cut, or something in between.

President Klaus said he chided Davos attendees for talking up radical proposals when they hadn't even been able to fulfill their modest Kyoto commitments. But trying to reason with the Davos people was like trying to reason with Communist officials before 1989 — they just regarded you as hopelessly ignorant or naive. Klaus described the business attendees at the Davos meeting as "rent seekers," interested only in profits from government and "not at all interested in markets or freedom." The political situation, he said, is that of a highly organized rent-seeking group rolling over an opposition of isolated unorganized individuals.

The UN models, Professor Lindzen jested, are "examples of unintelligent design." Global warming effects are miniscule if seen on a graph mapped against the huge variability of daily and seasonal weather. Climate warming alarmists have forgotten the null hypothesis — which assumes that there is no need to bring in exogenous forcing mechanisms (such as anthropomorphic CO₂) to explain observed climate behavior. The ocean's turbulent movements can suffice to explain most climate variability. Dreaming up specific causes for this or that climate blip isn't necessary; we don't, after all, need specific causes for each whorl and eddy in a bubbling brook.

[Brussels Journal](#)

Arguments against the global warming idea are presented, but are too much to quote here.

My position: global warming is probably both man-made and a natural cycle, but we must deal with it. Also, global warming is a symbol to represent "all human changes to our environment" which concern most intelligent people. There are too many people, and not enough unbroken thousand miles of wilderness for species to preserve themselves and thrive. We're changing this world for the better, in the human sphere, but we haven't examined the secondary costs to many of the things that make life on planet earth great.

Although a majority of Americans believe the seriousness of global warming is either correctly portrayed in the news or underestimated, a record-high 41% now say it is exaggerated. This represents the highest level of public skepticism about mainstream reporting on global warming seen in more than a decade of Gallup polling on the subject.

Altogether, 68% of U.S. adults believe the effects of global warming will be manifest at some point in their lifetimes, indicating the public largely believes the problem is real. However, only 38% of Americans, similar to the 40% found in 2008, believe it will pose "a serious threat" to themselves or their own way of life.

[Gallup](#)

How can this be? Let me show you something else, and then I'll tell you what I think is afoot:

I mean, if you look at polls, you see right now, for example, that obviously the economy is just through the roof. So whatever is going on at that particular moment that is really affecting people's lives, that's what ranks high in the polls. And climate change has often been described as a slow-moving catastrophe, and it's precisely the kind of issue that once you actually really feel the dire effects in your own life, then it's way too late. That's what the science tells us and what scientists have been telling us for 25 years now really. So it's a very, very difficult problem for the political system to deal with.

I went to interview John McCain, and he made this point. He was very honest and it was back in the straight-talking John McCain days, where he said, "It's very unclear whether our political system can deal with a problem like this because usually we wait for a crisis and then we deal with the crisis, and that's just not the way climate change works. You can't deal with it once the crisis hits."

I think that's one of the reasons that it doesn't register very high in polls as a concern — it's just not in people's faces all the time right now. So it really is the obligation, you could argue, of the media and also of the political system, to put it there. And the political system has been very consciously ignoring the problem for a long time now, eight years of really trying to suppress discussion of climate change and reports about climate change. So I think that also contributes to the public sense of "I don't have to worry about that," because they're not hearing people talking about it in Washington. And now that is changing to a certain extent.

[Yale](#)

So, are the Brussels Journal and Michael Crichton just wrong when they say global warming is a sham?

No, they're correct — it's not actual science. It's a symbol.

As Colbert said above in the crypto-language of media-savvy leftists, people aren't going to pay attention to big, slow problems. We can't mention that because it points out that democracy is garbage that survives only in convenient times. That's taboo. So instead, we invent a giant hype and a horrific albeit unscientific symbol, and use that to scare other people into acting.

It's no different than claiming black rapists stalk the park, or that Zombie Hitler waits under the bed, or that if you masturbate your palms will get hairy. Our self-appointed media elite are accustomed to manipulating us with symbols, whether a dead dog or crying waif or pile of cash, and so they're doing the same thing. As in all things, leftists mean well but are subverted by their desire for power through self-righteousness, and so they've run into a snag here.

For one thing, our big media has been falling in importance. For another, our political landscape is highly polarized. For a third, people are now accustomed to the internet and being able to see only what agrees with them. Like conservatives? Read/watch/hear the odious blob Rush Limbaugh and the frank yet charming Ann Coulter. Like liberals? Read/watch/hear Glenn Greenwald and the quirky, likable Huffington Post. So the message falls between political allegiances.

All of this is an attempt to cover up the real problem: democracies further fragment societies, as does consumerism, and without a consensus or goal, we're falling into infighting and declining while others rise. If we focus on global warming, we look at one subset of that decline — the environmental impact — without looking at the rest. So here, again, Global Warming is a symbol that represents the whole without being it.

Now on to the scary evidence for human change to the environment. Note that I don't attribute this to global warming, or exclusively to humans, but view these as problems we must address — problems that

would be made easier if we were honest about the amount of pollution the third world produces (we can't measure it because they don't have factories that keep records) and the problem of overpopulation, both taboo subjects in the crowd-pleasing news.

Renewable Energy Cannot Sustain a Consumer Society

World population is likely to reach 9.4 billion by 2070. If all these people were to consume fossil fuels at present rich-world per capita consumption rates, all probably recoverable conventional oil, gas, shale oil, uranium (through burner reactors), and coal (2,000 billion tonnes assumed as potentially recoverable), would be totally exhausted in about 20 years.

What is not well understood is the magnitude of the overshoot, the extent to which our present consumer society has exceeded sustainable levels of resource use and environmental impact. This is made clear by a glance at the greenhouse problem. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has given a range of emission rates and the associated levels that the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere would rise to.

Perhaps the most quoted graph shows that if the concentration is to be stabilized at 550 parts per million (ppm), twice the pre-industrial level, emissions must be cut to 2.5 gigatonnes per year (Gt/y) by 2040 and to 0.2 Gt/y by about 2200. The present level from fossil fuel burning (i.e., not including land clearing) is over 6 Gt/y.

To keep the concentration below 450 ppm, emissions must be cut to about 1+ Gt/y by 2100, and to about 0.3 Gt/y by 2200. This target is much too high, because the atmospheric concentration is now at about 380 ppm and many disturbing climatic effects are becoming apparent.

If world population reaches 9+ billion, a global carbon use budget of one Gt would provide us all with about 150 kg of fossil fuel per year, which is around 2–3% of our present rich-world per capita use of fossil fuels (in GHGe [greenhouse gas equivalent] terms). Alternatively, only about 170 million people, 2.5% of the world's present population, could live on the present rich-world per capita fossil fuel use of over 6 tonnes of fossil fuel per year.

[Intel Daily](#)

Gosh, we're back to that sickening knowledge that if we had fewer people, they could live a better life with zero environmental impact. They estimate 2.5% of the world's population; I've been saying 5% of the world's population which coincidentally would be the ones over 120 IQ points, or those likely to contribute anything of lasting importance. If we cut back, we'd want to keep the smart, because being smart is good... right? Well, most people think that's not fair and would oppose it.

Of course, it wouldn't be hard to cut our use by half if all the fast food, porn stores, nail salons and ebay stores went away. I don't see many smart people in those.

At a scientific conference on climate change held this week in Copenhagen, four environmental experts announced that sea levels appear to be rising almost twice as rapidly as had been forecast by the United Nations just two years ago. The warning is aimed at politicians who will meet in the same city in December to discuss the same subject and, perhaps, to thrash out an international agreement to counter it.

The reason for the rapid change in the predicted rise in sea levels is a rapid increase in the information available. In 2007, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change convened by the UN made its prediction that sea levels would rise by between 18cm and 59cm by 2100, a lack of knowledge about how the polar ice caps were behaving was behind much of the uncertainty. Since then they have been closely monitored, and the results are disturbing. Both the Greenland and the Antarctic caps have been melting at an accelerating rate. It is this melting ice that is raising sea levels much faster than had been expected. Indeed, scientists now

reckon that sea levels will rise by between 50cm and 100cm by 2100, unless action is taken to curb climate change.

Konrad Steffen of the University of Colorado, Boulder, leads one study of the Greenland ice sheet. He told the conference that this sheet is melting not only because it is warmer but also because water seeping through its crevices is breaking it up. This effect had been neglected in the earlier report.

[The Economist](#)

Basically, nothing's changed except that their models were bad. Generally, models *are* bad, because it's really difficult even for a genius to think of all the factors involved. It's why video games with extremely realistic physics engines don't look quite like reality yet. They are capturing 300,000 factors out of ten million, and those last 9.7 million factors represent the finishing 5% of detail that makes life "lifelike."

Saying there's no excuse for inaction, the nearly 2,000 climate researchers meeting in Copenhagen urged policy-makers to "vigorously" implement the economic and technological tools available to cut emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

"The worst-case IPCC scenario trajectories (or even worse) are being realized," the scientists said in a statement. "There is a significant risk that many of the trends will accelerate, leading to an increasing risk of abrupt or irreversible climatic shifts."

The climate change panel predicted a sea level rise of 7 to 23 inches (18 to 59 centimeters) by the end of the century, which could flood low-lying areas and force millions to flee. But more recent research presented at the conference suggested that melting glaciers and ice sheets could help push the sea level up at least 20 inches (50 centimeters), and possibly as much as 39 inches (1 meter).

"Recent observations show that societies are highly vulnerable to even modest levels of climate change with poor nations and communities particularly at risk," the statement said.

[SEF](#)

More support for my thesis hard. Want to convince people to do something? "Think of the children... the orphans, the poor, minorities, gays and other victims you can *feel good about yourself* for saving!"

And finally, the blasting gap to prime you with fear:

Lord Stern, the economist who produced the single most influential political document on climate change, says he underestimated the risks of global warming and the damage that could result from it.

"Do politicians understand just how difficult it could be, just how devastating rises of 4C, 5C or 6C could be? I think, not yet," Lord Stern posed to the meeting of scientists in Copenhagen.

"A rise of 5C would be a temperature the world has not seen for 30 to 50 million years. We've been around only 100,000 years as human beings. We don't know what that's like."

Lord Stern said new research done in the past two or three years had made it clear there were "severe risks" if global temperature rose by the predicted 4C to 7C by 2100. Agriculture would be destroyed and life would be impossible over much of the planet, the former World Bank chief economist said.

[The Independent](#)

Does that sound like a movie? Like total apocalypse, Ragnarok creeping in from the wings, all life ends, etc? Yeah... it's a movie apocalypse, complete with "et cetera." No one knows, but we use that ambiguity

to pitch a very worst case scenario. He may be right, but it's equally possible this is a powerful manipulation.

Michael Crichton was known for his interpretations on the philosophical level of science, putting numerous small discoveries into context and showing us what they *meant* in terms of impact, not raw data. His epic [State of Fear](#) pointed out that global warming wasn't good science in the context of pointing out how our mass media manipulates us with symbols of fear.

Fear sells. Fear also motivates. Saying things are OK does not. This is why "Progressive" dogmas are most appealing to those with no purpose in life; they seem dramatic, important, a good way to be self-important. And the mass media has one concern: profit. Therefore, they frame their reporting as what gets the most purchases, hits, mentions, etc., and that's constant fear that's after the event justified as "well meaning."

While I think the right — "neoliberals" — are on crack, it's because they've become reactionaries instead of people with creative and positive, assertive, warlike plans for conserving nature and culture, I think they're right to fear the power global warming gives.

It's obvious first world people aren't going to give up their SUVs, and third world people aren't going to stop at two children. They will need to be forced. That will require a global Taliban of the Secular, Scientific and You-Can't-Prove-Us-Wrong Populist Progressive Alliance. That's probably a bad thing.

But then again, not regulating human impact to the environment is a bad thing also... so we need something like the NWO to help us do what populist democracy never will do: anticipate a problem and fix it even though the solution is unpopular.

As one man says, it's off people's radar:

1998 remains the warmest year on record, and since then there has been no discernible upward trend.

Last year saw a miserable summer in much of western Europe, and the same countries are in the middle of a winter which has been colder than for many years.

For the average layman, global warming remains a distant prospect.

Politicians are naturally reluctant to impose apparently unwarranted costs on their citizens if those same people can vote them out of office at the next election.

[BBC](#)

No one wants to pay for an illusion. We're also used to our governments, media and fellow citizens selling us lies so they can advance themselves.

Supposing we put all our wealth into global warming, cut our emissions by killing parts of our industry and lifestyle, and then find out it was a fraud? That means others get ahead at our expense.

Crichton was right. The climate of fear, the grimly deceptive competition between humans, means we're at a stage in our evolution where there is no way to get consensus on an issue like Global Warming. We're too afraid of each other and too tired of being lied to.

So it goes.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [media](#) · [passive aggression](#)

The Wisdom of Susan28

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I'm on all sorts of mailing lists. Most people are not bad; they may be irresponsible, however. They have some part of the puzzle figured out. My role is to (a) accept what wisdom they do have and (b) bully them into channeling through logic.

You get some gems, though, like this summary of socialism:

[Consider] Nietzsche's hawks, who've "nothing against the mouse, and infact find him quite delcious"

socialism is basically the (more numerous) mice pouncing and munching on the (stronger but less numerous) hawks until they cough up feathers.

the problem of course is that even the mice need a leader, a "Council of Mice" which ends up putting hawk-like power in the hands of the "Mouse-ciders" until they eventually grow beaks and now we've got hawks, whom, unlike the original hawks, can claim a mandate to rule and operate under colour of law.

since this ruling body needs all individuals to be rendered powerless against it in order for it to properly impose fairness" (ie: monopoly on the use of force), now we've got beak-bearing mice eating their former fellows who've voluntarily had their teeth pulled and end up missing the old days when it was an asymmetrical but at least *sometimes* winnable contest between their sharp-toothed and fleet-footed selves and the self-serving hawks.

[OnlineNihilism](#)

I think the only people who embrace socialism are those who take the infrastructure of society for granted, and cannot imagine how their local grocery store might not be there at some point.

In the same way, upper middle-class women think they're cute and can be demanding, even annoying at times. They don't realize that 90% of the world looks at them through the eyes of two words: privileged bitch. They don't care how nice you are. They care about your money. Get with the reality trip, yo.

For me, nihilism was a venture into understanding the bones beneath the skin, the structure below appearance, the hidden mechanism underlying the show I saw projected onto the cave wall. That requires me to look past socialism and see that capitalism is inherent to all things — trade, and the trade of time for wealth — but that it in and of itself does not constitute an order. Get that? The invisible hand is non-existent; capitalism is a process like gravity. It just does what it does, serving itself. If you want your nation more stable, you have to have a brainy leader to intervene, one who understands structure.

But leftists don't want to hear that. Neither do modern conservatives, or "neoliberals" in my view, who do very little conservation and a whole lot of talking around symbolic points like abortion and fags getting married and prayer in schools. Seems like misdirection to me, since conservatives should be conserving nature and culture and defending them against the horde of irresponsible people out there.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Society's war on truth continues

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Truth is not popular. In fact, here's Prozak's theorem:

Prozak's theorem: The truthfulness of a statement is inversely proportionate to its popularity.

In other words, the more truthful it is, the less likely it is to be popular.

And now, our society has legalized suing people for saying offensive but true things:

The US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston ruled recently that a former salesman at Staples can sue the company for libel after a vice president sent an e-mail to about 1,500 employees saying the salesman had been fired for violations of company procedures regarding expenses reimbursements.

Although the decision did not involve a news outlet, it has alarmed journalists, bloggers, and media law specialists, who worry that it could discourage news organizations from pursuing true stories that might cast subjects in a bad light.

[Boston Globe](#)

I'd agree, cause for alarm, but just the latest of many actions in society's war against truth.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

How the net's going to change

Mar 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I love adbusters. I think this campaign is also brilliant:

On March 11, Google revealed its latest plan to violate your privacy: they will now record the types of websites you visit in order to gather a behavioral profile of your interests purportedly so that they can send you targeted advertising. This policy is in addition to their current policy of keeping a record of every single web search you have ever made along with as much other personally identifying information as they can gather.

I propose that we collectively embark on a civil disobedience campaign of intentional, automated "click fraud" in order to undermine Google's advertising program with the goal of forcing Google to adopt a pro-privacy corporate policy.

[AdBusters](#)

Too much leftism there to be really coherent. First, why just Google? Every other search engine is doing the same thing, because our current business model for the internet is unsustainable:

The online world is scrambling for a new business model that reflects the potential and reach of online marketing. As traditional media is losing ground with its push mechanism and high cost [cost per impression], and the model for getting paid for online content is still up in the air, the question on everyone's lips is "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?"

U.S.S. Content is sinking into the ocean, namely because it is really easy for a person to find whatever they need online if they've got mad Googling skills. This is best exemplified by the Millennials, or the generation that launched a thousand marketing Powerpoints who tend not to pay for anything on the Internet because they either know how to torrent or have friends who do.

[LA Weekly](#)

Second, you didn't mind when Google used Wikipedia to wash out better sources and put the control of "facts" in the hands of amateurs and dilettantes. Oh wait... those are "your people," the crowd. OK. You didn't seem to mind when your ISPs started giving you fixed IPs and keeping records, did you? But you did complain when they raised rates on your exorbitant downloads.

I guess liberals are just surface-skimmers: they see effects, and they whine, but they steadfastly refuse to learn about things like the design and operations of infrastructure. It reminds me of computer nerds who whine about management and then dismiss getting involved, as if it were all voodoo science. Give me a break. This isn't science — it's ignorance pretending to be profundity. If there's anything out there in the world, we can look into it, and with disciplined minds find out how it works and fix it.

Twenty-seven top Internet publishers — including the New York Times, CNN, CBS Interactive, ESPN and the Wall Street Journal — say they'll try the supersize ads in an attempt to get the attention of Web surfers who have learned to ignore banners.

The new formats represent an effort to boost an ad market that has grown dramatically in recent years but is suffering in the slumping economy.

Research firm EMarketer Inc. predicts that the Internet is the only advertising segment that will grow in 2009. But most of that growth will be in Web search, while spending on so-called display ads is expected to fall.

EMarketer said in November that U.S. online ad spending would reach \$23.6 billion in 2008 and \$25.7 billion this year, but senior analyst David Hallerman said those figures would be revised downward soon.

[LA Times](#)

But the problem remains: the internet is about free content. Yet it takes money to make that free content. We know from socialism and trust funds that if the reward comes before the labor, people don't strain. The resulting decline in quality makes it hard to give a damn about anything. What's the future? My guess is that it involves a period of big media falling apart, and then some real chaos as the amateurs take over, making clones of big media stuff so that they get the egopoints for being big men on the internet, like Wikipedia editors.

In the meantime, the big winners are going to be book publishers and magazine publishers who do not make PDF editions, making it harder to pirate their magazines and less likely to happen. At some point, a system like the Amazon Kindle will appear with a sensible licensing model, but my guess is that most publishers are going to stick to physical objects. The net makes it too easy for people to steal, and as in socialism, they simply do and the infrastructure collapses as a result.

I'm not sorry to see Hollywood and the music industry in trouble. Classical music purchases continue to be strong. It tells you something about the difference in audience. In the meantime, Hollywood is making less money pumping out trivial and venal plot lines that only derive momentum from whatever controversy they can create by insulting traditions or positive values. The rock and rap bubble has burst too, meaning that hiring five idiots to make an interchangeable product is no longer a sure way to profit. Good, heady times we're in.

Posted in: [Science](#).

How to fool people

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

You can manipulate anyone with this basic psychological technique:

1. Your experience was rough
2. It's not your fault
3. Someone else did this to you
4. In order to get back at them, you're going to self-destruct too

Amazingly, as cops and politicians know, it works.

(For all those people out there complaining that the powers that be control us: this is how they do it, and they couldn't do it if we had no stupid people and the smart people got their heads out of their egos and used a modicum of self-control. As with all really big fixes, it's easy but seems difficult so "no one" does it.)

Let's see it in action:

President Obama took aim Thursday at conservative critics who claim that he is using the economic crisis to ram through an unrelated, expansive domestic agenda.

Obama said that any delay for new investments in education, energy and health care would only continue "the same irresponsibility that led us to this point" and ultimately weaken the recovery.

[CNN](#)

Trans:

1. You're in a recession and it hurts
2. It's not your fault, it's Bush's fault
3. The callow elites did this to you
4. Let's make big government more powerful to destroy them, even though you hate big government and know it's ineffective

Stated in a less dogmatic form:

It's easy to fool people.

Flatter them.

Promise them big ideas and big, vague solutions.

Tell them that everyone is equally important.

That's how you make a Crowd happy. Of course, to do that you, you have to be a cynical bastard. That's why most Revolutionary leaders are corrupt people who plunge their countries into New Dark Ages.

Obama, coming from the most corrupt political machine in North America (the Chicago machine), is undoubtedly aware of all these things, and knows how to manipulate them for personal gain. Again, very cynical. But that's the RealPolitik(tm) when you have a huge crowd of people out there who vote with their emotions, based on the appearance of realities they're too lazy to research.

Hope! Change! Hope! Change!

[Slashdot](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [obama](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Class war

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I learned these hard lessons years ago and now think they're obvious, so it's hard for me to be civil when people with the blank open faces of the unthinking bleat these ideas at me. It's almost insulting to hear someone who has put zero thought into an issue relative to what's needed telling someone with extensive experience in it all about "the real solution." You want to punch — and then you remember: this person has not seen what I've seen, had the advantages *and disadvantages* I've had, nor traveled as widely or engaged in enough scurrilous activity to see the "seamy underside" of modern reality.

So, speaking slowly, here goes:

In a recent column, he noted that the \$3.6 trillion total is "gargantuan" (we columnists are paid to make keen observations like that), but what really upset him was that the tax burden to finance universal health care, energy independence and other big initiatives in Obama's budget "is predicated on a class divide."

With heavy sighs, Brooks expressed great despair that "no new burdens will fall on 95 percent of the American people," adding with a tsk-tsk that "all the costs will be borne by the rich and all benefits redistributed downward."

Leaving aside the fact that such things as health-care coverage for every American and a booming green energy economy will benefit the rich as well as the rest of us, Brooks' column was echoing a prevalent theme in all of the right's attacks on Obama's economic proposals: Class War! Indeed, the Times' columnist even suggested (sadly) that Obama's budget was fundamentally un-American: "The U.S. has never been a society riven by class resentment," he sniffed.

[Altnet](#)

This typical modern user has no idea what he's talking about.

Modernity is defined by rationalism, or the idea that in complex interactions of many factors, we can focus in on a single factor and measure BEFORE and AFTER states to achieve a replicatable process.

Works great for making cars, but fails to assess secondary effects: pollution, social change, intellectual change, economic change.

However, our entire modern civilization is based on glibly allowing sophomores to make their changes, and then the rest of us adapt however we can.

The single factor they've picked here: wealth.

What they fail to include: does wealth correlate to intelligence, does intelligence correlate to degree of responsibility, does wealth correlate to degree of responsibility, does degree of responsibility correlate to leadership ability, and are all these in fact related — that smarter people are able to see further ahead than two weeks, and so have more responsibility and earn more?

This is in contrast to a mass of people that we know from experience can't see ahead more than two weeks, spend whatever money they have until they're head over heels in debt, buy flashy new things and throw them out the next week, frequently default and flake out, leaving behind huge piles of waste. These people also invent nothing, contribute nothing to culture or learning, and so on. But they'd like to think they do. They have blogs and twitters and myspace and indie funk rockabilly grindcore bands and lots of facebook friends and know all about the latest TV, movies, cuisine, music, and so on. They may even

engage in some garbage artform like interpretive dance or modern sculpture. And they hate the wealthy.

I think there is the origin of your class war, sirs: in the irresponsible masses who are seeking a "Reason" why they are down and others are up. Surely it couldn't be lack of ability, or lack of organization? Surely it couldn't be all the stupid decisions they've made? No, it must be someone else's fault, and they're wired to believe that because they're irresponsible.

These are the same people who think nothing of tossing their fast food bags out the window when they're done eating, don't seem to mind abandoning cars outside their apartments, and don't care if an acre of forest got destroyed for a new McDonald's — they want a hamburger, now, and it makes them feel powerful to demand it and get it and they'll pay any markup for that feeling.

Class war is what happens when these irresponsible people gang up on the responsible people, triumph by strength of numbers, and then in their ensuing bad leadership plunge the country into third-world decline. France. Russia. South Africa. Greece. India. Rome. Even in the new world, the mighty Aztecs (my true heroes in this life) and Maya were destroyed because their day laborer populations united with the Spanish — all 200 of them — and overthrew them.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [class war](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#)

It's better to die young than live too long

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A Japanese doctor has apologised after saying that people should smoke themselves to an early death to save the country money on elderly care, according to his hospital.

"It is clear that medical costs will increase if non-smoking spreads," the doctor said last week, according to Ida Hospital in Kawasaki City. "It's better that people smoke a lot and die early."

[AFP](#)

Of course, he offended one of the basic humanist ideas, which is that every life is always worth saving, which to a psychologist is just another form of death-denial. We should all be immortal, of course.

But he's made a practical statement. Smoking tends to kill people in their late 60s and early 70s, if they are otherwise healthy. As a result, they linger on into their 90s and require extensive health care. Because our society is already burdened with parasites of working age, the elderly strain the system when they live this long.

They've properly hushed him up, but he got them. Stories like this divide the realists from the obliivots.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Peering behind the curtain

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

At the end of *The Wizard of Oz*, the semi-benevolent dictator of Oz tells his visitors “do not look behind that curtain.” If they were to look, they'd see he was just one guy manipulating machines that controlled the masses.

Most modern narratives involve The People peeling back the curtain and seeing how it's just one guy, then overpowering him and living happily ever after. Of course, that's not how it happened in France, Russia, Greece, Rome and India, but that's another story.

What I think is important today is that people are in denial of the curtain in another way — we literally have no idea how our society's infrastructure works.

As she began making dinner using a bag of frozen peppers, she looked into the pan and recoiled with horror.

'My partner poured the peppers into a pan and was startled to find a clump of mouse fur and intestines falling out of the bag,' said the 37-year-old.

I think the memory is going to stay with me for a long time,' said Miss Smith.

[The Metro](#)

You do know, Miss Smith, that the reason you can afford those is that we have hordes of not-so-bright people to pick them in the fields of their third world nations?

You know that we then ship them in big refrigerated ships or planes across the ocean, stuffed thousands to a box?

You know that we then run them through big machines that wash them, slice them and bag them, all while paying minimal attention to them?

I mean, we have sensors to detect improper temperatures or clogging of the line.

But if a mouse ran out onto that line — or had been in one of planes or boats and chewed its way into a box — the people we pay very little to watch our vegetables would probably not notice.

And so you get sliced mouse. Because one sliced mouse per 100,000 packages is actually a pretty good rate. Why are you shocked? You knew all these things. And you know we do them to keep costs as low as possible. So why are you surprised?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Portraits of diversity's success: South Africa

Mar 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Posted just for humor.

A report by the international NGO ActionAid, backed by the South African Human Rights Commission, said the horrific crimes against lesbians were going unrecognised by the state and unpunished by the legal system.

"Every day I am told that they are going to kill me, that they are going to rape me and after they rape me I'll become a girl," Zakhe Sowello from Soweto, told the paper. "When you are raped you have a lot of evidence on your body. But when we try and report these crimes nothing happens, and then you see the boys who raped you walking free on the street."

Research shows 86 per cent of black lesbians from the Western Cape live in fear of sexual assault. Triangle, a gay rights organisation, said it deals with up to 10 new cases of "corrective rape" every week.

[The Telegraph](#)

This would shock me, but once you start peeling back the layers of stupidity, it's impossible.

Did you think the new South Africa was going to be different from any other African state? No: each continent has its rules, and by displacing those who brought in other rules, you've returned to the default.

Which, quite honestly, is hilariously miserable:

Crimes against property, such as carjacking, have often been accompanied by violent acts, including murder, when victims resist or are slow to respond to attackers' demands. South Africa also has the highest incidence of reported rape in the world. Foreigners are not specifically targeted, but several have been the victims of rape. Victims of violent crime, especially rape, are strongly encouraged to seek immediate medical attention, including antiretroviral therapy against HIV/AIDS. Questions about how to receive such treatment should be directed to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

[US State Department](#)

Too bad, it was once a leading world power, now a third world backwater.

A decade-and-a-half after the end of apartheid, violent crime is pushing more and more whites out of South Africa. Exactly how many are leaving is impossible to say. Few admit that they are quitting for good, and the government does not collect the necessary statistics. But large white South African diasporas, both English- and Afrikaans-speaking, have sprouted in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and many cities of North America.

The South African Institute of Race Relations, a think-tank, guesses that 800,000 or more whites have emigrated since 1995, out of the 4m-plus who were there when apartheid formally ended the year before. Robert Crawford, a research fellow at King's College in London, reckons that around 550,000 South Africans live in Britain alone.

In some cases, idealism remains a draw. Whites who left in previous decades because they were repelled by apartheid, or who expected apartheid to end in a bloodbath, can find much to admire. Whites build tall walls around their houses and pay guards to patrol their neighbourhoods; they consider some downtown areas too dangerous to visit. But on university

campuses and in the bright suburban shopping malls it is still thrilling to see blacks and whites mingling in a relaxed way that was unimaginable under apartheid.

[The Economist](#)

Diversity, even if all of the ethnic groups involved are good, becomes a problem because it suspends the consensus a civilization needs to survive. What falls into the void? Selfishness (anarchy) and predation-parasitism (crime).

I found this quality definition of multiculturalism, which is one of the many indicators that our civilization is declining, as it was an indicator in ancient India, Greece, Rome, France and Russia:

Multiculturalism is a denial of the simple truth that cultures clash. The proponents of multiculturalism attack this truth by claiming that:

All the different cultures can live like one big happy family as soon as we get rid of the bad people—the racists, sexists, fascists, chauvinists, bigots, red necks etc.— all those people who will not change their beliefs to match fashion.

[Our Civilization](#)

Yet this doesn't seem to work, even when participants are all noble, because cultures clash and two cannot occupy the same space unless one is the leader and the other the segregated follower. Brutal but truthful assessment brought to you from the same reality that brought death, entropy and disease — and it's there for similarly vital reasons.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

It's not racism to point out that diversity doesn't work.

Mar 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I think this needs clearing up, before anyone tries to pigeonhole this blog as either right or left.

We are not racist. Racism means that you prefer one race over all others universally or detest a certain race or races. It is a value judgment and an emotional response.

On the other hand, those who read history will tell you that there is no record of diverse societies being successful — in fact, diversity is one of the stages in the death of a society. Who cares what we prefer when the truth is staring us in the face this way?

For this reason, we refuse to join the “cough knowingly when pictures of black men arrested for crimes appear on the TV” crowd, but we also refuse to join the “make ourselves seem morally superior and witty by making fun of the dumb redneck racists” crowd. Neither of those activities are productive.

We love America. We want practical solutions, and we are scientific (history is our laboratory) about it. Our goal is to find something that works and figure out the moralistic bloviation later.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [race](#)

The human default

Mar 12th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The default state of humanity is poverty, ignorance, and self-destruction.

Sometimes, a few humans get their act together and make a civilization that rises above monkey desires: shiny object (consumerism), self-importance (status), retaliation against the smarter or wealthier (socialism).

But that's rare. Most of the time, humans are just busy working themselves back down the evolutionary ladder, and using justifications like Progress and Morality to enforce it upon others.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Examining humanist views as ethical avoidance of collectivism

Mar 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Normally, we take different ideologies at their word, meaning that if they say they're taking our money to help the poor, we assume that's what they're doing. In the murky underworld where psychology, sociology and philosophy meet, however, there's reason to peer under that skin and find that their real motivations are almost always baser.

Generally, they do this through definition games. "We're taking this money for the poor," Robin Hood, esquire, said. "Granted, about 88% of it goes to my salary, those of my employees, our health plans and retirements and annual bonuses, but those are operating expenses. The remaining 12% goes to poor people who tend to shop at the local convenience store I own."

Let's look at Humanists through the 1952 "Amsterdam declaration" which launched this movement into the public eye:

The fundamentals of modern Humanism are as follows:

1. Humanism is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
2. Humanism is rational. It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world's problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. But Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.
3. Humanism supports democracy and human rights. Humanism aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.
4. Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility. Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognises our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.
5. Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion. The world's major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their world-views on all of humanity. Humanism recognises that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision.
6. Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art. Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.

7. Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.

[IHEU](#)

This is what some would call "wish fulfillment fantasy": the idea that if we declare our right to do something, we become that which is described.

If we have the right to define our own values and make art, we must all be artists.

If we have the right to define what wisdom is, we can make statements that make us feel wise.

If we have the right to define moral right independent of tradition and reality outside of human beings, we must be right.

It's transparent when you spend time thinking about it: humanism is a shallow justification for a philosophy of self-indulgence and egomania that's not in any way distinct from consumerism or narcissism. It's self-worship using guilt to compel others to not interrupt that self-worship, on the grounds that allowing *all* of us self-worship is a greater moral good than, say, paying attention to reality.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [humanism](#) · [liberalism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Same-sex teaching reduces stress

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Young people are trying to fit into natural selection's plan, too, so there's a lot of tension between the sexes. Liberate it and things may — may — function more smoothly.

Mr. Cannon noticed that fifth graders' results were largely stagnant, a slump common across the city. He heard about a school in North Carolina that had all-girls classes and was inspired.

So he decided to try it — under the Bloomberg administration's philosophy of letting principals run their schools as they wish, it was as simple as that, with no special training or monitoring. A few parents expressed reservations at first, but it was popular enough that this year, the middle school around the corner followed suit with its sixth grade.

"Before it was all about showing the girls who was toughest, and roughing up and being cool," said Samell Little, whose son Gavin is in his second school year surrounded only by boys. "Now I never hear a word from teachers about behavior problems, and when he talks about school, he is actually talking about work."

[NYT](#)

Interesting hypothesis. Of course, the usual defensive and neurotic types are freaking out and saying really nasty things, showing that theirs is an agenda of revenge and not a positive, life-affirming dogma:



But Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women, said separate classrooms reinforce gender stereotypes. "A boy who has never been beaten by a girl on an algebra test could have some major problems having a female supervisor," she said.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The advantages of getting kids outside

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

New research in teenagers links low levels of vitamin D to high blood pressure and high blood sugar, which can lead to ominous early health problems. The “sunshine” vitamin is needed to keep bones strong, but recent research has linked vitamin D to other possible health benefits. The teen study confirms results seen in adults, linking low levels with risk factors for heart disease, the researchers said.

Teens in the study with the lowest vitamin D levels were more than twice as likely to have high blood pressure and high blood sugar. They were also four times more likely to have metabolic syndrome, defined as have three of more conditions that contribute to heart disease and diabetes — including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, big waists and high cholesterol.

[AP](#)

Evolve having something around, and when it goes away, your body misses it. Like addiction, but to healthy things.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

The pretense of diversity costing us a fortune

Mar 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Death row inmate Anthony Haynes, a one-time average teen whose descent into the drug life ended with his shooting a Houston police officer in 1998, has been granted a new trial by a federal appeals court because of the possibility that black jurors were improperly dismissed from his jury panel.

Two blacks ultimately were struck by prosecutors using peremptory challenges — though several were seated on the final jury — and those strikes were challenged by Haynes' lawyers. Wallace overruled their objections.

Haynes, 30, was 19 at the time of the shooting. He admitted to participating in a brief robbery spree and to shooting Kincaid.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

Why do we need a second trial for this idiot — are we assuming black jurors would have voted to acquit since he was also black? Possibly — yet another reason that diversity is a costly and destructive experiment. Upshot: either he gets a retrial with more black jurors and walks or not, but either way, money and time goes into this — I'd prefer we spent it on people who were going somewhere in life.

Eleven sixth-graders at the highly touted southeast campus of YES Prep Public School were expelled last month for placing bets on each other during organized fights in the boys' bathroom.

School officials said they're not sure how much money changed hands among the 11- and 12-year-olds, but said no students were seriously injured. Other fights were probably held before the students were caught on Feb. 16, Willis said.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

They don't tell you this, but the YES program is a liberal darling. It's where inner city youth — codeword: diversity — get taken and spoon-fed an aggressive preparatory regimen. It gets massive hype and so far has shown no results better than simply providing intelligent kids with decent education, but it exists as one of those symbolic pro-diversity programs that annoy anyone thinking clearly about what that money and energy would accomplish.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Let's see if they post this

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I think we need to question the assumption that diversity works as a model for civilization.

History gives us no positive examples.

If we're going to have a dialogue, we need to ask first whether the course we're on is sensible, or motivated by an ethic of convenience.

[NYTB](#)

Usually, administrators won't approve comments like this. I find it amusing that we cannot even have an open debate on the issue.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Depression kills

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Columbia University researchers reported new evidence that depression can lead to heart disease in the first place.

The scientists tracked 63,000 women from the long-running Nurses' Health Study between 1992 and 2004. None had signs of heart disease when the study began, but nearly 8 percent had evidence of serious depression.

The depressed women were more than twice as likely to experience sudden cardiac death — death typically caused by an irregular heartbeat, concluded the 12-year study, published Monday in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. They also had a smaller increased risk of death from other forms of heart disease.

[Discovery](#)

Mind and body are not as different as we like to think.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [depression](#)

I wish our fish weren't poisonous

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Fish are the gateway to building strong brains:

Fifteen-year-old males who ate fish at least once a week displayed higher cognitive skills at the age of 18 than those who ate it less frequently, according to a study of nearly 4,000 teenagers published in the March issue of Acta Paediatrica.

Eating fish once a week was enough to increase combined, verbal and visuospatial intelligence scores by an average of six per cent, while eating fish more than once a week increased them by just under 11 per cent.

Swedish researchers compared the responses of 3,972 males who took part in the survey with the cognitive scores recorded in their Swedish Military Conscription records three years later.

[Science Daily](#)

This may be less epic than we think: people who are smarter are likely to seek out more brain foods, which could explain why how in a study that uses averages the results came out as they did. But still, wouldn't it be nice to have non-toxic fish available?

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

How long have humans been out of Africa?

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The numbers keep getting bigger:

New dating techniques suggest the remains of so-called Peking Man — a batch of *Homo erectus* fossils found in the 1920s — are 200,000 years older than previously calculated.

What's important about that date, about 770,000 years ago, is that this was a glacial period on Earth, and Peking Man was found in far northern China.

[Discovery](#)

So follow this logically:

First, if *Homo erectus* existed both in Africa and outside of Africa, how did both populations end up being *Homo sapiens*?

Second, if nearly a million years ago humans were out of Africa, there's a whole hidden pre-neolithic history that none of us know yet. And that's why the dates keep changing.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Whorf-Sapir replaced: retraining Revolutionary impulses with language

Mar 11th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

It is a sign of a degenerate and disintegrating society when even the "well-bred" or wealthy no longer aspire to fine manners and cultivated speech in private as well as public life, but prefer a world of vulgarity. After forty years of the Cultural Revolution, persons of all classes and professions have become co-natural with the crude, the common, and the casual. The language we hear around us reflects an egalitarian impulse toward leveling all speech and thinking to the most basic and elementary. I don't need to provide examples. One need only turn on the radio or television to hear the slang and loose tone of everyday conversation.

Many persons have become acclimated to this kind of modern egalitarian ambience where everything, including language, is easygoing, informal, and trendy. When they look to the past and consider the small disciplines of courtesy born from Christian Civilization, such as "If you permit me, sir," "I'd be delighted," "Could you be so kind as to wait one moment?" "What is the state of her health?" they are amused or even revolted. How old-fashioned! What a waste of words and time.

Why? Because of an egalitarian trend in culture that wants to break with everything — including language — that has form and polish, everything that is elevated and refined. This mentality is worthy of repulse, because it professes a love for what is low, common, and crass. Ultimately, it ends in the modern taste for the monstrous and blasphemous.

[Tradition in Action](#)

An interesting point:

Revolutions deconstruct; organic societies construct.

The first thing the Revolutionary does is redefine all symbols so that they have null meaning, and then argues from that nullity that symbolism itself is broken.

The goal of the Revolution is to atomize the population so that each individual pursues his or her own goals, and is easily manipulated with reward and punishment.

This creates a more effective form of decentralized, invisible totalitarianism.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Caught between poles

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Examples of the human dichotomy — situations where our minds get ahead of our ability to balance our reason, and so we lean into unrealistic scenarios.

Until quite recently, there were two main schools of thought on this. According to one, the hard problem is actually very easy: the answer is that consciousness ‘emerges’ from neural processes. This succeeds in replacing ‘what is consciousness and how is it possible?’ with ‘what is emergence and how is it possible?’ But it doesn’t seem to get much further; many find it less than satisfactory. According to the other view, the hard problem is so hard that it can’t be real: consciousness must be some sort of illusion. Many of this persuasion tried hard to convince themselves that they are, in fact, not conscious, but few of them succeeded. Centuries ago, Descartes suggested, plausibly, that the attempt is self-defeating.

[And a third way] So, then, if everything is made of the same sort of stuff as tables and chairs (as per monism), and if at least some of the things made of that sort of stuff are conscious (there is no doubt that we are), and if there is no way of assembling stuff that isn’t conscious that produces stuff that is (there’s no emergence), it follows that the stuff that tables, chairs and the bodies of animals (and, indeed, everything else) is made of must itself be conscious. Strawson, having wrestled his angel to a draw, stands revealed as a panpsychist: basic things (protons, for example) are loci of conscious experience.

[LRB](#)

I can buy into the “emergent” idea, because it seems to me all patterns in life — per [nihilism](#) — but it seems to me that humans are paying attention to only one side of the cycle: how consciousness appears to us. It’s likely that in a larger context, consciousness is not “free will” as like to think it is, but a complex series of decisions made like those of a digital switching machine. At that point, consciousness is more a machine being aware of itself and planning around it than some divine trait that is obscure to us mortals.

As eyeballs flock to the Internet without a reciprocal shift in advertising revenue, the online world is scrambling for a new business model that reflects the potential and reach of online marketing. As traditional media is losing ground with its push mechanism and high cost CPM (i.e. how much it costs advertisers to get a thousand people to look at whatever it is they’re hawking), and the model for getting paid for online content is still up in the air, the question on everyone’s lips is “WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?”

As Los Angeles positions itself to become new media content capital of the world, I expect the answer to this “How do I make money online?” conundrum wrapped in an enigma will come from this city.

People who sell things or help people sell things to people over 25-years-old (like Amazon) and people who help those people sell things (like Google) have found a way to pay the bills, but U.S.S. Content is sinking into the ocean, namely because it is really easy for a person to find whatever they need online if they’ve got mad Googling skills. This is best exemplified by the Millennials, or the generation that launched a thousand marketing Powerpoints who tend not to pay for anything on the Internet because they either know how to torrent or have friends who do.

Gen Y’s reluctance to spend money online is precisely the reason “the Internet wants to be free” – they built it that way on purpose (note to business owners: if you want us to pay for stuff why don’t you start actually paying us? It’s called a “wage motive”). If, as one panelist put it,

"when times are tough people gravitate to quality," then how do you market to an entire generation that doesn't mind watching their free copy of Reality Bites with Russian subtitles?

[LA Weekly](#)

In the same way, humans fail to consider anything but their own participation. We all want quality content; it costs money. Either we find out a way to pay for it, and view ourselves as investors in future content, or it doesn't occur. Now, you'll note that I said investors — it's possible we could construct a business model which did not involve profit as much as redistribution of wealth to those who purchase and thus invest in any the products of any industry.

Both advocates and the media portray the homeless as simply ordinary Americans down on their luck; victims of cruel economic forces and a housing crisis. They delight in telling us that we are all just one paycheck away from living on the streets. But the pure down-on-my-luck group is relatively small; about 15 percent. They are highly visible in media stories about the homeless because advocates learned long ago that this group elicits the most support for their cause.

Ignored is the prominence of substance abuse, criminal behavior, and mental illness which highlights the majority of the homeless. Advocates and the media neglect to tell us that seven out of ten homeless have been institutionalized at one time or another; this includes mental hospitals, detoxification centers, and prison.

Advocates and the media always argue that it is external forces, not individual choices, that lead to homelessness. Personal responsibility is never an issue. They place the blame on face-less corporations, evil Republicans, and a selfish society.

Consequently, many homeless have become more offensive and even violent in their behavior as they have come to believe that everyone who passes them owes them something. They used to believe that their plight was their own fault but as White observes, "Now, because of what they [homeless] hear in protest songs, read in newspapers, see on television, hear from advocates, or learn from the social system, they think that their condition is someone else's fault. Some act as if they are morally superior to people who work and raise a family." But, the fact is, that in the majority of cases, the homeless are either directly responsible for their plight or some individual-based problem is at work.

[UM](#)

In the same way, we only think of homelessness as if we were homeless. In that condition, we'd like to be blameless and have it not only not be our fault, but to have someone to blame. We didn't do this; Republicans did this to us. So we project our own fear in the form of blamelessness onto the homeless, who really are only those with mental illness and profound criminal or sociopathically lazy tendencies; it's easy as hell to just survive in this society and those who fail at it are truly defectives.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

On liberalism

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I guess liberalism gets a bit of a bashing here. Let me explain.

I started life as a liberal; I still am a liberal.

However, liberalism got redefined.

Historically, the original idea behind liberalism was: whether we must be disloyal to the current regime or not, our goal is to combat the naturalistic fallacy. Meaning: that which is is not necessarily right. We must be guided by values above convenience.

This got hijacked by the crowd into: "we must make all individuals equal."

In doing so, liberalism became a foe of biological determinism and in doing so, it became an enemy of nature. And, since morals and values are adaptations to nature, it became an enemy of morals and values — and soon after that, opposition to all value systems.

Every philosophy, over time, decays into a simpler version of itself.

Liberalism has done so, and what it has become is terrible, so instead, I think I'd rather pick a philosophy which never decays: naturalistic realism, or the idea that an organic order exists on this earth which is both practical and divine, and that we should pay attention to this invisible but discernible structure instead of being confused by appearances.

It's the same truth you'll find etched through history. It's in the Bhagavad-Gita. It's in Hemingway. It's in Eckhart. It's in Emerson. Even Mary Shelley. And Nietzsche. Found in Plato. And in many of the common sense folk sayings handed down over the generations.

If my goal is fairness, I need to apply that fairness scientifically. I choose to recognize the obvious, which is that with civilization, we could not longer as individuals act as free agents.

As a result, I've come full circle: liberalism (of a consistent type) opposes individualism and as a result, embraces biological determinism.

That includes some taboos, like recognizing differences between the races, supporting the organic society, recognizing different gender roles, and rejecting the idea of equality of ability since genetics shows us otherwise. Those are big, bad ideas in the eyes of:

- Big media.
- Big corporations.
- Liberals and neoliberals ("conservatives").
- Your buddies.
- "Everyone" on the internet.

But I've long observed that a statement's truthfulness is inversely proportionate to its popularity. Just as liberalism gained popularity when it strayed from the truth, into that easy land of symbols and categories that seem indivisible — of pure composite — until you analyze them and see there's no purity on earth. There's only relativity, practicality as determined by relativity to the whole, and human will.

And when you've realized that, life gets a lot simpler and a lot more exciting and rewarding.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [liberalism](#)

Are humanists the new “flat earthers”?

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Of all philosophies available to us, there's one that underscores just about everything we see each day. That philosophy is humanism. Developed in the Enlightenment as a secular outgrowth of Christianity, it is now the dominant assumption, shared in common by hippies, anarchists, corporate businessmen, big media, government and disillusioned underachievers on the internet alike.

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.

[International Humanist and Ethical Union](#)

This rapidly translates into “Humanism: the idea that humans are more important than reality.”

Here's why:

Prozak's Law: All philosophies decay to their simplest interpretation by a group learning them through the words of others.

This means that the idea of placing humans as our first priority means humans quickly replace nature, logic, etc. as priorities. Humanism becomes our oldest impulse, which is to hide in denial in our big brains, and by changing our perceptions and not the world around us, feel better. What human failing doesn't fit into this category? Hubris, alcohol/drugs, laziness, egomania, etc.

We all know what flat-earthers are — but a challenge has been issued in that regard:

Climate change deniers are “ridiculous” and akin to “flat-earthers”, according to Sir Nicholas Stern, who advised the government about the economic threat posed by global warming. The respected economist compared climate naysayers to those who deny the link between smoking and cancer or HIV and Aids in the face of mounting scientific evidence.

[The Guardian](#)

I am a philosopher. We are scientists who deal in abstract logic based on pattern comparison. We recognize that for the most important truths in human life, there's never going to be a “smoking gun,” because they are too many layers removed from the physical. But we are scientific about how we explore these abstract patterns, which is what separates us from many religious and dogmatic types.

I am going to show you that humanism, which becomes the idea that each human has an inalienable right to live however they want free from criticism by the rest, is the cause of our decline and that we are all flat-earthers while we support it. And 99.99% of us do. It's simply a bad illusion that gained traction because it's popular because it's easier and more ego-affirming than the more complex truths out there.

Stern is calling those who deny global warming “flat earthers,” adding to a list of insults comparing them to Holocaust deniers and others. Flat earthers of course were those who insisted the earth was flat when the evidence suggested it was round. I'm from a third camp on global warming. To my mind, the evidence suggests:

- a. Global warming is not an accurate term; global climate change is occurring, with both human and “natural” factors. However, it's up to us to fix it and mitigate its effects.

- b. Global warming is a surrogate used by all environmentally-concerned people for the general, wholesale, indiscriminate, for-profit consumption of our earth and its resources by humanity.

Now, if I were a conservative, Conservation would be high on my life of priorities. But other than George Bush [pardoning the oceans](#), not much has happened along those lines lately.

If I were a liberal, I'd be struggling. [Liberalism](#) is the party of humanism because humanism makes everyone equal, and so enables to the underdogs to prevail against (by clear evidence of their own failure) their oppression by larger social forces. However, telling people they can't cut down that forest, buy that happy meal and throw the trash on the freeway shoulder, own whatever large truck they want, introduce another 11 babies to their impoverished nation, move anywhere they want, etc. is not very liberal, but it is very green.

This is why global warming is a big football: conservatives see it as liberal, and fight it, and liberals use it to argue that first-world nations should "reduce emissions" when the real problem is overpopulation. What causes overpopulation? Philosophically speaking, humanism does: the idea that each person who is human is entitled to do whatever they want because, hey, they're human! And humans come first.

Humanism, or humans come first, is interpreted through the individual in a kind of utilitarian-individualism hybrid: whatever human individuals want to do, they can. This is why modern liberal democracies inevitably invent consumerism and call it capitalism, then refuse to deny anyone the right to tearing down a forest and making from it a fast food restaurant because it's that guy's shot at the dream of being wealthy, and he had the money to do it. This is why libertarianism is not the whole answer, nor is anarchy, nor is capitalism; on the other hand, it's why [socialism](#) drowns itself in too many people who do nothing, because they will if the rewards are equal not stir themselves from doing whatever is most convenient.

The same failing, humanism, underscores both systems, and manifests itself in a passive aggression where we seek out those who deny us our human universal absolute right to do whatever we please, and squash them, even though often they're pointing toward an honest truth: that we are a collective once we form a civilization, and that we must design that civilization so it has a structure that functions sensibly as a whole. We cannot both be civilized and think of ourselves as atomized individuals.

The goal of humanism, as it decays from an irrational humans-first ideology into the "you can be whatever you imagine yourself to be" stage, is to deny that any aspects of ourselves is inherent and that we have limits on our "free will." Science, of course, thinks this is illogical:

Genes have a very strong influence over how certain parts of our brains develop, scientists in the US and Finland have found. And the parts most influenced are those that govern our cognitive ability. In short, you inherit your IQ.

Paul Thompson at the University of California at Los Angeles and his colleagues used MRI to scan the brains of 10 pairs of identical and 10 pairs of fraternal twins. Identical twins have identical genes, whereas fraternal twins sharing on average half their genes. The twins shared environments, means researchers can separate genetic and environmental factors.

The researchers found that certain regions of the brain were highly heritable. These included language areas, known as Broca's and Wernicke's areas, and the frontal region, which, among other things, plays a huge role in cognition.

In identical twins, these areas showed a 95 to 100 per cent correlation between one twin and the other – they were essentially the same. The frontal structure, says Thompson, appears to be as highly influenced by genes as the most highly influenced trait we know of – fingerprints.

The study was all the more interesting in that it found that not only was this gray matter highly heritable, but it affected overall intelligence as well. "We found that differences in frontal gray matter were significantly linked with differences in intellectual function," the authors write.

Not only is the quality of your thought genetic, but the speed at which you think it is:

Now it seems that the quality of these connections, which is governed by the integrity of the protective myelin sheath that encases them, is also largely genetic, and correlates with IQ.

Paul Thompson and colleagues at the University of California, Los Angeles, scanned the brains of 23 sets of identical twins and the same number of fraternal twins, using a type of magnetic resonance imaging called HARDI. MRI scans typically show the volumes of different tissues in the brain by measuring the amount of water present. HARDI measures the amount of water that is diffusing through white matter, a measure of the integrity of myelin sheathing, and therefore the speed of nerve impulses. "It's like a picture of your mental speed," says Thompson.

By comparing brain maps of identical twins, which share the same genes, with fraternal twins, which share about half their genes, the team calculate that myelin integrity is genetically determined in many brain areas important for intelligence. This includes the corpus callosum, which integrates signals from the left and right sides of the body, and the parietal lobes, responsible for visual and spatial reasoning and logic (see above). Myelin quality in these areas was also correlated with scores on tests of abstract reasoning and overall intelligence

In other words, none of us can will ourselves into being something we're not. The best we can do is improve what we are. But that annoys the type of person who wants to be a humanist, because they like to think the world is wide open to them, just for thinking it. They like to think they deserve to live and have a right to do whatever they can convince other people to let them do, even if the consequences for others are a disaster. In short, they want to be supported by others for no purpose other than the exercise of their personalities.

How has humanism failed? Let me count the ways.

1. Overpopulation

All measures to thwart the degradation and destruction of our ecosystem will be useless if we do not cut population growth. By 2050, if we continue to reproduce at the current rate, the planet will have between 8 billion and 10 billion people, according to a recent U.N. forecast. This is a 50 percent increase. And yet government-commissioned reviews, such as the Stern report in Britain, do not mention the word population. Books and documentaries that deal with the climate crisis, including Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," fail to discuss the danger of population growth. This omission is odd, given that a doubling in population, even if we cut back on the use of fossil fuels, shut down all our coal-burning power plants and build seas of wind turbines, will plunge us into an age of extinction and desolation unseen since the end of the Mesozoic era, 65 million years ago, when the dinosaurs disappeared.

We are experiencing an accelerated obliteration of the planet's life-forms — an estimated 8,760 species die off per year — because, simply put, there are too many people. Most of these extinctions are the direct result of the expanding need for energy, housing, food and other resources. The Yangtze River dolphin, Atlantic gray whale, West African black rhino, Merriam's elk, California grizzly bear, silver trout, blue pike and dusky seaside sparrow are all victims of human overpopulation. Population growth, as E.O. Wilson says, is "the monster on the land." Species are vanishing at a rate of a hundred to a thousand times faster than they did before the arrival of humans. If the current rate of extinction continues, Homo sapiens will be one of the few life-forms left on the planet, its members scrambling violently among themselves for water, food, fossil fuels and perhaps air until they too disappear. Humanity, Wilson says, is leaving the Cenozoic, the age of mammals,

and entering the Eremozoic — the era of solitude. As long as the Earth is viewed as the personal property of the human race, a belief embraced by everyone from born-again Christians to Marxists to free-market economists, we are destined to soon inhabit a biological wasteland.

[Alternet](#)

The rest of the article lapses into world socialism, namely complaining about how first world nations consume most of our resources. However, they also produce most of our technology, learning, and wealth, so that shouldn't be incomprehensible to us — after all, bodily homeostasis uses up a ton of our calories, but we don't complain because it keeps us alive.

However, the point remains: n people times x resources per person = total resources used. We can reduce x to some degree, but any gains in that are obliterated if another billion people get added to the pile. We're now at seven billion, with the next stop at nine. Turning off appliances, recycling condoms, riding bicycles, drinking urine and composting old newspapers will not fix that.

2. **Pollution**

Pollution comes in two basic forms: either an excess of a known element, or introduction of poisonous elements.

Human pollution is turning the seas into acid so quickly that the coming decades will recreate conditions not seen on Earth since the time of the dinosaurs, scientists will warn today.

The rapid acidification is caused by the massive amounts of carbon dioxide belched from chimneys and exhausts that dissolve in the ocean. The chemical change is placing "unprecedented" pressure on marine life such as shellfish and lobsters and could cause widespread extinctions, the experts say.

[Common Dreams](#)

We cover pollution of poisonous elements elsewhere, but those are even more destructive: they don't go away, and they mutate our animals and plants, with consequences we cannot predict.

This is why we need a revolution in design science: we should not consider a machine a successful design unless it lasts for one hundred years, emits nothing more than vapor and heat, and can be repaired by a reasonably intelligent person with normal tools. It should also have "cradle to grave" designed into its lifespan, meaning that a company or agency should exist when it is time for the gadget to be retired that can recycle it completely.

This logic can be applied to all products sold from bananas to soft drink bottles to cars and computers.

3. **Economic Growth**

What stimulates population growth? Well, a number of things. In developing nations, people breed in huge numbers to offset losses from disease and starvation. If there's an escape valve, like people heading to a nearby continent where living is easier, that process accelerates.

Economic growth creates those conditions. It also creates the state where every natural resource, every person and every idea has a price tag on it, which chokes the growth of learning as well as forming a spiraling out of control growth curve. As you know from analysis of the standard distribution, developing more people does not create smarter people — if anything, it recenters the average on the lower, and so minimizes smart people, making it less likely that society can avoid idiocracy and stop itself before it expands recklessly.

"We created a way of raising standards of living that we can't possibly pass on to our children," said Joe Romm, a physicist and climate expert who writes the indispensable blog climateprogress.org. We have been getting rich by depleting all our natural stocks — water, hydrocarbons, forests, rivers, fish and arable land — and not by generating renewable flows.

"You can get this burst of wealth that we have created from this rapacious behavior," added Romm. "But it has to collapse, unless adults stand up and say, 'This is a Ponzi scheme. We have not generated real wealth, and we are destroying a livable climate ...' Real wealth is something you can pass on in a way that others can enjoy."

"Just as a few lonely economists warned us we were living beyond our financial means and overdrawing our financial assets, scientists are warning us that we're living beyond our ecological means and overdrawing our natural assets," argues Glenn Prickett, senior vice president at Conservation International. But, he cautioned, as environmentalists have pointed out: "Mother Nature doesn't do bailouts."

"We are taking a system operating past its capacity and driving it faster and harder," he wrote me. "No matter how wonderful the system is, the laws of physics and biology still apply." We must have growth, but we must grow in a different way. For starters, economies need to transition to the concept of net-zero, whereby buildings, cars, factories and homes are designed not only to generate as much energy as they use but to be infinitely recyclable in as many parts as possible. Let's grow by creating flows rather than plundering more stocks.

[NYT](#)

Friedman's a broken clock that's right twice a day, but here he really nails it: our concept of economic growth driving our future is borrowing from tomorrow to pay today. This is why ancient mystics found usury to be a sin. It promotes unrealistic thinking, empowers swindlers, and creates a crowd-reality that quickly dwarfs common sense.

4. **Multiculturalism**

Populations work best when everyone's on the same page: language, customs, values, culture and heritage, all at once. That's called pan-nationalism now, because idiots started confusing "patriotism" and "nationalism" in public, but I have a simpler term for it — the *organic society*. For most of human evolution, societies have been organic. Only recently have we started creating a world lumpenproletariat of mixed heritage and justifying it with humanism.

What's the problem with diversity, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, multiracialism — they're different terms for the same thing — as it applies to life? It fragments that cultural consensus. It encourages population growth. It reduces the values systems in common that we have that enable us to oppose reckless consumerism. This is why I'm a Black Panther as much as a Lakota Secessionist, a Libertarian White Nationalist as much as a Asian National Socialist. Pan-Nationalism works; cosmopolitanism destroys, but because the latter makes the individual feel empowered, it is more popular.

Obviously, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt are rabid, hateful paranoids — total bigots and anti-Semites — for having suggested that there are powerful domestic political forces in the U.S. which enforce Israel-centric orthodoxies and make it politically impossible to question America's blind loyalty to Israel.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair announced today that Ambassador Charles W. Freeman Jr. has requested that his selection to be Chairman of the National Intelligence Council not proceed. Director Blair accepted Ambassador Freeman's decision with regret.

In the U.S., you can advocate torture, illegal spying, and completely optional though murderous wars and be appointed to the highest positions. But you can't, apparently, criticize Israeli actions too much or question whether America's blind support for Israel should be re-examined.

[Salon](#)

Diversity doesn't work. Each group has to act in its own interests; this conflicts with the interests of the whole. Can you be both a Jew and an American? Yes, but then you have loyalties to two masters. Zionism is one facet of pan-nationalism; after all, if you want to save the Jewish people, culture and religion, you need a nation for Jews and only Jews. Otherwise everyone else moves there, interbreeds with the population and brings their own ideas, and soon reduces the population to a genetic average, a cultural average, and so on. Why not preserve diversity which paradoxically requires we keep many places non-diverse? People don't like that idea, because it implies that they personally cannot do whatever it is they want to do, and they hate limits. Hate 'em! Even though they're inherent to life itself.

The media will fool you on this one. Even though right now they detest anything Jewish or Zionist, and are screaming bloody murder about Israel exiling Palestinians from its territory (and just watch: that's what is going to happen, and it will bring greater, not lesser, peace), they're wrong just as they were wrong about George W. Bush being a fascist dictator — fascist dictators don't leave office when their term is up. But you never see *that* followup story.

There is an inverse correlation between how popular something is and how true it is. If you want to be popular, deconstruct. Separate ideas from their consequences. Separate related ideas. Break everything down into tiny conceptual bits, so that you reinforce the unspoken desire of the Crowd: we as individuals want to be able to do whatever we want at any time and never be judged unfit for it as natural selection does, and we will band together into a Crowd to enforce this on the rest of you with guilt, passive aggression, and force "for your own best interests." Sound like a positive future?

No — in fact, it's how every ancient empire has snuffed itself out and left behind a third-world ruin. Spengler just reminded us of this; Plato told us originally. But you won't hear that in the media because it's too truthful, and too much reinforces the tendency of our natural world to minimize the individual for universal laws and principles, to be popular. Humanism decays to a philosophy of "whatever is popular, is true" — when we need the opposite.

When do we wake up and realize that the humanists are the flat-earthers, and that their beliefs being popular has nothing to do with their veracity, and that thus our society is a flat-earthier leading itself to ruin?

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [eugenics](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [race](#)

Atomization

Mar 11th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

An Allen Township man accused of driving drunk wore a Coors Light sweatshirt to court today and offered a novel defense.

The law doesn't apply to him, Scott A. Witmer said, because he is a "sovereign man."

"It means I live inside myself," Witmer, 44, told a curious Northampton County Judge Leonard Zito. "I don't live in the state of Pennsylvania."

[The Morning Call](#)

Instead of thinking of a civilization as buildings and laws, think of it as an agreement between people. When that agreement is strong, people know what behaviors will be rewarded and have psychological support for engaging in those behaviors. They're defined as right; others are defined as wrong; and then there's a third category that's not either other category.

For example, building a new irrigation channel is right; murder is wrong; masturbation is — well, if it doesn't interfere with anything else, probably not our business.

As this agreement is diluted by the introduction of people who cannot connect cause and effect, civilization decays. That's the first part of a cycle; the second is that, as civilization decays, so does the agreement. The two — civilization and agreement — are one and the same.

With this decay, people no longer feel like they will get rewarded for doing what is right, so they take to rewarding themselves at the expense of others. Further, they withdraw into their own value systems and their own mental reality. The French writer Michel Houellebecq calls this "atomization," and it seems to me an apt description.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [atomization](#)

Today's hero

Mar 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

You see so much stupidity, you want to give up and give in, and then along comes someone to convince you that not every person on earth is a whore.

Mr Stuart, however, says he will not allow anyone to hunt Pearl.

He said: 'This is quite a rare deer and we want to protect it. We would prefer people to come and shoot it with their cameras.

'At the moment it is a yearling and doesn't even have antlers. It is a beautiful animal and we are worried about poachers and people coming to shoot it.

'While it is on this estate it will be safe. I don't care how much anybody offers to kill it, I want to preserve it and make sure it has a long life.'

Roe deer, which are native to Britain, have been round for 10,000 years.

Only a handful of white ones have been seen since the end of the Second World.

[The Daily Mail](#)



He seems determined and despite the money being offered, isn't giving in to an ethic of convenience and justifying it with some pretense of individualism.

Instead, he's trying to do not what is "right" but what is beautiful — preserve a rare creature of inestimable spiritual worth to humankind.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

More proof of how destructive plastic waste is

Mar 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

His ranch is four miles downwind of large industrial plants that spew tons of carcinogens and other toxic substances into the air. Mumme and other ranchers in Point Comfort suspect the factories are contributing to the ill health of their cattle.

Tests have revealed that herds as far as six miles downwind of the factories have more DNA disturbances than other herds not downwind, according to scientists at Texas A & M University. The changes in chromosome structure and other genetic damage can increase the animal's risk of cancer and reproductive damage.

At the request of local ranchers, the researchers collected white blood cell samples from 21 herds within an 11-mile radius of the industrial facilities. Because of the strong, steady wind from the southeast, researchers expected that if Formosa Plastic Corp. was the main culprit, cattle located downwind or northwest from the industrial complex would show larger genetic disturbances.

The results "provided a strong indication of increased damage" in herds downwind of the industrial complexes, according to the study, published in January in the science journal *Ecotoxicity*.

[Scientific American](#)

I can't understand why conservatives deny how important these issues are.

Sure, global warming is a liberal flag-waver... but if they're right, why not act on it?

Or even more: maybe global warming is just one part of a larger process where humans being selfish are wrecking this earth.

Conservatives, when they fail, are directly selfish; liberals are indirectly selfish, using unselfishness/altruism as an argument for their own purity of intent.

Let's stop playing the childish games and fix the problems. It won't hurt as much as blowing them off.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Daily WTF: anti-immigration raids “like Holocaust”

Mar 10th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Never cheapen tragedy.

According to the Iowa Independent, Jim Clarity, a defense attorney representing Agriprocessors, has “compared the plight of mounting a defense in the Northern District of Iowa to that of the Jews facing Nazi persecution in 1939 Poland.” Clarity has also referred to the pretrial publicity surrounding this case as “sickening,” and he wants the trial moved to either Minnesota or Chicago simply for his belief that “Iowa is poison.”

In addition to this motion, the defense team has asked that each defendant's case be handled separately, and the attorneys even went as far to file a motion to dismiss the criminal indictments of Agriprocessors' executives stemming from the May 2008 immigration raid. Their proposed reason for dismissal? Anti-Semitism on the part of grand-jury members.

The Holocaust card is overplayed and is a detriment to those who were (and still are) truly affected by it. We hear it everywhere. The teacher who always collects assignments is the Homework Nazi. The chef who won't dish you any bisque when you ask for an extra roll is the Soup Nazi. Most disputes among polarized bloggers commonly end with at least one of them being called a Nazi. But let's get something straight.

Following due process and pursuing justice through the law does not make individuals Nazis. Genocide is the most horrific, monstrous crime imaginable, and the Holocaust is the paramount example of genocide. A case in America's innocent-until-proven-guilty justice system cannot possibly be likened to any happenings of the Holocaust.

[Daily Iowan](#)

This attorney isn't thinking very clearly.

First, it's clear this firm was hiring illegals. We all agree on that.

So we now know that anything else said on the issue is attempting to muddy the waters: they broke the law.

Then all we must ask is: were they sufficiently organized in avoiding information that would alert them that they were breaking the law that they must be considered culpable?

That's good logic. Comparing the case to the Holocaust, and insulting every person who believes laws are necessary, is insane.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Chuck Norris, President of The Nation of Texas

Mar 10th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I haven't thought about this individual in years, but apparently he's into politics:

On Glenn Beck's radio show last week, I quipped in response to our wayward federal government, "I may run for president of Texas."

That need may be a reality sooner than we think. If not me, someone someday may again be running for president of the Lone Star state, if the state of the union continues to turn into the enemy of the state.

From the East Coast to the "Left Coast," America seems to be moving further and further from its founders' vision and government.

[WorldNet Daily](#)

He's got a point, but he hasn't identified the cause of these symptoms:

Every nation, as soon as it is born, begins to die.

It dies because as it grows, its people grow farther from having any understanding of reality, which makes them unstable and self-centered. Society is a surrogate reality. The reality they prefer is one in which they are each kings who control reality with their thoughts and make things different by wishing them so.

They they demand a number of freedoms, including liberalization and democracy, so that they can finish off the society.

Just like overcoming our urge to reach for that second cheeseburger is how we as individuals stay fit, overcoming our urge toward decay is how we as civilizations stay fit.

That requires periodic and rigorous re-assertion.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

You never win by giving in

Mar 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

This week has brought amazement at the many examples of human stupidity by people who should know better. I think the correct analysis is that they're sophomoric — literally wise fools who do not know their ignorance, and so assume they are geniuses when they are speaking of a tiny portion of reality as if it were the whole.

Here's the latest — the problem:

Evangelicals have identified their movement with the culture war and with political conservatism. This will prove to be a very costly mistake. Evangelicals will increasingly be seen as a threat to cultural progress. Public leaders will consider us bad for America, bad for education, bad for children, and bad for society.

The evangelical investment in moral, social, and political issues has depleted our resources and exposed our weaknesses. Being against gay marriage and being rhetorically pro-life will not make up for the fact that massive majorities of Evangelicals can't articulate the Gospel with any coherence. We fell for the trap of believing in a cause more than a faith.

Here's Doofus, PhD's solution:

Expect evangelicalism to look more like the pragmatic, therapeutic, church-growth oriented megachurches that have defined success. Emphasis will shift from doctrine to relevance, motivation, and personal success – resulting in churches further compromised and weakened in their ability to pass on the faith.

The emerging church will largely vanish from the evangelical landscape, becoming part of the small segment of progressive mainline Protestants that remain true to the liberal vision.

[CSM](#)

I am no evangelical, but I'll tell you this from experience: it always seems like you win by giving in to the crowd, but in the end, all it does is adulterate your message — which makes people even less likely to find you.

What Evangelicals and Christians need is more practical talk about how faith is the basis of a community and they need to agree on some values and establish some communities with those values. Teaching people that fighting abortion or fighting racism is equivalent to "doing right" is like assuming that clipping one blade of grass is mowing a lawn.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Blame is useless

Mar 10th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The New Statesman bravely posits the crowd-pleasing summation:

The perception of population growth in developing countries as the culprit of worldwide environmental damage is a fallacy that deserves to be eradicated

Their reasoning:

The environmental argument has thus been used to strengthen the already mighty interest in avoiding any disruption of the established international economic order.

The result has been a dramatic collapse of education, health and nutrition indicators throughout Latin America and other developing regions in the last 20 years; the massive growth of unemployment; further dependence on the export of raw materials, and growing masses of people living in extreme poverty.

First: no, it hasn't. People in power have not cited environmental reasoning of this nature. And Latin America and developing regions continue to have the same poverty and disorganization they had before.

In the year 2000 there were approximately six billion people on the planet, 21 per cent in industrial countries, and the remaining 79 per cent in developing countries. Nevertheless, industrial countries accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all resources consumed. They were also responsible for the production of nearly 80 per cent of all waste and pollutants.

Where are these figures from? My guess: they're made from estimates convenient to his argument.

Back in reality land, we see that developing nations produce a ton of waste, not least of all from their industries, or their practices like clear-cut agriculture, slash and burn, or torching used equipment. Even more, they're hopelessly corrupt and so cannot regulate the exploitation of resources.

He knows that his argument has a second fatal flaw: that even if the first world were using more resources, it's because of infrastructure like hospitals, roads, manufacturing, education, government... all the stuff he wants developing nations to achieve. So if the problem's bad now, not blaming the developing world will make it worse.

He backhandedly admits this, and then admits his real motivation:

If we consider the long history of slavery, abuse, exploitation and misery that, for centuries, have been imposed on developing countries by the main industrial nations, we could conclude in a gigantic environmental, economic and social debt, with which industrial countries have so far got away with.

The unsustainable growth of the population of developing countries is closely related to the extreme levels of poverty they must endure, partly a consequence of the established international economic order, designed by industrial nations at Bretton Woods to enhance their own interests, and then imposed upon the rest of the world.

[New Statesman](#)

Guilt and revenge are the psychology he displays here. Those are tools of those who fear they can never produce what first world nations have. History shows that they cannot on their own; first world nations have higher IQs and as a result, got themselves organized to develop the cool stuff.

He wants to use guilt to convince us to give up what we've worked for so that others can steamroller us, even though they couldn't achieve the same nominal changes on their own.

Blame and guilt are useless. What we need is practical solutions. Although it's socially taboo to say this, what we need is to restrict dumb people from breeding in first and third world populations alike, so that we produce better humans.

Posted in: [Science](#).

We knew he was a puppet

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Obama's reliance on the teleprompter is unusual—not only because he is famous for his oratory, but because no other president has used one so consistently and at so many events, large and small.

After the teleprompter malfunctioned a few times last summer and Obama delivered some less-than-soaring speeches, reports surfaced that he was training to wean himself off of the device while on vacation in Hawaii.

Obama has relied on a teleprompter through even the shortest announcements and when repeating the same lines on his economic stimulus plan that he's been saying for months—whereas past presidents have mostly worked off of notes on the podium except during major speeches, such as the State of the Union.

[Politico](#)

He's not officially an actor. Yet, if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck...

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Conservative writer lambasts corn

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A worthy, worthy read from a smart writer:

Much of the too-ample flesh of Americans (three of five are overweight; one in five is obese) comes from corn, which is a grass. A quarter of the 45,000 items in the average supermarket contain processed corn. Fossil fuels are involved in planting, fertilizing, harvesting, transporting and processing the corn. America's food industry uses about as much petroleum as America's automobiles do.

During World War II, when meat, dairy products and sugar were scarce, heart disease plummeted. It rebounded when rationing ended. "

Four of the top 10 causes of American deaths — coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer — have, Pollan says, "well-established links" to diet, particularly through "the superabundance of cheap calories of sugar and fat." What he calls America's "national eating disorder" is not just that Americans reportedly eat one in five meals in cars (gas stations make more from food and cigarettes than from gasoline) and that one in three children eat fast food every day. He also means the industrialization of agriculture, wherein we developed a food chain that derives too much of its calories — energy — not from the sun through photosynthesis but from fossil fuels.

[WAPO](#)

The simplest solutions are often the most profound.

Posted in: [Science](#).

American Indians destroyed environment too

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Archeological evidence shows that Native Americans were no more or no less protective of the environment than were any other groups on earth. A large majority of plant and animal species that ever existed on the American continents had been driven extinct by Native Americans long before Columbus set foot in the West Indies. Environmental protection is a luxury that became possible to Western societies only in the last several decades. Before industrialization and the current age of material abundance, all human groups had to exploit the environment to the maximum just to survive. No one could afford to be environmentally conscious, and Native Americans were no exception.

[Psychology Today](#)

It's not so much that all cultures do the same things as that all human groups are eventually devoured from within by their least responsible people, who tend to genocide everything they can find on their way out.

It's easy to fix however.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Attacks on Scientology are now a hate crime

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The Crown Prosecution Service has decided that anyone who attacks Scientology can be prosecuted under faith hate laws.

The move will for the first time provide the controversial Church of Scientology – described by some as a cult – the same protection as other mainstream religions.

Critics of the organisation, whose members include Tom Cruise and John Travolta, attacked the decision last night, saying it would encourage Scientologists to push for official recognition in Britain.

[The Daily Mail](#)

When does it end?

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Socialism always becomes parasitism

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

One liberal politician finds out the hard way that socialist values inevitably become a simpler form:

I was also seeking to reverse what I see as a culture of tolerance, where we are now expected to accept everyone else's choices without criticism or judgment, even when those choices have a negative effect on the wider community.

Politicians are not expected to talk about moral absolutes. Raising questions about other people's choices, after all, could offend someone and nothing is less acceptable these days than causing someone offence.

For some it is because they don't feel it is a problem; they believe that, as a rich society, we can afford to fund this 'lifestyle choice'.

Why is it 'Left-wing' to allow millions of people to remain on benefits instead of working? When did 'Labour' stop meaning 'work' and start to mean 'benefits'?

[The Daily Mail](#)

People confuse "their society" with an absolute and universal judgment.

For example, if someone says "Germany for Germans," that's racist, as if every person on earth had the right to be a German.

In another sense, the Americans believe that anyone who opposes democracy and consumerism is a Hitler.

They're taking judgments that fit in one place and time and applying them like a rule for a whole world, like those classifications "good" and "evil" which everyone wants to use but only a few understand.

In short, they're taking it personally, because they have no idea how reality actually works — and instead of throwing out reality, they've asserted their personal preferences for how they'd like reality to be in its stead.

This makes people bind together in crowds and oppose any judgment of anyone, at any time, unless they violated one of those universal codes: don't kill, don't rape, don't criticize others for their decisions.

The fact is that every society needs a consensus as to what it will tolerate and, in the absence of it, people fill the gaps like poured concrete and do whatever they feel like doing at the expense of the collective. This works for awhile and then the society falls apart.

Obviously, no one learns from history in this here human race, but we should be exploring the stars and composing the next great symphonies... but we're not, because people are fixated instead on bickering over entitlements, which means no one will notice great achievements.

Well, it can be easily fixed.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Humanity races from one excuse to the next

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

You know that New Age thing that people do?

January: I'm really into disco Yoga. Not only is it exercise, but it's a better way for humanity to live.

March: Disco Yoga is antiquated. I'm really all about kumquat Pesto. It's fair trade and that's not just food, but a better way for humanity to live.

Every new trend starts when one person, looking for something to talk about, finds an undiscovered possibly cool but probably just like everything else thing.

They and their friends surge into it, and make it popular. But any activity is its people, so soon it's all the same people involved.

Someone notices, and everyone flees to the next big thing.

Throughout human history, the treatment of ideas is not much better: a trend occurs, people milk it for some centuries, and then they pollute it with their own bad logic and it is cast aside.

In 2008, Christians comprised 76 percent of U.S. adults, compared to about 77 percent in 2001 and about 86 percent in 1990. Researchers said the dwindling ranks of mainline Protestants, including Methodists, Lutherans and Episcopalians, largely explains the shift. Over the last seven years, mainline Protestants dropped from just over 17 percent to 12.9 percent of the population.

Thirty percent of married couples did not have a religious wedding ceremony and 27 percent of respondents said they did not want a religious funeral.

About 12 percent of Americans believe in a higher power but not the personal God at the core of monotheistic faiths. And, since 1990, a slightly greater share of respondents — 1.2 percent — said they were part of new religious movements, including Scientology, Wicca and Santeria.

[Yahoo](#)

So in the quest to explain the invisible order that unites our world, science is still lagging because it addresses only the immediate, and people are trying out various religions including the newest, atheism.

Why is it a religion? Because it places religious faith and reliance on individual and science to explain what a philosopher or theologian needs to, which is a complex arrangement of abstractions; the self/science folks dumb it down into the dubious explanation.

They will, of course, replace themselves with fundamentalists, who outbreed them.

But basically what we're seeing is trend-hopping.

Garrett Hardin explains this best:

The tragedy of the commons develops in this way. Picture a pasture open to all. It is to be expected that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible on the commons. Such an arrangement may work reasonably satisfactorily for centuries because tribal wars, poaching, and disease keep the numbers of both man and beast well below the carrying capacity of the land. Finally, however, comes the day of reckoning, that is, the day when the long-desired goal of social stability becomes a reality. At this point, the inherent logic of the commons

remorselessly generates tragedy.

As a rational being, each herdsman seeks to maximize his gain. Explicitly or implicitly, more or less consciously, he asks, "What is the utility to me of adding one more animal to my herd?" This utility has one negative and one positive component.

1) The positive component is a function of the increment of one animal. Since the herdsman receives all the proceeds from the sale of the additional animal, the positive utility is nearly +1.

2) The negative component is a function of the additional overgrazing created by one more animal. Since, however, the effects of overgrazing are shared by all the herdsmen, the negative utility for any particular decision-making herdsman is only a fraction of -1.

Adding together the component partial utilities, the rational herdsman concludes that the only sensible course for him to pursue is to add another animal to his herd. And another; and another.... But this is the conclusion reached by each and every rational herdsman sharing a commons. Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit—in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.

[The Tragedy of the Commons](#)

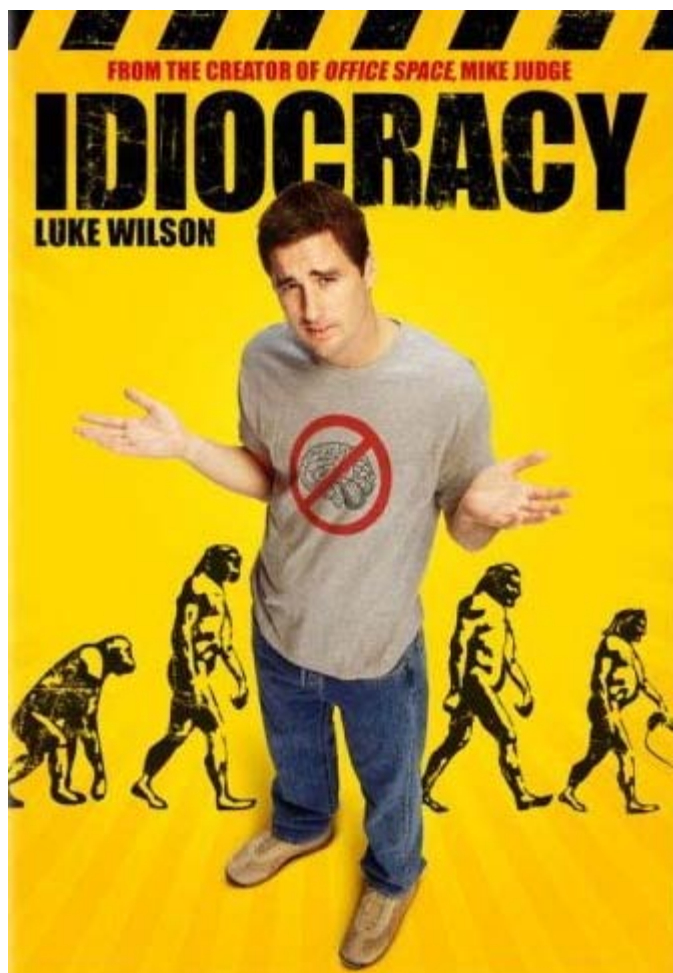
Rather than abandon religion, which serves vital unscientific roles that science cannot serve (and no intelligent scientist will claim it can), we should make religion evolve to fit a sensible, natural and long-term worldview.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Idiocracy: a troubling future

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



[Idiocracy](#)

Mike Judge, director. 20th Century Fox, \$8

At the urging of a friend, I checked out this movie. When it was first described to me, what shocked me was how predictable it was: in the scene being explained to me by others, I could tell exactly what was going to happen and couldn't believe the absurdity of it. Now I see how this is the strength of this movie.

This film is somewhat of an exercise in sadomasochism. There is delight in the stupidity of others, and a "2 minutes hate" style mentality toward them for being idiots. There is also a sense of predictability in the consistent stupidity of these characters, and it shocks us because we're accustomed to ignoring stupidity even after someone does a blatantly stupid thing, and then being surprised when they do another, because that's sociable. At the same time, even the predictable is made hilarious with over-the-top absurdity, and so there's a delight in seeing what many of us believe will be the downfall of humanity: because we're all socially equal, we cannot attack stupid behaviors and stupid people or we face the wrath of the crowd, thus over time our civilization itself becomes dumb as bricks.

Plotline summaries are easy to find, but for a quick rundown, this movie takes place when an average Joe and a below-average Josphephine find themselves in the future, where everyone is brick stupid. There's a bizarre caricature of Barack Obama meets Hulk Hogan for the president; the average people resemble Beavis and Butthead, but worse; all functions of society have decayed according to the whims of a population that is too easily convinced of lies. And that is the first task for anyone in the land of the stupid:

to lie simply and convincingly.

Although movies are so obvious by the nature of the medium that we've all become accustomed to sitting through the obvious in case the special effects are good, this movie is a drubbing with the obvious. It's not about the future, or rather, the future isn't a distant binary state — it's a gradient, and we're on the part that is steadily darkening with stupidity (there are strong undertones of Platonic eugenics to this film). That is why while I would not leap to see this again, I might purchase it for friends because it's as valuable a container of truth as many works of literature.

Posted in: [Books](#).

We too easily fool ourselves

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

If a correspondence theory of truth is correct, and if thus for a sentence to be truth it has to correspond to the world in a way that mirrors the structure and matches parts of the sentence properly with parts of the world, then the structure of a true sentence would have to be mirrored in the world. But if, on the other extreme, a coherence theory of truth is correct then the truth of a sentence does not require a structural correspondence to the world, but merely a coherence with other sentences.

One way to understand logic is as the study of the most general forms of thought or judgment, what we called [a type of logic]. One way to understand ontology is as the study of the most general features of what there is, our [a type of ontology]. Now, there is a striking similarity between the most general forms of thought and the most general features of what there is. Take one example. Many thoughts have a subject of which they predicate something. What there is contains individuals that have properties. It seems that there is the same structure in thought as well as in reality. And similarly for other structural features.

If there is an explanation of this similarity to be given it seems it could go in one of two ways: either the structure of thought explains the structure of reality, or the other way round. An explanation of the latter kind, where the structure of reality explains that of thought, could go as follows: the world has a certain basic structure, being constituted by objects which have properties, which other objects can have as well. To properly represent a world like this the creatures from which we evolved had to develop minds that mirror this structure. Those who developed a different kind of mind died out. Therefore we have a mind whose thoughts have a structure which mirrors the structure of the world.

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

I've cut and re-arranged a little bit to make the argument clearer: do we make our thoughts correspond to reality, or our thoughts correspond to other thoughts? In another light: do we make our selves correspond to reality, or make ourselves correspond to the expectations of other selves?

Posted in: [Science](#).

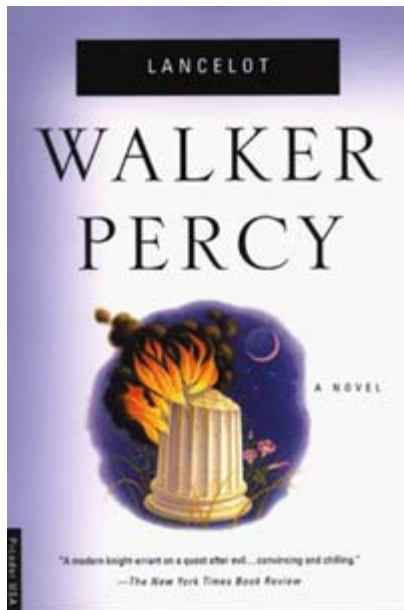
Three books about crossing the abyss

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Friedrich Nietzsche is associated with nihilism not because he advocated it, but because he saw it as an essential stage. Civilization, sensu Nietzsche, has a life cycle through which it ages and dies as its symbols become increasingly disconnected from reality. For people in a dying civilization, the only hope is a Viking funeral for all values, and then a rediscovery of what matters in life — an awakening.

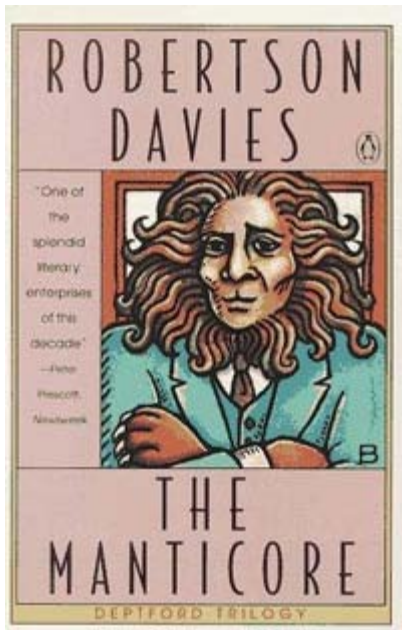
Since Nietzsche, novelists have attempted to chronicle this awakening in different forms. Thomas Pynchon explicitly mentions it in his short fiction; William S. Burroughs takes us through the darkest depths of hell to find redemption in action; even popular fiction like Paulo Coelho tries to show us an invisible world beyond the world of appearance as dictated by society. Today I mention three classics of this genre from the oldest school of the philosophical novel: how to discover what you're willing to die for.



[Lancelot: A Novel](#)

Walker Percy. Picador, \$10

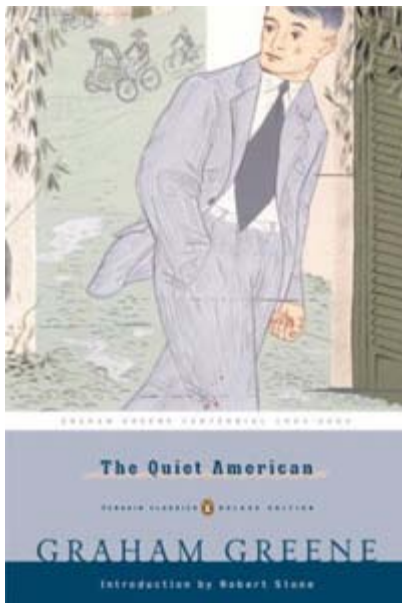
In this short book, a man discovers the life he was living was not what he thought it was, and then leads him to ask the fundamental question: how was I deceived? In fitting with the title, he discovers in himself a knightlike desire to wage warlike action in the name of moral alertness, or being awake to what goes on outside the visible, categorical, plastic-clean definitions used by our society to transact daily function. The book flirts with dangerous ideas and then quickly revokes them, much as Nietzsche flirted and then contradicted, to force us to invoke those issues and then pick our own reality more complex than voting for option A or option B, buying product Z or product W. While its topic is vital and kept me riveted, the use of language is somewhat heavy-handed. In fact, this book would benefit by losing a hundred pages or so (like many novels). There's a mystery underlying the fundamental event of the novel and how it transpired, but what makes Percy a great writer is that by the time events are revealed, we the reader are so invested in his protagonist that it all seems quite natural, which is where we agree with what I surmise is Percy's thesis: that in all of us is a Lancelot, and we're happiest if we not only morally awaken but wage constant moral warfare against the slumbering, ignorant, beastlike complacency and deceptiveness of our species.



[The Manticore](#)

Robertson Davies. Penguin, \$10

This book approaches a man after The Fall, or his descent into dissolution that masked a deeper void in his soul. He has gone partway through the descent and recovery process Nietzsche describes, wherein he is aware of the hollowness of social reality but cannot yet grasp something better to strive for, and so remains becalmed in negativity and self-destruction, like most people under 45 are today. Although the book is told through Jungian archetypes, its fundamental process is one of rediscovering value by confronting life itself and all of the illusions society uses to cover its fears — mortality, natural selection, failure — and so is a slow, cerebral buildup to an animalistic finale. What is most interesting about this book is that it shows a character before awareness coming to the ground of that awareness, and lets us breathe our own hopes into him instead of closing the cycle. Like all books from this author, it mixes wit with that multi-axial sense of being suspended between emotions and actions that is at home in the modern consciousness, and prized when it is truthful.



[The Quiet American](#)

Graham Greene. Penguin, \$10

At its simplest level, this is a wartime political novel, written before American involvement in Viet Nam really

took on stature, but showing the fundamental flaws not of an army, a political party or a nation, but of an attitude. In this circuitous novel that veers between disturbing action and contemplative scenes of social interaction, characters wrestle with their own balance between wanting to do what is logical and getting caught up in the forest of symbols, emotions, ideals and subterfuges that define the modern West. Much like *Heart of Darkness* and later *Apocalypse Now* this shows us people unwilling to win wars, or make their personal lives achieve clarity, because they are ghettoized in their individualism, comfort, and lazy self-deception. Like most books of this genre, it comes to a crashing denouement as one character grows a pair and risks the confrontation with social illusion — not social morality, not its conventions, but the basic illusion of society itself: that now that we're part of it, we must no longer struggle for clarity, but can let its bureaucratic and unctuous socialization define that for us — and goes to war with the assumptions that lead to misery.

Posted in: [Books](#).

Tagged: [literature](#) · [philosophy](#)

The have-nots think joining the society of haves will make them whole

Mar 9th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Malmo, which has one of the highest percentage of Muslims of any western European city, illustrates the challenges facing a continent whose native population is increasingly wary of a rapidly expanding and often discontented Muslim population.

There is increasing evidence that Islamic militants are gaining a foothold in Sweden by successfully exploiting racial tensions and Muslim anger over economic underachievement, and ghettoization.

Meanwhile moderate Muslims like Becirov, whose progressive mosque is a place where Sunnis and Shiites praying side by side, are increasingly under fire from both Swedish nationalists who see them as dangerous representatives of radical Islam and Muslim fundamentalists who see them as selling out to Western ideas.

[CSM](#)

Our holy grail in modern society:

Individual merit.

We like to think we're each geniuses, grand artists, wizards, etc. waiting to be discovered. But that's true only in a few cases per 100,000 and the rest of us are disturbingly... ordinary.

Because of this individual merit nonexistence taboo, we tell people from foreign lands that they're have-nots as a result of historical accident.

The truth is, however, that Muslims (codeword for: Middle Eastern-descended Muslims) who move to Europe are going to find themselves at a disadvantage, so they'll always be in lives of poverty. After all, if they were able to develop what Europe has, their home countries would look different... so obvious, yet so widely denied.

So they fester in poverty, while a few make it upward, but most are basically pissed off because they're have-nots in a society of haves, and they lack the innate abilities the haves have, which is why they're have-nots. It makes them more miserable to be surrounded by haves, even if they've got better health care. This is the situation of Saamis in Scandinavia, Turks in Germany, African-Americans and Mexicans in America, Indios in Brazil, etc. etc. it repeats everywhere. Evolution is real. The haves evolved in different ways that the have-nots, and have abilities those others lack.

In other words, there is no nature-nurture gap. Race is not a social construct; there are no things that are purely social constructs, since society reflects abilities which reflects genetics which reflects evolution which reflects degree of adaptation to reality. So it's stupid to demand that we consider ourselves all the same, especially since it produces chaotic upheaval in our societies.

The UK is home to nearly three quarters of a million illegal immigrants, research obtained by the BBC's Panorama programme suggests.

"What unfortunately would happen is that people traffickers and others would see that as a pull factor to get people to the United Kingdom illegally and we would end up with a bigger problem not just for our society, but for the people themselves involved," Mr Woolas told the programme.

"The proposal for an amnesty starts with a conversation in London with the best of intentions and it ends up with dead bodies in the back of lorries in northern France," he added.

[BBC](#)

Amnesty *looks like* the right solution. But nothing is ever how it appears. You need to understand the structure of how it works, or you're just a monkey banging on a machine you don't comprehend.

So it is with the haves and their pathological desire to admit the have-nots, as if guilt itself had undone them.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Do we bring progress or death?

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Al-Qaeda and Ted Kaczynski say that Western "Progress" is actually a path to doom. Fred Nietzsche seems to agree. So, hilariously, does Plato, the forefather of all Western metaphysics. Let's look at a sliver of the evidence.

While sexual violence has accompanied warfare for millennia and insecurity always provides opportunities for criminal elements to profit, what is happening in Iraq today reveals how far a once progressive country (relative to its neighbors) has regressed on the issue of women's rights and how ferociously the seams of a traditional Arab society that values female virginity have been ripped apart.

Nobody knows exactly how many Iraqi women and children have been sold into sexual slavery since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, and there are no official numbers because of the shadowy nature of the business. Baghdad-based activists like Hinda and others put the number in the tens of thousands. Still, it remains a hidden crime; one that the 2008 US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report says the Iraqi government is not combating.

That underworld is a place where nefarious female pimps hold sway, where impoverished mothers sell their teenage daughters into a sex market that believes females who reach the age of 20 are too old to fetch a good price. The youngest victims, some just 11 and 12, are sold for as much as \$30,000, others for as little as \$2,000. "The buying and selling of girls in Iraq, it's like the trade in cattle," Hinda says. "I've seen mothers haggle with agents over the price of their daughters."

[Time](#)

When "American culture" — really, a global culture formed at the intersection of consumerist capitalism and multi-cultural liberal democracy, or cosmopolitanism — reaches a new land, it appeals to the inner idiot in all humanity that like a barely-evolved ape can't think past next week.

That inner idiot finds Coca-Cola and Marlboro as important as democracy and other airy concepts that no one who's watched community organization successively fail expects to actually work.

And with this global culture, comes a catch: since it's based on the individual, whatever people are willing to buy is good, and everything's for sale.

Is it making us happy?

Forget the idea that love is all around us: it seems to be acute loneliness that is pervading our society.

According to many sociologists and psychologists, it is now a national epidemic afflicting women of all ages and at almost all phases of the life cycle.

A student living away from home for the first time, a new mother, a single woman unsuccessfully looking for love, a newly married woman, a mother whose children have grown up and 'flown the nest' or a recently retired woman.

All are as likely to report feeling lonely as an elderly woman — the group we wrongly assume are the loneliest of all.

More of us than ever are living alone, with one-third of all UK households occupied by only one

person; they also point to the increasing divorce rate and declining role of the Church – all leading to a more fragmented society.

In addition, we are much more geographically mobile than our grandparents – moving on average five times in our lives, making us less likely to form community bonds or even to know our neighbours.

And, of course, technological changes have had a massive impact on the way we live.

It is no longer necessary to leave home to shop, to 'meet' people, to communicate, to earn a living, to learn about the world or to be entertained.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Translation: we destroyed social obligation to be closer to ourselves, and replaced real socialization with harmless substitutes, and now we find that empty. But it is a superior product, and it's what the people voted for.

Or did we just give in to our inner ape and self-destruct?

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Irresponsible people produce irresponsible societies

Mar 9th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

There is a 50-50 chance of temperature rises reaching dangerous levels over the next century, climate scientists have warned.

Even with heavy cuts in greenhouse gas emissions of 3 per cent a year from 2015, the chance of preventing the temperature rise from exceeding 2C by 2050 is no more than half.

Scientists fear that temperature rises above 2C would lead to wars over key resources, including water supplies, falls in crop yields in southern Europe and the spread of diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Almost a third of animal and plant species could become extinct. Warm-water corals are among the species most at risk; animals that will struggle to survive include polar bears and emperor penguins.

[The Times](#)

How could a society be so irresponsible? It must be the type of government it uses; its leaders; or shadowy corporations. It can't be that the people got decadent, became detached from reality and used their continuing irresponsibility as a goal, so that every other action became a means to perpetuating that state of irresponsibility.

Why not just tolerate the dumb actions of others? Because they have secondary consequences and if not that, they lower the social standard — think of the Broken Windows theory — to a lower level, so that everything dumbs down.

Irresponsibility, stupidity, ignorance, poverty, consumerism, materialism, etc. are not modern inventions. They're the default state of humankind. Every time a society gets its act together to rise above that state, it has a few centuries of learning before the idiots proliferate and drag it down into oblivion.

What defines this default state? Disorganization, because the individual has become more important than the collective.

The mother of three pulled up her sari and defecated with the Taj Mahal in plain view.

With that act, she added to the estimated 100,000 tons of human excrement that Indians leave each day in fields of potatoes, carrots and spinach, on banks that line rivers used for drinking and bathing and along roads jammed with scooters, trucks and pedestrians.

In the shadow of its new suburbs, torrid growth and 300- million-plus-strong middle class, India is struggling with a sanitation emergency. From the stream in Devi's village to the nation's holiest river, the Ganges, 75 percent of the country's surface water is contaminated by human and agricultural waste and industrial effluent. Everyone in Indian cities is at risk of consuming human feces, if they're not already, the Ministry of Urban Development concluded in September.

Every day, 1,000 children younger than 5 years old die in India from diarrhea, hepatitis- causing pathogens and other sanitation-related diseases, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Some 665 million Indians practice open defecation, more than half the global total.

[Bloomberg](#)

It's how nature both helps us and hurts us.

We can survive easily, but that default state is one from which it's hard to rise.

To do so, we have to think farther into the future, like "If I defecate here, it will eventually end up somewhere near my food supply."

This is why ancient civilizations dug toilets to concentrate waste away from themselves. That was responsibility.

But fallen civilizations, like India or Greece or Rome, have a perverse way of returning to irresponsibility full-tilt.

The World Bank predicts the global economy will shrink this year for the first time since World War II, and sees trade at its lowest point in 80 years.

The World Bank also said Sunday the growing global financial crisis will create a multibillion-dollar financing shortfall for poor and developing nations.

A group of 129 countries face a shortfall of \$270 to \$700 billion this year, the World Bank says. It warns international financial institutions will not be able to cover even the low end of that estimate.

[Yahoo](#)

Luckily, the pusher is withdrawing our drug. This current recession is no big deal; it's a symptom of a larger situation, which is a re-adjustment of wealth based on actual earnings potential.

Disorganized, irresponsible populations who blame others for their own dysfunction don't have much future value, do they?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Science can determine ethnicity from genetics

Mar 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Even ancient ethnicity:

Rome destroyed the Phoenicians' greatest city — Carthage — centuries ago, but new genetic studies indicate that as many as one in 17 men living in communities around the Mediterranean may be descended from these ancient mariners.

Researchers led by Chris Tyler-Smith of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in England were able to locate a genetic marker for the Phoenicians on the male-only Y chromosome.

While it wasn't part of their study, the researchers said they also saw genetic indications of the spread of the Greeks around the Mediterranean. They suggested similar studies may be able to trace the genetic influence of the army of Alexander the Great in Asia and India, the Mongol invasion of Europe and the spread of the Vikings.

[Discovery](#)

All this notion of there being no design-level differences between different human groups is anti-scientific blather.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Discipline helps keep kids functional

Mar 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Here at one of two Youth Challenge camps in Georgia, he rose at 4:30 a.m. each day, made his bunk with neat corners and sweated through an hour of calisthenics or running.

He has worn a uniform, marched in step with his platoon to the dining hall, completed 50 hours of community service, and spent long hours studying for the General Educational Development diploma that opens the door to college or career training for dropouts. The camp bars cigarettes and alcohol.

The early results of a national study comparing youths who qualified for the program and were then admitted or denied on a random basis suggest that Youth Challenge may be the most successful large-scale program yet evaluated to help dropouts.

Nine months after participants left the program, they were 36 percent more likely than those in the control group to have obtained a G.E.D. or a high school degree. They were more than three times as likely to be attending college and 9 percent more likely to be working full time.

[NYT](#)

It's not rocket science, but the question is whether we want people in our society who need to be controlled, or whether we want those who have the innate tendencies to strive toward doing what is right.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Biology is a whole

Mar 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

...by a whole, I mean that it reflects itself as context, not a focal point. Focal points are singular facets we can appreciate in an instant; context requires we take in many factors at once. Guess which one is more popular?

We like to put biological traits — focal points — into silos. Someone is either smart, good looking, healthy or honest. What if these traits ran together, as if humans were literally ranked on a scale by evolution?

Holy shinola... they may be:

For Jefferson Duarte of Rice University in Houston, Texas, and his colleagues are suggesting that one of a person's most telling moral features, his creditworthiness, can also be seen in his face.

Dr Duarte's research was enabled by the internet. Once, if you wanted to borrow money, you had either to visit a bank or to tap a rich friend or relative. Now it is possible to do business directly with a stranger, using a peer-to-peer lending site. The needy advertise themselves, and how much they want. Those flush with cash assess potential borrowers and decide who to lend to, and at what rate of interest.

The researchers looked at 6,821 loan applications, 733 of which were successful. Their first finding was that the assessments of trustworthiness, and of likelihood to repay a loan, that were made by Mechanical Turk workers did indeed correlate with potential borrowers' credit ratings based on their credit history. That continued to be so when the other variables, from beauty to race to obesity, were controlled for statistically. Shifty physiognomy, it seems, is independent of these things.

People flagged as untrustworthy by the Mechanical Turks were less likely than others to be offered a loan at all. To have the same chance of getting one as those deemed most trustworthy they were required to pay an interest rate that was, on average, 1.82 percentage points higher, even when the effects of historical creditworthiness were statistically eliminated.

[The Economist](#)

This data will not be popular with the Crowd.

First, it means that your traits are inherent and inborn; therefore, you can't be whatever you want to be, because you are what you are, and anything else is polishing a turd.

Worse, it means that we're not all equal (love of equality is contingent upon us not having inherent, innate traits). Some are shifty and some are less shifty. That's just how they are.

As science advances, the same people who used primitive science to slay religion are finding that science is revealing the same "biases" that religion had — as being inherent to nature. Maybe we threw out some good data when we pitched out the fairytales?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Materialism is a disease in education too

Mar 8th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Stanley Fish bloviates over brandy:

In previous columns and in a recent book I have argued that higher education, properly understood, is distinguished by the absence of a direct and designed relationship between its activities and measurable effects in the world.

This is a very old idea that has received periodic re-formulations. Here is a statement by the philosopher Michael Oakeshott that may stand as a representative example: "There is an important difference between learning which is concerned with the degree of understanding necessary to practice a skill, and learning which is expressly focused upon an enterprise of understanding and explaining."

Understanding and explaining what? The answer is understanding and explaining anything as long as the exercise is not performed with the purpose of intervening in the social and political crises of the moment, as long, that is, as the activity is not regarded as instrumental – valued for its contribution to something more important than itself.

According to Donoghue, [the death of this idea of higher education] has been happening for a long time, at least since 1891, when Andrew Carnegie congratulated the graduates of the Pierce College of Business for being "fully occupied in obtaining a knowledge of shorthand and typewriting" rather than wasting time "upon dead languages."

Industrialist Richard Teller Crane was even more pointed in his 1911 dismissal of what humanists call the "life of the mind." No one who has "a taste for literature has the right to be happy" because "the only men entitled to happiness . . . are those who are useful."

[NYT](#)

Fish is indirectly hinting at a tragedy: by making education entirely a practical matter, we're dumbing down the teaching of subjects which are conduits for skills that are applied outside of those subjects. For example, learning philosophy and literature means that we gain critical analysis skills, which is necessary for that 5-10% of the population lucky enough to merit jobs in which these are useful talents.

The problem, as I see it, is that education trivialized itself by focusing on theories of a Marxist nature which increasingly emphasized individual interpretations of reality without any correspondence to that reality. As a result, our best universities now teach Advanced Egomaniacal Bullshit as a means of keeping the aged toddlers pacified, but in the process, have eliminated the skill of critical analysis, or the finding of "more realistic" assessments through argument.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Feminism: empowering women, or selling women?

Mar 8th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Answer: consumerism is the default philosophy of humankind. Buy stuff, flatter each other, evade upsetting forms of reality.

Young girls so often see being able to behave badly as a right to be fought for; that being as sexy and outrageous as the boys is “empowering”.

They don't have any sense of being bamboozled or exploited. And if anyone doubts it, look at the fact that girls think it's simply hilarious to “sext” their boyfriends – send a photo of themselves naked on their mobiles.

They don't know much about the darker side of sexploitation – tyrannical pimps, the near-slavery of the girls trafficked into this country for sex – let alone what lap dancing outings for businessmen do to any idea of a level playing field for females. Though when it comes to journalism, according to a high-up in the Murdoch empire, “journalists don't go to lap clubs. They're much too exhausted.”

Fifty years ago women were all clean and bright-eyed and fresh looking – housewives and brides in *Woman's Own*, haughty and remote in *Vogue*.

Now they not only look far younger – *Vogue* used to have a feature showing clothes for mature women called *Mrs Exeter*, it's decades since they dropped it – but the girls are all too often like sulky schoolgirls, with that irritating cliché of the toes turned in to look deliberately gawky.

[BBC](#)

Feminism, like all forms of liberalism, is a revenge ideology.

Revenge against the perceived majority who, because we assume we're all equal because we want to assume we can be anything without obligation to engage with the world, *must have been* gifted by the gods instead of having some innate ability, intelligence, drive, etc. to end up in their position.

If we look at a king and say, “That guy's the top of the heap,” we feel our inadequacies; if we say “some accident of nature or the of the gods put him there,” we do not feel inadequate. We feel unlucky, and as a consequence, we build up an impulse toward revenge.

Feminism geared itself toward revenge against men. Instead of working for women, it worked against men, inserting women in a role identical (equal, get it?) to that of men. However, differences between genders remain; consequently, some women used other ways to get ahead and justified it as feminism. It wasn't incompatible with the ideology, which sought material rewards as a sign of having reached equal status.

Now women have to ask themselves a question: do they want a revenge/negative ideology, or simply to pick a sensible role for both themselves and men? But that's not a soundbite, is it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Mocking the miscegenator

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

From the best of Craigslist:

You: Asian, young(ish), cute, petite, left-of-center, cosmopolitan.

Me: The Asian guy you would never dream of giving a second glance.

Hi! I'm so sad that you were offended by my very presence at your favorite boutique coffee shop. Seriously, I was just there to do some work and maybe a bit of reading – I didn't mean to draw attention to the fact that you too, are also Asian. I was just looking for a quiet place to sit, and the seat by you just happened to be open. It's not like peed all over you, put my arm around your shoulder, and screamed to all the other patrons in a heavy Chinese accent, "She mine! You all stay away!"

After I sat down and pulled out Said's Orientalism (no joke), you, in all of your ignorant glory, proceeded to loudly flirt with the nearest non-Asian man with a pulse to dissuade any romantic overtures from me. Lady, I already know you only date white guys; you don't even have to open your mouth.

Ever since Chad took you out back in high school and made you the envy of all homecoming, you've understood the magical power of white boys. Your parents balked until they saw how well Chet treated you and made you so so so happy. You tell yourself you don't see color lines, and that you're ending racism by only dating white guys – and you give yourself a little pat on the back every night before dreaming of waking up with beautiful blonde hair. You've even thrown in a black guy or two, just to get back at daddy. Asian guys? Like, gag me with a spoon!

Hey, I applaud you. You're totally progressive.

[Craigslist](#)

People don't date outside their ethnic groups — thus helping destroy those ethnic groups — because they're Progressive. They do it because there's something wrong with them, and then justify it by claiming they're progressive.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

World gone insane

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

How does a supposedly intelligent species get itself in such a mess?

More than 25,000 conservationists and international policy makers are preparing to meet in Istanbul this month to discuss world water challenges.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature says two-thirds of the world's population will face water shortages by 2025.

Policy makers at the World Water Forum must understand that investing in good water governance is critical for a sustainable water future, the group said.

[UPI](#)

I'll tell you why: because we view ourselves as minds separate from bodies, we fear the body/world because we cannot control it as we seem to be able to control our minds.

To combat that uncertainty, of that weird physical world out there, we invent a fiction of absolute, universal autonomy. Here's how it goes: I do only what I intend to do, and if I am forced to do anything else *except in service of my right to do only what I want to do*, I am being abused by others. Furthermore, my decisions are as valid as anyone else's, or I'm being oppressed. Why this focus on oppression/abuse? Because the social contract is forced on us because we're born into society, but we learn quickly that to make ourselves the victim is to throw others into socially dubious circumstances, and get them in trouble with the teacher or whatever.

So now we've got a huge crowd of people united around the idea that their fond illusions are reality, that they are untouchable kings in a castle of their own minds, and even more, that the individual itself is a viable goal. These crowds make obeying reality a preference, and universally, they prefer to ignore reality until it's a really big problem. This is why it takes a tragedy to awaken humanity to any situation; everyone is too busy thinking how cool they are and ignoring everything but what they want to see.

However, science is starting to shatter this religion of the godlike self:

The debate over intelligence and intelligence testing focuses on the question of whether it is useful or meaningful to evaluate people according to a single major dimension of cognitive competence. Is there indeed a general mental ability we commonly call "intelligence," and is it important in the practical affairs of life? The answer, based on decades of intelligence research, is an unequivocal yes. No matter their form or content, tests of mental skills invariably point to the existence of a global factor that permeates all aspects of cognition. And this factor seems to have considerable influence on a person's practical quality of life. Intelligence as measured by IQ tests is the single most effective predictor known of individual performance at school and on the job. It also predicts many other aspects of well-being, including a person's chances of divorcing, dropping out of high school, being unemployed or having illegitimate children.

By now the vast majority of intelligence researchers take these findings for granted. Yet in the press and in public debate, the facts are typically dismissed, downplayed or ignored. This misrepresentation reflects a clash between a deeply felt ideal and a stubborn reality. The ideal, implicit in many popular critiques of intelligence research, is that all people are born equally able and that social inequality results only from the exercise of unjust privilege. The reality is that Mother Nature is no egalitarian. People are in fact unequal in intellectual potential—and they are born that way, just as they are born with different potentials for height, physical attractiveness, artistic flair, athletic prowess and other traits. Although subsequent experience shapes this

potential, no amount of social engineering can make individuals with widely divergent mental aptitudes into intellectual equals.

[University of Toronto](#)

So what science proves, The People deny, and as a result, government and media — which pander to what people want to think, not what is real — lead us further down the path of illusion.

Instead of pretending you're so wise as you bash theists, Republicans, etc., dear friends, why not focus on the real problem — that our species is in denial of fundamental facts about its own intelligence?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Relativity versus relativism

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The problem with having a big brain: it gets hard to tell what you've observed, or simply thought you observed, because your brain contains so many memories and predictions of the world.

"HOW wonderful that we have met with a paradox. Now we have some hope of making progress." So said Niels Bohr, one of the founders of quantum mechanics. Since its birth in the 1920s, physicists and philosophers have grappled with the bizarre consequences that his theory has for reality, including the fundamental truth that it is impossible to know everything about the world and, in fact, whether it really exists at all when it is not being observed. Now two groups of physicists, working independently, have demonstrated that nature is indeed real when unobserved. When no one is peeking, however, it acts in a really odd way.

The reality in question—admittedly rather a small part of the universe—was the polarisation of pairs of photons, the particles of which light is made. The state of one of these photons was inextricably linked with that of the other through a process known as quantum entanglement. Drs Yokota, Lundeen and Steinberg managed to observe them without looking, as it were, by not gathering enough information from any one interaction to draw a conclusion, and then pooling these partial results so that the total became meaningful.

What the several researchers found was that there were more photons in some places than there should have been and fewer in others. The stunning result, though, was that in some places the number of photons was actually less than zero. Fewer than zero particles being present usually means that you have antiparticles instead. But there is no such thing as an antiphoton (photons are their own antiparticles, and are pure energy in any case), so that cannot apply here.

[The Economist](#)

Was this a case of us not knowing how to predict where things should be?

An interesting perspective:

a sizeable minority of physicists have long been pushing entirely the opposite view. They remain unconvinced that quantum theory depends on pure chance, and they shun the philosophical contortions of quantum weirdness. The world is not inherently random, they say, it only appears that way. Their response has been to develop quantum models that are deterministic, and that describe a world that has "objective" properties, whether or not we measure them. The problem is that such models have had flaws that many physicists consider fatal, such as inconsistencies with established theories.

Until now, that is. A series of recent papers show that the idea of a deterministic and objective universe is alive and kicking. At the very least, the notion that quantum theory put the nail in the coffin of determinism has been wildly overstated, says physicist Sheldon Goldstein of Rutgers University in New Jersey. He and a cadre of like-minded physicists have been pursuing an alternative quantum theory known as Bohmian mechanics, in which particles follow precise trajectories or paths through space and time, and the future is perfectly predictable from the past. "It's a reformulation of quantum theory that is not at all congenial to supposedly deep quantum philosophy," says Goldstein. "It's precise and objective – and deterministic."

If these researchers can convince their peers, most of whom remain sceptical, it would be a big step towards rebuilding the universe as Einstein wanted, one in which "God does not play dice".

In the early 1950s, physicist David Bohm developed a more consistent version of the pilot-wave model, one based on the same equations as ordinary quantum theory but offering a different interpretation of them. Bohm found buried within those equations a close link to the mathematics of classical physics, which is based on Newton's laws of motion. Bohmian mechanics asserts that the outcome of an experiment isn't truly random, but is determined by the values of certain "hidden variables". For instance, in quantum theory two electrons may be "entangled" such that their states appear to have a kind of spooky link; measuring the spin of one determines the spin of the other, say. Bohm's theory suggests that they share a hidden variable governing spin. The theory also shows how probabilistic quantum measurements can always arise from specific particle trajectories.

[NewScientist](#)

We have a universe with infinite factors.

We pick one factor, compare before and after, and use that to determine cause, when cause is a collaboration of many different factors.

We discard all other facts, and call them "details" or "context," implying they are not valid — yet mathematically speaking, the world appears as a consistent whole because of the interaction of many factors (called [parallelism](#)). We cannot discard details because they are part of the structure of the multiple factors causally interacting.

It may be the origin of perspective bias, this tendency of ours to semi-arbitrarily classify some things as "actors" and others as "details" or "background noise."

When the world does not reward our linear model, we blame it for being inconsistent, and invent radical quantum theories to explain what classical physics might — but that we may simply not have enough information, or the attention span, to see exists.

This is relativity versus relativism.

Relativity: As Schopenhauer and the Hindus told us many years ago, the universe is relative, because no part exists in a vacuum. One object needs another to act upon for the first object to have any property; the difference between states and objects is what gives them meaning. Colors, for example, are a result of reflected light, not an inherent "color" attribute of the object. Without light, it would have no color.

Relativism: making excuses for our own perception, or that of others, in a rigid literalist physics that assumes all reality succumbs to a few rules of appearance. In short, perspective bias.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Terrorists versus narcissists: the 21st century wars await

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

People talk about terrorism without knowing what it means. A terrorist is a guerrilla who operates within civilian spaces. Terrorists are universally the product of people with no money and power taking on those who do have money and power.

As Samuel Huntington points out, there's a "clash of civilizations" coming up where the atheistic, consumerist, globalist West is going to clash with everyone who wants to have a unique national culture, religion or heritage:

World politics is entering a new phase, and intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be—the end of history, the return of traditional rivalries between nation states, and the decline of the nation state from the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among others. Each of these visions catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet they all miss a crucial, indeed a central, aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years.

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

[Foreign Affairs](#)

The good news — read on — is that the "fundamentalist" populations are outpacing the degenerate West:

According to demographic projections, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian fundamentalists will gain significant ground against their liberal and secular counterparts by 2050, even surpassing them in some cases, Belfer Center Fellow Eric Kaufmann said at last week's International Security Program (ISP) brownbag presentation.

Kaufmann, a joint fellow with ISP and the Initiative on Religion in International Affairs, outlined fertility trends within religious groups and the impact this may have on regional, national, and global politics and security in his talk, "Religious Fundamentalism as the End of History? The Political Demography of the Abrahamic Faiths."

Kaufmann hypothesizes that while the Fukuyama, "post-historical" core societies — liberal democratic, capitalist and secular — have been able to survive external threats like the advancement of technology and the challenge of socialism, it may not be a demographically sustainable system. There is the possibility that the stark differences in growth rate between religious fundamentalists and others could threaten this system from within.

The first demographic transition, which lasted between the 18–20th centuries, resulted in a population boom because the total fertility rate (TFR) was higher than the death rate. Today, it appears that the world is on the verge of a second demographic transition, where there are fewer births than deaths. The current world total fertility rate (TFR) is 2.55, but the U.N. predicts that it will drop to 2.33, below the replacement rate, during 2020–2050.

[Harvard](#)

What he means is: while the West has zoomed on to the End of History™, it has done so on a demographic boom which is now ending. It will be replaced by populations that are less prone to decadence — consumerism, sexuality without breeding, egodrama — because they have focus on something larger than the self. That means that the boom which made the West both predominant and decadent is ending, and the West will have to buck up in order to face new, tougher enemies.

All of that is awesome. As Fukuyama says:

The triumph of the West, of the Western idea, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade, there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world's two largest communist countries, and the beginnings of significant reform movements in both. But this phenomenon extends beyond high politics and it can be seen also in the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture in such diverse contexts as the peasants' markets and color television sets now omnipresent throughout China, the cooperative restaurants and clothing stores opened in the past year in Moscow, the Beethoven piped into Japanese department stores, and the rock music enjoyed alike in Prague, Rangoon, and Tehran.

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. This is not to say that there will no longer be events to fill the pages of Foreign Affairs's yearly summaries of international relations, for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long run. To understand how this is so, we must first consider some theoretical issues concerning the nature of historical change.

...

The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual care taking of the museum of human history. I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed. Such nostalgia, in fact, will continue to fuel competition and conflict even in the post historical world for some time to come. Even though I recognize its inevitability, I have the most ambivalent feelings for the civilization that has been created in Europe since 1945, with its north Atlantic and Asian offshoots. Perhaps this very prospect of centuries of boredom at the end of history will serve to get history started once again.

[Viet Studies](#)

Fukuyama's [*The End of History and the Last Man*](#) and Huntington's [*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*](#) represent opposite ends of a spectrum describing the same thing: how the West has run out of values, lapsed into modernity enabled by technology, and in its decline is making way for a new world order that's not the New World Order of the globalist, liberal democratic, capitalist, consumerist mishmash of right and left that has become the political aggregate of the West.

Here's an article detailing the narcissistic, individualistic and self-obsessed attitude of Westerners, and the resulting dysfunction:

When did you first realize that what Stephanie and Amanda were going through wasn't just normal teenage rebellion?

I think it was the night that they stayed out all night long. I was getting more and more concerned about the fact that they were skipping school and their grades were slipping. I was feeling very uncomfortable about their friends. And then one night they simply did not come home. They were 12 and 14. They had formed quite a group of friends out on the streets, and they just kept disappearing for longer and longer periods of time.

This group of kids downtown said: "Here's an abandoned building. We'll show you where to get blankets. We'll show you where to get food. We'll show you how to get money on the corner. And you don't have to listen to anybody's rules. You can make up this life as you go along."

They were hauling around copies of Charles Bukowski poetry and listening to Tom Waits all the time. They built this whole reality for themselves that felt very exciting.

My daughter Amanda says that the day that they jumped on their first freight train, when she was 16, and they were in this boxcar in the middle of the night, and she stood in the doorway as they were going past Mount Shasta, while all this cold air was hitting her in the face, she said that was the moment that she felt most vibrant and capable of anything.

...

In late November on Amanda's 17th birthday, I got a call that she had overdosed on heroin, and she had given the police her real name. That started the process of getting her back home.

[Salon](#)

For Westerners, the self is all. They are closed-circuits based on their feelings but disconnected from the consequence of those feelings. That is why they can pollute rivers and streams, throw trash out of car windows, endorse ethnic destruction through race-mixing, deny science, and vote for corrupt liars and call it hope and change. They have no connection to reality. Their concern for reality is: how do I arrange it so that I *feel* better? They do not care about the results in reality itself, or notice that those will in turn affect their feelings. Even more, they have a fundamentally negative bias toward life, because they're living for nothing but themselves, which makes them see out "uplifting" and "empowering" experience instead of focusing on reality itself, which would enable them to configure their lives for the better. It's an impotent, bratty attitude and it ends as the story does, with a humbling return to lesser expectations plus an endurance of years of damage, loss, and the resultant destruction of family and long-term potential.

This end of history isn't a culmination, but a standardization: the [ultimate conformity](#) in global, liberal, "progressive" democratic society.

Others of course see it for what it is, which is a massive justification for [individualism](#) which produces consumerism, sexual liberation and the end of the family, lack of moral obligation to anything larger than the self, [atomization](#) and ultimately an entropy of having no choice be better than any other.

Fundamentalism, on the other hand, despite the bad connotations heaped on it by liberal media, means that people always have an abstract goal and [something bigger than the self](#) which they value. These civilizations find it easier to reproduce, focus on family, cooperate and maintain order, mainly because they're all pulling in the same direction.

These are what I call ["the organic society."](#) or a nation united by culture, language, values, customs and heritage. All or none. The advantage of such a society is that it experiences none of the [inner turmoil](#) and purposelessness of the West, and as a result, pays more attention to the basics of survival and order for an ultimately more successful civilization.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#)

How being fat will give you cancer

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Carrying excess weight around the middle can impair lung function, adding to a long list of health problems associated with belly fat, French researchers said on Friday.

Abdominal obesity is already linked with diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease as part of a cluster of health problems known collectively as metabolic syndrome.

Researchers have now shown that a large waist measurement is strongly associated with decreased lung function, regardless of other complicating factors that affect the lungs such as overall obesity and smoking.

[MSN](#)

Get fat, inhale some car exhaust, die of cancer.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Chicken and egg solution eludes scientists

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Researchers visited 226 food stores in the city of Baltimore and Baltimore County — including supermarkets and convenience stores — and looked at the availability of healthy food. They then tracked the availability of healthy food in each of 159 neighborhoods.

The researchers found that 43 percent of predominantly black neighborhoods were in the third of neighborhoods with the least healthy food; 46 percent of the poorest neighborhoods were in that group.

By contrast, just 4 percent of predominantly white neighborhoods were among the third of neighborhoods with the least healthy food. Just 13 percent of the wealthiest neighborhoods were in that group.

[Yahoo](#)

Which came first: the tendency of poor people to buy TV dinners, or the TV dinners in poor neighborhoods?

Come back to reality, you weepy scientists. When I hit the ghetto store, I see people pushing carts full of square boxes, meaning frozen food.

When I go to the suburbs or even an impoverished rural area, I see people buying whole ingredients.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Why the herd absorbs us

Mar 7th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Someone made an interesting statement the other day, so I highlighted it on some social networking sites to see the responses. Here's the statement:

90% of the people that I meet are impatient and too self-concerned to learn anything that is even just a step outside whatever the mainstream opinion about that subject is.

[UGM](#)

In a thread of [revealing comments](#), people laid out their support and rage at this condition:

"The problem has to do with the structure of memory. A quite common and useful memory trick to remember a string of random facts is to make a silly story or song up that involves all the facts in sequence. For instance, as children, to remember the alphabet we sing the alphabet song.

The same is true for most "mainstream" information. A large part of these stories are akin to bedtime stories told over and over again to us by the mainstream media. One example of this would be the don't smoke pot public service ads. Very simple little story with a beginning a middle and an ending. The viewer is supposed to place themselves in the story as a character and believe that the plot of their lives will follow the public service announcement if they make the same decisions."

"People don't try new things because they don't have the attention span and it's hard. I blame (among many other things) weed. (here come the downmods I know), but seriously... weed is like the anti-uppity drug. If you smoke weed, you just hang out. You don't get a bug up your ass to try anything new. There are entire generations of kids now who are basically sedating themselves through a formative period in their lives where they could be picking up valuable skills and wisdom."

"Having an opinion on a subject that falls outside the mainstream sets one up as a target in a time when most people are probably trying to hang on to what they've got."

"Not to mention embarrassed to even consider discussing issues that aren't completely frivolous/of any importance."

"And this is why Democracy doesn't really work, why Plutocracies always form, and why humanity itself is an endlessly repeating cycle of stupidity."

Some good insight there.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Intolerance and pluralism

Mar 6th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Pluralism is the idea that, since every group or person has an organizing idea and goal to life, these goals can coexist.

Pluralism denies that societies are inherently collective, and so we need a collective goal to the whole of society. Pluralism becomes that goal, but what of its effects?

The first thing we learn is that there is not one rule that is right for every person; however, if these rules come in conflict, those people cannot live in the same society. And if we think clearly, we see that every ideology by the very fact of asserting itself as true is calling every other ideology untrue.

So pluralism is a stupid idea, unless we grant different areas the right to segregate themselves, exclude outsiders by ideology, race, religion, sexual orientation and so on, because each constitutes a de facto ideological bias.

One person I showed that to wondered at the passage about "an intolerance for cultural diversity and diversity of thinking and are views that are not shared and are not representative of the thinking of a majority of the citizens of Oklahoma." But that's accurate. After all, the majority of citizens of Oklahoma share an entirely different set of intolerances!

[Science Blogs](#)

In this sanctimonious young liberal's eyes, every place must obey the same standards. An ideology of standard parts: there is one right way, and we must apply it anywhere. God forbid that Oklahoma wants to believe in God or do anything else that opposes his globalist True Moral Right Way. He considers his view Progress, and the rest of us to be ignorant, all while talking about freedom, but really what he's offering is a lack of freedom to disagree with what he sees "scientifically" as a moral right.

Confusing? Not to a philosopher, who understands that negation is also assertion. In pluralism, every view must be tolerated, including explicitly its intolerance of separate views, which means pluralism cannot work unless divided up geographically. Oklahoma understands that; this liberal bigot does not, which makes him the ultimate in intolerance.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [pluralism](#)

Levels of intelligence

Mar 6th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

According to studies conducted by the Oxford evolutionary psychologist Robin I. M. Dunbar, most humans are limited to fourth-order theory of mind or what Dunbar calls fifth-order intentionality, including the intentionality of the focal actor (I know that you know that Casey knows that Dan knows that Natalie knows it), and not higher. Dunbar further argues that good writers like Shakespeare are rare, because complex dramas like Othello often require the writer to possess a fifth-order theory of mind (or sixth-order intentionality), which is beyond the cognitive capacity of most humans. For example, Shakespeare as the writer must intend that the audience believes that Iago intends that Othello supposes that Desdemona loves Casio, who in fact loves Bianca. Coming up with this plot, Dunbar contends, is beyond the cognitive capacity of most humans, which is why, when faced with Shakespearean plays, many of us have the natural reaction "How can a human being have written that?"

[Psychology Today](#)

The rest of the article is not to my taste, since I think it overestimates the intelligence required to make dramatic characters play off each other. But the concept remains: if we're going to be overmen, we must program ourselves to think in multiple layers, for multiple moves ahead in the chess game of life, for years and aeons beyond our immediate actions. We must program our minds to think of secondary, tertiary and beyond consequences and effects; of aggregate detail more than focal points; of not just how things will look when new, but how they decay.

With a little evolutionary pressure, we could convert our species into such forward-thinkers, instead of the pale and politically correct "forward thinking" in vogue now that consists of pandering to anyone who appears to possibly be a victim of something at some time, somehow.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [overman](#)

Genetics is not a shopping list; it's like computer code

Mar 6th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Look around and you'll see that most traits are not discrete – people are not either short or tall, obese or skinny, fast runners or slow; instead, such traits fall into a continuous range of values, such as a bell curve pattern. Traits with continuous values are called quantitative traits, and the genetics behind these traits is much more complex than discrete traits, because these continuous traits are not produced by variants of just one gene. Quantitative traits are controlled by multiple genes, and thus there is no simple 1:1 correlation between a trait and a particular genetic variant.

Why is it important to understand the genetics behind quantitative traits? Other than the fact that almost all interesting traits are quantitative, scientists are interested in quantitative traits because they are key to our understanding of both evolution and many common human diseases. To understand the evolution of quantitative traits and complex diseases, ones that are affected by variants of multiple genes, we need to answer a common set of questions: How many genes (and which variants of those genes) have an impact on the trait? How large of an impact does each gene have? How does a variant of one gene impact the effect of another gene on the trait? Without knowing the answers to questions like these, we can't accurately predict your genetic risk of getting diabetes, for example, and the growing field of personalized medicine will have little hope of success.

Quantitative traits can be built with variants in only a few genes, each with large effects, instead of dozens with tiny effects, which means that there might be hope yet for personalized medicine. And many of the critical genetic variants will probably be found in regulatory genes, meaning that the physiological diversity in a species is in large part due not to differences in the molecular machinery responsible for physiology; it's due to differences in how that machinery is regulated.

[Scientific Blogging](#)

When we started looking at genetics, we looked at DNA like a laundry list: if you check item A, you get trait A1, and so on.

People were even talking about how race “didn't exist” and was a “social construct” because they couldn't find a single gene for race. That's hilarious!

Much of the debate over the existence of human races stems from how one chooses to define 'race' (or 'subspecies'). No realistic definition can avoid using qualitative terms, yet these invariably invite disagreement in their application: “a group of individuals in a species showing closer genetic relationships within the group than to members of other such groups”[3]; “essentially discontinuous sets of individuals”[4]; “conspecific populations that differ from each other morphologically”[5]; “genetically non-discrete (confluent) populational entities”[6]; “geographically circumscribed, genetically differentiated populations”[7]; or groups identified “by the usual criterion that most individuals of such populations can be allocated correctly by inspection.”[8] Compounding the confusion, still others employ the term 'race' in a way more akin to 'species' than to 'subspecies.’[9]

In response to questionable interpretations of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and to help ensure the evolutionary significance of populations deemed 'subspecies,' a set of criteria was outlined in the early 1990s by John C. Avise, R. Martin Ball, Jr.[10], Stephen J. O'Brien and Ernst

Mayr [11] which is as follows: "members of a subspecies would share a unique, geographic locale, a set of phylogenetically concordant phenotypic characters, and a unique natural history relative to other subdivisions of the species. Although subspecies are not reproductively isolated, they will normally be allopatric and exhibit recognizable phylogenetic partitioning." Furthermore, "evidence for phylogenetic distinction must normally come from the concordant distributions of multiple, independent genetically based traits." [12] This is known as the phylogeographic subspecies definition, and a review of recent conservation literature will show that these principles have gained wide acceptance.

[The Race FAQ](#)

Now we're seeing it's more like computer code. Maybe five genes regulate height. The first determines a loop; the second the chemicals involved; the third a stop point; the fourth a test; and the fifth regulates an increment to that test.

What a welcome change.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [race](#)

Why Ted Kaczynski was right about technology

Mar 6th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Ted Kaczynski, the convicted bomber who blew up dozens of technophilic professionals, was right about one thing: technology has its own agenda.

The technium is not, as most people think, a series of individual artifacts and gadgets for sale. Rather, Kaczynski, speaking as the Unabomber, argued that technology is a dynamic holistic system. It is not mere hardware; rather it is more akin to an organism. It is not inert, nor passive; rather the technium seeks and grabs resources for its own expansion. It is not merely the sum of human action, but in fact it transcends human actions and desires. I think Kaczynski was right about these claims.

In his own words the Unabomber says: "The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity."

I too argue that the technium is guided by "technical necessity." That is, baked into the nature of this vast complex of technological systems are self-serving aspects – technologies that enable more technology, and systems that preserve themselves — and also inherent biases that lead the technium in certain directions, outside of human desire. Kaczynski writes "modern technology is a unified system in which all parts are dependent on one another. You can't get rid of the 'bad' parts of technology and retain only the 'good' parts."

Kaczynski claims that civilization is the disease and not the cure. He wasn't the first to make this claim. Rants against the machine of civilization go back as far as Freud and beyond. But the assaults against industrial society speed up as industry sped up. Edward Abbey, the legendary wilderness activist, considered industrial civilization to be a "destroying juggernaut" wrecking both the planet and humans. Abbey did all he could personally to stop the juggernaut with monkey wrenching maneuvers – sabotaging logging equipment and so forth. Abbey was the iconic Earth Firster who inspired many fire throwing followers. The luddite theorist, Kirkpatrick Sale, who unlike Abbey, railed against the machine while living in a brownstone in Manhattan, refined the idea of "civilization as disease."

In 2008 John Zerzan published an anthology of contemporary readings focused on the theme "Against Civilization". Derrick Jensen penned a 1,500 word treatise on how and why to topple technological civilization, with hands-on suggestions of the ideal places to start – power and gas lines and the information infrastructure.

[KK](#)

I like the way this man approaches this topic. He's clearly intelligent. In my view, he is under-informed about history and the "civilization life cycle" as reflected in [Plato's Republic](#).

You can read the full Unabomber manifesto [here](#).

First, I think "freedom" is overused in the manifesto and in this article. We don't want freedom; we want a sane civilization where what we need to do (a small set of events) is unobstructed, not "freedom" (where presumably an infinite set of events is unobstructed). Equally important to "freedom" is not to suffer at the hands of others, which means that it's more sensible than asking for freedom to ask for a consensus as to desired activities, and to form a civilization on that basis. If everyone is heading in roughly the same

direction, conflicts will not occur.

Second, I think he is throwing out the baby with the bathwater when he describes Civilization as the problem. Plato's approach is more mature: like us, each civilization has a life cycle. When it's young and healthy, it is a meritocracy made multi-generational via a feudal caste system and aristocracy. When it's old, and tired, it makes its decisions via democracy, and thus becomes so dramatic tyranny comes about.

Technology just aids this process. Blaming technology itself for mankind's use of it is to forget that the real problem is a lack of human organization, and a different kind of cancer: the illusion that we can all do whatever we want and still have a functioning collective — because civilization is inherently collective, every civilization, every time.

But that's an unpopular truth.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Italy and Israel reserve right to defend against parasites

Mar 6th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Italy said Thursday it is pulling out of a U.N. conference on racism — the latest blow to a meeting seen by many Western governments as marred by Muslim attempts to attack Israel and shield Islam from criticism.

Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said Italy has withdrawn its delegation from the preparatory negotiations ahead of the so-called Durban II conference due to “aggressive and anti-Semitic statements” in the draft of the event’s final document.

[AP](#)

Italy and Israel are both tired of being called the bad guy when they defend themselves against parasites in their midst.

In Israel, a first-world country (Israel) rose out of the ashes of Palestine. Now the dumber and less technological third-world Arab population wants to politically fight Israel. The correct solution, as Israel is finding out, is the National Socialist solution: one state, one people. Israel are the inheritors of Hitler, but paradoxically, that inheritance will prevent future racism and racial antagonism. Racism, in other words, is a product of the multi-ethnic state (“globalism”).

In Italy, hordes of dumber and less technological immigrants from Africa and the middle east have infiltrated a mostly-first-world society, with bad results. The Italians are pissed and want them out, but the rest of the world screams, “wacism! wacism!”

So they’re joining with nearby allies to resolve this debate that has lain stagnant since 1945, since everyone is afraid of being the next Hitler. But with Hitler’s most poignant victims even seeing how correct ethno-nationalism, which predated Hitler by thousands of years, is as a social order, that could soon change.

And it’s about time. Our politics have been stagnant and ineffective because of speech taboos for too long.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [race](#)

If TV promotes violence, censor TV

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Humans have such big brains we get lost in thought, and the truth staring us in the face gets missed.

I've commented on [censorship](#) before, and how it's a social taboo to advocate it, but every nation does it, and every person would censor at least one thing (child pornography, nuclear bomb instructions, SSNs of all citizens). I think it can be a useful tool, but our society fears it mainly because it might interfere with someone somewhere making a buck off our decline:

Cartoon favourites such as Scooby Doo and Pokemon can increase aggression among children because they feature high levels of violence, a controversial study claimed today.

Researchers found although the programmes are aimed at youngsters they contain significantly more brutality than TV programmes intended for general audiences.

Although the violence is in animated 'fantasy' form, it can have a similar effect on children's behaviour as 'actual' screen violence since youngsters still identify with characters and copy them, the study warned.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Why are we afraid to admit these are destructive and that a smart society would throw them into the dustbin?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [censorship](#)

Belief in more than the self makes life less neurotic

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Believing in God can help block anxiety and minimize stress, according to new University of Toronto research that shows distinct brain differences between believers and non-believers.

Compared to non-believers, the religious participants showed significantly less activity in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), a portion of the brain that helps modify behavior by signaling when attention and control are needed, usually as a result of some anxiety-producing event like making a mistake. The stronger their religious zeal and the more they believed in God, the less their ACC fired in response to their own errors, and the fewer errors they made.

"We found that religious people or even people who simply believe in the existence of God show significantly less brain activity in relation to their own errors. They're much less anxious and feel less stressed when they have made an error."

[Science Daily](#)

If you believe in something larger than yourself, whether God, a forest, or National Socialism, you'll find yourself at greater peace. You are one part of many. You are not responsible for your errors, or for your successes; you guide yourself toward them but they are ultimately all the works of whatever you believe in.

If you succeed, or if you fail, the bigger order carries on. You derive your sense of identity from being part of it, not being some self-styled individualist.

As a result, errors don't bother you. Just keep moving forward. Do what is sensible according to the order, and you'll find life makes sense.

In contrast, the individualist is neurotic and defensive, because they have nothing to believe in but themselves, as if they were individual worlds that ended completely when debunked by a single error.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [individualism](#)

Soft drinks full of Bisphenol-A

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The estrogen-mimicking chemical BPA, already banished from baby bottles and frowned upon in water jugs, has now shown up in significant levels in soft drinks.

Tests by Health Canada scientists revealed the highest levels were in energy drinks, the often caffeine-loaded beverages that have become popular with teenagers seeking a buzz and athletes chasing a quick pick-me-up. But the study also found the controversial compound in a wide variety of ginger ales, diet colas, root beers and citrus-flavoured sodas.

Bisphenol A was detected in 96 per cent of soft drinks tested, in quantities below regulatory limits. But a growing body of science suggests the chemical may have harmful effects at levels far below those limits.

[The Globe and Mail](#)

People are going to want to blame either capitalism (if they're on the left) or the Nanny State (if they're on the right) for this.

However, I think we should blame something more fundamental:

Inattention.

As I'm fond of saying around here, "The problem is us." You can blame the government — but it's made of humans. You can blame dictators and politicians, but someone put them in power by listening to their lies. You can blame the media, or large corporations, but who buys their products?

Yes: us.

Our inattention is what lets us think that companies selling one cent of bottled sugar water for \$1.50 are going to turn out to be anything but a gathering place for mental rapists and greedy thieves.

I mean: come on now. This is reality. It's not unnatural just because it wears a suit, types in 1200 DPI memos, and speaks with a New York accent. It's still a goddamn predator, but we made the predator.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [realism](#)

Obama Not Giving Up Executive Reins

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

As a Senate committee debated yesterday whether to create a “truth commission” to investigate alleged abuses of White House authority during the Bush era, President Obama has quietly adopted some of his predecessor’s expansive views of the power as commander in chief – especially concerning antiterrorism policies.

Those moves could lead to a confrontation over the scope of presidential authority with the Democratic-led Congress, whose leaders say they intend to recalibrate the balance of power between Congress and the White House. Some top Democrats, Obama allies, and civil libertarians say they are closely watching how the new president uses his power, and intend to challenge him if he does not voluntarily roll it back to pre-Bush limits.

[\[link\]](#)

Bush Jr. may have expanded executive power under his administration and been smug about it, earning the ire of the liberal left. But did you think once elected, Obama’s first course of action would be returning a more normal balance of power per the Constitution? Of course not – he’s using that power just as any newly elected leader would. Oops – this isn’t an iPod commercial anymore; this is the real thing.

Republicans got into power in the late 90s and early 2000’s and end up with infighting and a go-nowhere approach to politics. Democrats got into power in 2008 and 2009, and the same thing happens. When are we going to finally realize that both parties are the same group of politicians spinning their wheels on Capitol Hill?

We don’t need a “truth commission” to rein in some of the executive authority granted to – well, himself – by Bush. We simply need to move forward with an approach that stems from the Constitution: “Do you have the power, as the head of the executive branch of government, under the Constitution to do that? No? Well then you can’t do it. And if you do, our Court system will ensure you’re stopped.” When our society was filled with wise leaders who were elected based on a shared values system of the people, this worked very well. When you elect any old goon into office because he sounds good, you realize when in office that he’s like a game show host without a producer or director but merely a stage: drunk with power and losing focus quickly.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#)

Cue the false outrage

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We see these stories so much they're a cliché:

Jo-Ann Fabric and Crafts, the sewing and scrapbooking mega-chain with several locations in the Washington area, opted not to carry the sordid edition — a little “too hot” for Jo-Ann is what Lipinski says his distributor told him. Phone calls to Darrell Webb, chief executive of Jo-Ann, and Lisa Greb, public relations director, were not returned. “Good grief! What year is this???”

Get with the dominant illusion here, folks. To avoid noticing that our species still faces the same problems it did 5,000 years ago, and avoid facing that most of us lead disorganized, neurotic lives, we have to find an enemy. Government or big stores are to blame; they're censoring us! It's 2009, we should have the right to see anything we want any time! Cue the mock outrage. Cue the righteous indignation. Cue the feeling important because now you've going a fight for a universal, absolute, God-or-unGod-given thing, the right to see whatever risqué images are there. Right?

What is this quality art?

Behold, seven straight pages of shocking quilts. We're talking fabric phalluses. Gun-toting Jesuses. A newborn peering out from his mother's lady parts (constructed out of lots of soft, embroidered orange cloth).

Some of the images are disturbing — and moving — like quilter Gwen Magee's “Southern Heritage/Southern Shame,” which depicts five lynching victims hanging in front of a Confederate flag.

Others are whimsical. Consider “Helping Hands,” a Charlottesville quilter's ode to Viagra. The work was inspired by a present from a friend: “A fat quarter of fabrics with all these itty-bitty penises and sperm,” says Mary Beth Bellah, describing the pile of remnants with delight.

[WAPO](#)

That sounds essential. It will enhance us culturally. It must be important. It's groundbreaking. Do we have enough clichés yet?

These quilts are crap. The artists lacked a real concept, so they make the offensive/tear-jerking/weird and hoped that no one would notice.

What kind of well-balanced person wants to deal with this crap? In the meantime, the publisher is ejaculating mock outrage because he planned the whole thing as a publicity stunt in the first place.

No kidding, Sherlock — family stores don't want disturbing imagery. They leave it up to the family to decide when to expose itself to shocking imagery, and they don't sell it. But you won't be happy until every store on earth is selling images of phalluses and death, will you?

What an idiot.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

Smarter people socialize less

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Hypothesis: smarter people spend more time on improving competence than socialization, believing that socialization is a means to the end of accomplishing collective tasks and not necessarily worth doing as an activity for its own sake. However, over time smarter people learn socialization is a form of communication and not an activity, and can address it in that context.

From my observations, the following dating challenges seem to be common to most smart people. In fact, the smarter you are, the more clueless you will be, and the more problems you're going to have in your dating life. Once upon a day I used to be pretty smart, and believe me, I had a lock on clueless.

For simple things, it takes someone smart to really screw it up.

1. Smart people spent more time on achievements than on relationships when growing up.

(Translation: you're geared toward results, not making people feel good.)

2. Smart people feel that they're entitled to love because of their achievements.

(Translation: you think others will love you for your achievements.)

3. You don't feel like a fully-realized sexual being, and therefore don't act like one.

(Translation: you're inexperienced in sex, and looking for more than just sexual attraction.)

4. You're exceptionally talented at getting in the way of your own romantic success.

(Translation: you overthink something that does not reward analysis; it's biological and innate.)

5. By virtue (or vice) of being smart, you eliminate most of the planet's inhabitants as a dating prospect

(Translation: you're trying to meet that rare needle in a haystack smart person.)

[HuffPost](#)

Like most people marketing books on relationships, Dr. Benzer is really writing about sex, but he hits on some vital difficulties for smart people: finding other smart people, recognizing the personality and not the role, and then not overthinking the process of attraction.

But what he fails to realize is that for smart people, attraction is presupposed to lead to something else: a longer-term commitment, probably marriage and family. Why else would you bother? To someone with intelligence and achievements, sex alone isn't pleasurable enough to be a motivator.

One of the biggest problems our society faces is that the smart people are in the minority, and they find it increasingly hard to find and connect with mates during their years of fertility.

As one analyst writes:

Any endogamous population will produce a few relatively smart people, a few relatively dull people, and mostly inbetweens. If you want more smart people, and for the dull people to be less dull (the two changes go together), there is only one way to do it: raise the average. For

any trait whose variance is largely the result of many genes, the only way to change it is to change the level of the average person.

[EL](#)

What he/she is talking about here is the standard distribution: "mostly inbetweens," a few smart and a few dull.

The distribution occurs modally, or relative to a starting point; if that starting point ("average") is higher, the dulls are less dull and the smarts and inbetweens are smarter.

The only way to raise that average is to create more of the smart and to nurture them toward positions of importance, so others emulate them and want to adopt their traits.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

The biology layer scares us

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Underneath all that we do to convince ourselves we are in control, there's a lurking spectre of biological determinism. What if we aren't our own inventions, but our acts are determined by a kind of fate in our DNA? What if we're just fooling ourselves with our justifications, emotions like love or hate, etc. and are just reacting like animals?

It's a big taboo because it means, among other things, that nature has already sorted us. We cannot be anything we desire. We cannot mould ourselves into whatever we want to be. Makeup does not hide the inner self. And that means "freedom" is a lie — we cannot enjoy what we biologically cannot take advantage of.

THERE was a time when we thought humans were special in so many ways. Now we know better. We are not the only species that feels emotions, empathises with others or abides by a moral code. Neither are we the only ones with personalities, cultures and the ability to design and use tools. Yet we have steadfastly clung to the notion that one attribute, at least, makes us unique: we alone have the capacity for language.

The fact that we can interpret ape gestures also suggests that there is a shared evolutionary basis for gesticulation in humans and other primates. The innate similarities were demonstrated by Joanna Blake from York University in Toronto, Canada, who examined the literature on the gestures of human infants aged between 9 and 15 months and that on gestures by apes of various ages. She found that both human babies and apes use similar gestures to make requests, such as extending a hand to beg for food and raising both arms to be picked up and carried. Both use their whole hand to point. Infants and apes alike make the same gestures of protest, pushing someone away or turning away themselves while shaking their heads.

Dolphin calves also pass through a babbling phase. Laurance Doyle from the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, Brenda McCowan from the University of California at Davis and their colleagues analysed the complexity of baby dolphin sounds and found it looked remarkably like that of babbling infants, in that the young dolphins had a much wider repertoire of sound than adults.

[New Scientist](#)

In other words, we're just like other species, just a little smarter. The "human" traits we thought we had alone are animal traits, but we've taken them farther thanks to our intelligence. In fact, our intelligence is all that separates us from mice, but obviously, we haven't gotten that far — things are a mess and most people are completely in denial.

Just like [a mother's experiences are passed on to her children](#), we find that other experiences physically change us — alter our biology:

Child abuse can indelibly mark and alter genes in its young victims leaving them less able to cope with stress later in life, according to new Canadian research.

A Montreal team has discovered large numbers of "chemical marks," which inhibit a key mechanism for dealing with stress, in the brains of young men who were physically or sexually abused as children and later committed suicide.

"It's almost as if there is an imprint left," says Michael Meaney at McGill University, who heads the team that has already toppled many views of how early experience effects behaviour and genes.

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

Experience can shape our biology, but that's only highly traumatic or intense experience, not picking a course from a catalogue, a product from a shelf, or going to a different kind of meeting. Going beyond that level scares us, which is why modern people tend to retreat into their comfort zones and become atomized, insular.

Imagine if you could choose your baby the same way you pick out a new outfit from a catalogue. Perhaps some blue eyes, a bit of curly hair, and why not make her tall, lean and smart? One fertility doctor now says that he may be able to deliver.

Dr. Jeffrey Steinberg has already helped thousands of couples choose their child's gender at his fertility institutes in Manhattan and Los Angeles. Within six months, he says, the clinic will offer a new service: allowing couples to select the physical traits of their babies.

According to Steinberg, the technology behind genetic screening has progressed to the point where parents can almost custom-design their babies.

[ABC](#)

We are just collections of traits. And now, we can edit those. But do we have the wisdom to do so effectively? Probably not, since we didn't develop any higher traits already.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Signs your civilization is failing

Mar 5th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

If someone mentions one detail, it's easy to ignore because there's no context.

When the data points build up, most people freak out, because the truth becomes obvious but they're programmed not to see it.

Here's a few points of interest:

At the most recent meeting of the Blacktown Liquor Accord, local pubs and clubs voted to erect signs at watering holes, advising patrons they must not wear colours "depicting them as being a member of any group".

Spokesman Neil Vaughan says the move will stop local street gangs and motorcycle clubs identifying each other when they are having a drink.

Gang colours were made notorious in the 1970s by two major Los Angeles street gangs, the Bloods and the Crips, who wore red and blue respectively.

[ABC](#)

Remember when gangs were just an American problem? Now they've got them in Scandinavia. Is this "progress" or degeneration?

"The idea that you have too much debt, too much borrowing and too much consumption and you're going to solve that problem with more debt, more consumption and more borrowing? These people are nuts."

"Power is shifting now from the money shifters, the guys who trade paper and money, to people who produce real goods. What you should do is become a farmer, or start a farming network," Rogers said.

[CNBC](#)

In his book [American Theocracy](#), Kevin Phillips points out that the money shifters are a symptom of end-stage civilizations. When they're young, it's agriculture and manufacturing; as they get older, it's desk jobs that involve reshuffling finance and inventing marketing memes that are ineffective on the populations that replace them.

Coincidentally, this jives with what Plato tells us about the end stages of democracy: everyone drifts so far from reality that they start selling each other repackaged garbage and no one notices, because they're all so drugged on how "unique" they are, they're oblivious to reality itself.

Finally, our infrastructure has hit the fan:

The economic decline is continuing to ravage the nation's hospitals, with half of them operating in the red and many planning service and staffing cuts, two new reports show.

Hospitals are ailing because of a number of problems hitting in close succession. First, hospitals' investment incomes plummeted — like everybody's — eliminating a cushion for operating budgets and curtailing capital spending.

Then, the mix of patients began to shift: Paying admissions declined as people put off elective

procedures and insurers tightened their grip on the length of hospital stays they covered. And the number of patients without insurance or the means to pay their part of the bill began to rise.

An unprecedented 50% of the nation's hospitals appear to be losing money, according to an analysis of government and proprietary data that Thomson Reuters is set to release today.

[LAT](#)

So it's the economic decline, is it? The reporter glibly mentions it and then follows it with a list of symptoms designed to conceal the real problem, which gets mentioned offhandedly: "the number of patients without insurance or the means to pay their part of the bill began to rise."

This means, as in the economy as a whole, we've replaced the responsible and competent with the irresponsible and dissolute. Sound like a solid, shining future to you?

One angry American offers some words of sense:

President and owner of Great Bay Facility Services, Kimball's sign now displays a message to southbound drivers reading, "Let's all stop paying our mortgages."

"Most of us live by the rules. We pay our mortgages, and sometimes it's difficult, but we do it," he said. "We, the guys who follow the rules, shouldn't be subsidizing those who don't."

"We'll be passing on all this debt to our children and grandchildren, and maybe beyond."

"I think we have serious things coming," said Kimball, who is adopting a survivalist mentality by adding generators at his home and planning for worst case scenarios.

"Our enemies see us as weak and they are going to test us," he said.

[SeaCoast](#)

This populist sentiment reflects an uneasiness by the responsible about the rising tide of irresponsible people who, in keeping with their lack of responsibility, expect the responsible to pay for them.

Could this be a big source of our decline? Let's see. The irresponsible triumphed in France, and took it from being a leading world power to a backwater of no future military victory; they also overthrew the Russian leadership and turned that nation into a third-world disaster. In Athens, they took the seat of culture and so thoroughly destroyed it that it was lost to history for centuries. In Rome, they so weakened a great republic that disorganized bands of Vandals were able to destroy it.

Might there be a pattern here? Your mainstream media says no. Your friends say no. Your large corporations say no. But you know that people speak only of what pleases them and benefits them, ignoring long-term systemic consequences. So why would you trust these people?

The United Nations warned that two-thirds of the world's population will face a lack of water in less than 20 years if current trends in climate change, population growth, rural to urban migration and consumption continue.

Speaking at a high-level symposium on water security here on Thursday, UN Dy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro stressed that "if present trends continue, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with water scarcity by 2025, and two-thirds of the world population could be subject to water stress."

"The lack of safe water and sanitation is inextricably linked with poverty and malnutrition, particularly among the world's poor," Migiro said at the two-day meeting organised by the World Water Organisation (WWO).

[Nuprana](#)

Yet we've missed noticing big problems like water shortages, global warming, etc. How? Their root is in overpopulation. Addressing overpopulation means we need to tell some people they cannot breed. That means we in turn may be told we cannot breed, as individuals. That scares individuals so much they'd rather commit collective suicide than face individual disappointment.

How disappointing of the species.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#)

Diversity doesn't work, organic societies do

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The black nationalism that is now the dominant ideology of the council was on proud display, both at the table and in the audience.

Speakers advocating for the deal were taunted by the crowd and cut short by Council President Monica Conyers, who presided over the hearing like an angry bulldog; whites were advised by the citizens to, "Go home."

Opponents were allowed to rant and ramble on uninterrupted about "those people" who want to steal Detroit's assets and profit from the city's labors.

Juxtapose the place and the faces and imagine a white Livonia City Council treating a black union representative with such overt racial hostility. The Justice Department would swoop down like a hawk, and the Rev. Al Sharpton would clog Five Mile Road with protesters.

[Detroit News](#)

Black folk want their leaders to be black folk. Is that unreasonable?

The problem here isn't Conyers or black people; it's multiculturalism. It doesn't work.

The Israelis are discovering this:

One of the more disturbing developments in the Middle East is a growing consensus among Israelis that it would be acceptable to expel — in the words of advocates "transfer" — its Arab citizens to either a yet to be formed Palestinian state or the neighboring countries of Jordan and Egypt.

But "transfer" is no longer the exclusive policy of extremists, as it has increasingly become a part of mainstream political dialogue. "My solution for maintaining a Jewish and democratic state of Israel is to have two nation-states with certain concessions and with clear red lines," Kadima leader and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told a group of Tel Aviv high school students last December, "and among other things, I will be able to approach the Palestinian residents of Israel, those whom we call Israeli Arabs, and tell them, 'your national solution lies elsewhere.'"

- * Some 55 percent of Jewish Israelis say that the state should encourage Arab emigration;

- * 78 percent of Jewish Israelis oppose including Arab parties in the government;

- * 56 percent agree with the statement that "Arabs cannot attain the Jewish level of cultural development";

- * 75 percent agree that Arabs are inclined to be violent. Among Arab-Israelis, 54 percent feel the same way about Jews.

- * 75 percent of Israeli Jews say they would not live in the same building as Arabs.

[AlterNet](#)

If you're going to make a nation to preserve the Jewish people and culture, you want to have only Jews in it.

Otherwise, some silly young person marries outside the fold, and then those genes get enfolded into the group, and when this happens enough, the group becomes a generic mix of humanity — it's no longer Jewish.

Enough competing ideologies and people get sick of the decision and turn their backs on Judaism.

When culture becomes mixed, there is no dominant strain, and so people get confused and who rushes in to re-educate them? Marketers. They hate culture because it handles needs with learned practices, not products. Culture is bad marketing. Marketing is bad culture. But it's what replaces culture in mixed culture states. Just look at the USA.

What works better than mixed-culture/mixed-race ("diverse" or "multicultural") states? Organic states: one language, one set of values, one culture, one heritage.

We feel more altruistic to those who resemble us because in the past our early ancestors assumed that they were related, according to the study.

The study, published in *Biology Letters*, even found that we were more naturally drawn to people who looked like us than our own relatives, if the resemblance was strong enough.

The researchers came to the conclusion after a study of 70 identical adult twins who, although genetically the same, had over the years grown to look different from each other.

Then they manipulated the photographs of the participants by digitally mixing them with a model's face so that the images would either resemble them or their co-twin.

In each case, the person most resembling themselves was preferred almost two thirds of the time – significantly higher than being down to chance alone.

[The Telegraph](#)

Nature may seem random at times, but traits evolve over thousands or millions of iteration, so they're not random. In fact, they're behaviors that were reinforced every generation. So this behavior is logical — why?

For the reason we mention above: for society to work, it has to have a strong collective identity. It also needs to be roughly equal in terms of ability, or resentment rises and revolution threatens.

These are common sense ideas, but they're taboo in today's society. Why? Could it be that [our civilization is failing and we're in denial?](#)

Diversity continues to fail:

A \$950,000 earmark for a Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the omnibus spending bill that passed the U.S. House Wednesday has drawn the ire of U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa.

The Iowa Republican called the National Council of La Raza a "pro-amnesty organization" and said "the last thing Congress should be doing is handing out cash to apologists for immigration law breakers."

"American taxpayers do not support La Raza's agenda or its position in support of amnesty for illegal aliens," King said in a statement.

[Iowa Independent](#)

La Raza is Spanish for "the race/nation," an older usage of the term nation related to the English word *race*. It is not "The People" as commonly translated: that's *la gente*, but you will not see this mentioned in the mainstream media.

Mexicans want their own culture, too. If economic forces make it sensible for them to move to the USA, they will do so, but they don't want to lose ethnic-cultural (ethnocultural) identity. So they cling to it, at the expense of the [unity of the USA](#).

A better solution is the organic state: one nation, one people, one set of values and customs. Yet this remains unpopular because we're all afraid that it will mean we face more obligations and restrictions. What if they decide to send the Irish back to Ireland? I'm half-Irish, and now I'm afraid.

The truth is always unpopular because it involves mention of how small, fragile, [out of control](#) and inconsequential we are as individuals. Nations die because they cannot face the unpopular truth.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Where the Republicans have gone wrong

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The GOP's diminishing influence – clearly demonstrated by its greatly-reduced power in Washington – is the result of Republicans ignoring their traditional White European American base of support, while pursuing the traditional Democratic support base of non-White minorities. According to the PEW Research Center, White Americans will be a minority in the U.S. population by 2042. Instead of advocating and enacting policies that would prevent the decline of America's white population, the Republicans have decided to embrace the fateful change that has been underway since 1965, and has elevated Michael Steele to the Republican Party chairmanship.

In addition to electing leaders who disagree with the traditional party platform, the Republican response to their 2008 debacle was an embarrassing attempt to beat the Democrats at their own game by tapping Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal to deliver the Republican response to Obama's State of the Union Address. It was an ineffective, even comical attempt by the GOP to show that it, too, is racially diverse. It seems the Republicans are trying to recreate themselves in the image of the Democratic Party's notion of "diversity" by matching the Democrats minority-for-minority. But as recent history has proved, Republican efforts to reach out to minorities have not only been fruitless, but have also irritated an already disappointed base.

In 2008, with a minority at the top of the ticket, the Democrats received an even larger portion of the vote from its younger, expanding base. According to CNN, "The only age group where McCain prevailed was 65 and over, and that by just a 10-percentage-point margin, 54 percent to 44 percent, the exit polls showed. And minorities went heavily into the Obama camp. Blacks, 96 percent Obama to 3 percent McCain; Latinos, 67 percent Obama to 30 percent McCain; and Asians, 63 percent Obama to 34 percent McCain". The traditional Republican base is declining not just proportionately from an increase in the minority population, but also quantitatively from age. The decreasing Republican membership is reflecting the population trend that shows the numerical decline in the white birth rate. Since the GOP has been the traditional political-cultural home for white people, it follows that with fewer white people entering the human race, then there will be fewer white people in the Republican Party.

[John Tait](#)

While I agree with this assessment, I think it's only partially complete. The GOP is facing what all nations entering their later years face: the replacement of an original, vital population with a rising tide of disillusioned underachievers and imported labor.

This is how Athens faded into obscurity, as well as Rome.

The GOP, if it wants to survive, needs to appeal to the white middle class. It will not do this by chasing cheesy, obvious compromises like running minority candidates, making abortion a pivotal issue, or appealing to our fears of terrorism. The GOP has gotten fat and lazy and the results show it.

Rather, they need to get serious about conservation, as conservatives once were, and start talking hard realities about making America prepared for the future. And yes, they also need to tackle race: most Americans who are responsible, middle-class people don't wish ill to other races, but they want to live near people like them. That means not just white, but Western European in descent, with traditional values although they will not necessarily be Christian or conservative.

2008's election should show the GOP that their strategies and even their approach to formulating strategy are ineffective and need to be replaced.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Blame in the wrong places

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Joschka Fischer, the former German vice-chancellor, has issued a bleak assessment of Europe's prospects for surviving the financial crisis, warning that leaders of a "self-weakening" continent are failing to come to grips with its decline.

"Modern capitalism is based on a global ponzi scheme," he said. "There is no quick fix to this very severe crisis. It will transform global reality in a similar way as the collapse of the Soviet Union transformed the global system 20 years ago."

Global power was shifting from West to East, "and it's completely short-sighted to believe that other powers will look after our interests", Mr Fischer said in a speech to the London School of Economics.

As Eastern EU economies crumbled, "there is a serious question mark: whether richer European economies understand that they must contribute to the refinancing of those economies. Otherwise, enlargement is in danger... [and] we will invite other powers to play games in a very unstable and insecure situation. I'm not talking just about the economy, but about peace and insecurity on the European continent."

[The Telegraph](#)

He's right about so much and wrong about the rest, especially the solutions.

First, this is a recession, not a complete failure of the capitalist system. Capitalism acts as it always has, but when you pile enough restrictions, government programs, etc. into it, it is much less consistent. Periodically it re-adjusts to make value more closely match reality. We all knew American consumers had a giant debt bomb waiting for us; why are we surprised when it explodes?

Second, capitalism is not my favorite value system because the idea of "if it makes money, it's good" is misplaced social darwinism. There needs to be some value system that guides society at large, and to whose end capitalism serves, otherwise it becomes people with a pretense of freedom indulging an ethic of convenience. America has become more of a giant open-air mall since the Clinton years.

Third, it was a leftist program of lending to minorities that created this mess; lending to more impoverished populations in the east won't help.

Fourth, what's killing Europe is not capitalism. It's general civilization decline as described by Plato in *The Republic*. That's a bigger topic than can be handled here.

He's right the economy is a Ponzi scheme. This is why usury used to be considered a sin. But the solution is not to try to bundle east and western Europe together — it's to get serious about our society, kick out what failed and plunge ahead with what will succeed. And that's not a soundbite-able statement.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

It never ends...

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A pupil walked out of school in protest at the novel To Kill A Mockingbird, describing it as "racially offensive".

Tinashe Makunike – the only black student in his class – says he felt uncomfortable at the use of racist language by characters in the GCSE set text.

He quit lessons at Holy Family College in Heywood, Rochdale, after a drama company acted out scenes from the text using the word 'n*****'.

He had already complained about studying it and his requests to read an alternative text were refused.

[LEP](#)

When you give people victimhood, you encourage them to blame others, in case the victims fail.

They will use this passive aggression again and again, in an ever-tightening spiral, until they shake your society apart.

Furthermore, by rewriting history and science, and claiming there are no biological/evolutionary/genetic differences between the races (there are) and that Africans were enslaved out of cruelty and not because they were a population for sale to the highest bidder as the continent wrestled with its endemic third-world poverty, we are setting ourselves up for an ever-widening circle of what we censor.

This is why all "diverse" (multicultural) societies inevitably give way to instability, which paves the way for tyranny.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#) · [race](#)

The real threat to our environment: the poor and clueless

Mar 4th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

There's a lot of wailing out there about how much of our resources we use here in the USA. While I agree that's true, and most people here are a waste of time, it's stupid for us to equate this with the classic "the rich are the devil" argument made by those irresponsible masses who have nothing and so hate those whose ancestors or selves got responsible enough to have something.

It's too glib and easy to unite the have-nots and neurotic sort-of-haves (the urban middle class, who have enough to live opulently but not enough to live well in the areas that really count: education, land ownership, medical care and retirement). They love to blame the rich, ignoring the fact that most people with money got that way by being good at something. Otherwise, we'd all be rich, right?

Sure, some are accidental, and some are inheritors from lines blighted by admixture with strippers and showgirls (certain heiresses known for sex tapes come to mind). But most people who are what the common man calls "rich," or the 1/5 of our population whose households make over \$140,000 per year — which is the bare minimum at which you can afford good medical care, private schools, etc — got that way by having brains and working hard.

So in order to create this fiction where the rich are our misfortune, we create the sainted poor who have no environmental consequence. Wrong. They tend to be the ones using slash and burn agriculture; they're the ones breeding out of control (the rich breed below replacement rates); they're the ones stimulating population growth through emigration; they're the ones with low IQs.

And, they're the ones adopting some of our most destructive technologies:

Six in 10 people around the world now have cell phone subscriptions, signaling that mobile phones are the communications technology of choice, particularly in poor countries, according to a U.N. report published Monday.

By the end of last year there were an estimated 4.1 billion subscriptions globally, compared with about 1 billion in 2002, the International Telecommunication Union said.

[AP](#)

That's a lot of cell phones and batteries that are going to end up burned in campfires or thrown out with the goat skulls and canteloupe rinds. The poor don't have time, the brains or the moral compass to worry about recycling. They're busy being poor, overpopulating the world, and practicing slash and burn agriculture.

Now, as much as I detest blaming the rich, I also detest blaming the poor — they just do what they always do. Smart species find a way to get over their pretense — "While all you care about is earning money, I am christlike and want to help those who cannot help themselves" — and limit their populations to the smart and upwardly-mobile. Meritocracy = Aristocracy.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [eugenics](#)

The naturalistic fallacy

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The naturalistic fallacy is assuming that because something is a certain way, there's a divine or inherent order which says that's the right way to do things.

Obviously, it's retarded; idiots on the left use it to argue against anyone who says "the natural way is to..." in any argument. What it really combats however is the inertia that says, welp, things turned out that way, so it must be right.

Here's a good attack on it as well:

A leading American scholar of biology, Prof Francisco Ayala, plans to tell the conference that the so-called theory of intelligent design, proposed by Creationists, is flawed.

"The design of organisms is not what would be expected from an intelligent engineer, but imperfect and worse," he said.

"Defects, dysfunctions, oddities, waste and cruelty pervade the living world".

[BBC](#)

Ayala's kind of an idiot in that he assumes that precludes intelligence behind the design of our natural world, including natural selection. The most perfect system may be an imperfect system, because then, as Thomas Pynchon reminds us, it may not fall into a state of entropy derived through equality of all possible options.

Our world is perfect because it is imperfect, because that imperfection enables it to be an ongoing cycle and not a static state that will rapidly decay. Good and evil are both necessary for life, but that doesn't mean (if you want to survive) that you stop fighting evil for one goddamned minute.

A Vatican cardinal said Tuesday that the Catholic Church does not stand in the way of scientific realities like evolution, though he described as "absurd" the atheist notion that evolution proves there is no God.

"We believe that however creation has come about and evolved, ultimately God is the creator of all things," he said.

He said that while the Vatican did not exclude any area of science, it did reject as "absurd" the atheist notion of biologist and author Richard Dawkins and others that evolution proves there is no God.

[MSN](#)

He's right. It is absurd. Evolution is a mechanism, not a cause. What is the cause? Well, science cannot tell us yet. So atheism is an untenable position (the idea that you can linearly "prove" a prismatic order is in itself ludicrous, but most outspoken atheists are angry, destructive loudmouths). Agnosticism, sure. Religion? Those religions that claim God is the world don't seem to bother me. In fact, I think we'd all do better if we believed in something larger than ourselves, and for best results, something wholly abstract and unprovable.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

How to save Detroit from itself

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We don't know how it works now, but when we lived in the ghetto a girl's best career path was promiscuity. She got more money with each child she had...provided, of course, that the father didn't take responsibility for it. Then, the child grew up...took drugs and stole cars...until he got sent to prison. One problem led to another – but it could all be traced to the government's giveaways. They had the same effect in Baltimore as they had in Burkina Faso. The political elite took the money and lined their pockets...the masses become more miserable than before. And the worse conditions got, the more money the cities received from federal bailout programs.

And now Obama is proposing to make things worse. More bailouts...more giveaways...more programs...more bureaucrats... Already, the 'rich' support whole sections of the population. Obama says he will raise taxes on 'the rich,' creating even more parasites. Of course, who cares if the rich have less money? They will still live in their leafy suburbs and send their children to private schools. But pity the poor parasites.

Abolish all welfare of all sorts...no unemployment insurance...no child tax credits...no welfare...no foodstamps...no nothing, except privately-sponsored charities. Close the public schools. Kick out all the bureaucrats and all federal and state employees. Abolish all rules concerning employment – no minimum wages, no overtime, discriminate all you want. Require all residents to say please and thank you...dress properly...and sneer at people who don't seem to be gainfully employed or polite.

[The Daily Reckoning](#)

My libertarian side says that if we just enforce Social Darwinism as he suggests, things will turn out OK. The side of me that has read history knows that if we want to avoid long-term problems we must (a) ensure we have good leadership and (b) filter our population to remove the incompetents, criminals, perverts, idiots, and passive-aggressive types. These two sides aren't really at war with each other: both are required. Social Darwinism to reward the good, and eternal moral vigilance to drive away parasites and keep power in the hands of the meritocratic elite.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

The Simple Art of Murder

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

This is one of the most influential things I've ever read, and I was glad to find an etext of it. It argues for devoting moral attention to society, recognizing that most people are morons and parasites, and that the only way to have a non-failing society is to be constantly vigilant — and to reject Jesus and his ideas of loving your brother because he's your brother, and replacing that idea with "love your brothers who are not incompetent, corrupt or stupid." It's both a manifesto of a Nietzschean morality and a declaration of a need for eugenics in our flailing declining society:

Fiction in any form has always intended to be realistic. Old-fashioned novels which now seem stilted and artificial to the point of burlesque did not appear that way to the people who first read them. Writers like Fielding and Smollett could seem realistic in the modern sense because they dealt largely with uninhibited characters, many of whom were about two jumps ahead of the police, but Jane Austen's chronicles of highly inhibited people against a background of rural gentility seem real enough psychologically. There is plenty of that kind of social and emotional hypocrisy around today. Add to it a liberal dose of intellectual pretentiousness and you get the tone of the book page in your daily paper and the earnest and fatuous atmosphere breathed by discussion groups in little clubs. These are the people who make bestsellers, which are promotional jobs based on a sort of indirect snob-appeal, carefully escorted by the trained seals of the critical fraternity, and lovingly tended and watered by certain much too powerful pressure groups whose business is selling books, although they would like you to think they are fostering culture. Just get a little behind in your payments and you will find out how idealistic they are.

The detective story for a variety of reasons can seldom be promoted. It is usually about murder and hence lacks the element of uplift. Murder, which is a frustration of the individual and hence a frustration of the race, may have, and in fact has, a good deal of sociological implication. But it has been going on too long for it to be news. If the mystery novel is at all realistic (which it very seldom is) it is written in a certain spirit of detachment; otherwise nobody but a psychopath would want to write it or read it. The murder novel has also a depressing way of minding its own business, solving its own problems and answering its own questions. There is nothing left to discuss, except whether it was well enough written to be good fiction, and the people who make up the half-million sales wouldn't know that anyway. The detection of quality in writing is difficult enough even for those who make a career of the job, without paying too much attention to the matter of advance sales.

The detective story (perhaps I had better call it that, since the English formula still dominates the trade) has to find its public by a slow process of distillation. That it does do this, and holds on thereafter with such tenacity, is a fact; the reasons for it are a study for more patient minds than mine. Nor is it any part of my thesis to maintain that it is a vital and significant form of art. There are no vital and significant forms of art; there is only art, and precious little of that. The growth of populations has in no way increased the amount; it has merely increased the adeptness with which substitutes can be produced and packaged.

Yet the detective story, even in its most conventional form, is difficult to write well. Good specimens of the art are much rarer than good serious novels. Rather second-rate items outlast most of the high velocity fiction, and a great many that should never have been born simply refuse to die at all. They are as durable as the statues in public parks and just about that dull. This is very annoying to people of what is called discernment. They do not like it that penetrating and important works of fiction of a few years back stand on their special shelf in the library marked "Best-Sellers of Yesteryear," and nobody goes near them but an occasional shortsighted customer who bends down, peers briefly and hurries away; while old ladies jostle each other at the mystery shelf to grab off some item of the same vintage with a title like The

Triple Petunia Murder Case, or Inspector Pinchbottle to the Rescue. They do not like it that "really important books" get dusty on the reprint counter, while *Death Wears Yellow Garters* is put out in editions of fifty or one hundred thousand copies on the news-stands of the country, and is obviously not there just to say goodbye.

To tell you the truth, I do not like it very much myself. In my less stilted moments I too write detective stories, and all this immortality makes just a little too much competition. Even Einstein couldn't get very far if three hundred treatises of the higher physics were published every year, and several thousand others in some form or other were hanging around in excellent condition, and being read too. Hemingway says somewhere that the good writer competes only with the dead. The good detective story writer (there must after all be a few) competes not only with all the unburied dead but with all the hosts of the living as well. And on almost equal terms; for it is one of the qualities of this kind of writing that the thing that makes people read it never goes out of style. The hero's tie may be a little off the mode and the good gray inspector may arrive in a dogcart instead of a streamlined sedan with siren screaming, but what he does when he gets there is the same old futzing around with timetables and bits of charred paper and who trampled the jolly old flowering arbutus under the library window.

I have, however, a less sordid interest in the matter. It seems to me that production of detective stories on so large a scale, and by writers whose immediate reward is small and whose need of critical praise is almost nil, would not be possible at all if the job took any talent. In that sense the raised eyebrow of the critic and the shoddy merchandizing of the publisher are perfectly logical. The average detective story is probably no worse than the average novel, but you never see the average novel. It doesn't get published. The average—or only slightly above average—detective story does. Not only is it published but it is sold in small quantities to rental libraries, and it is read. There are even a few optimists who buy it at the full retail price of two dollars, because it looks so fresh and new, and there is a picture of a corpse on the cover. And the strange thing is that this average, more than middling dull, pooped-out piece of utterly unreal and mechanical fiction is not terribly different from what are called the masterpieces of the art. It drags on a little more slowly, the dialogue is a little grayer, the cardboard out of which the characters are cut is a shade thinner, and the cheating is a little more obvious; but it is the same kind of book. Whereas the good novel is not at all the same kind of book as the bad novel. It is about entirely different things. But the good detective story and the bad detective story are about exactly the same things, and they are about them in very much the same way. There are reasons for this too, and reasons for the reasons; there always are.

I suppose the principal dilemma of the traditional or classic or straight-deductive or logic—and—deduction novel of detection is that for any approach to perfection it demands a combination of qualities not found in the same mind. The cool-headed constructionist does not also come across with lively characters, sharp dialogue, a sense of pace and an acute use of observed detail. The grim logician has as much atmosphere as a drawing-board. The scientific sleuth has a nice new shiny laboratory, but I'm sorry I can't remember the face. The fellow who can write you a vivid and colorful prose simply won't be bothered with the coolie labor of breaking down unbreakable alibis. The master of rare knowledge is living psychologically in the age of the hoop skirt. If you know all you should know about ceramics and Egyptian needlework, you don't know anything at all about the police. If you know that platinum won't melt under about 2800 degrees F. by itself, but will melt at the glance of a pair of deep blue eyes when put close to a bar of lead, then you don't know how men make love in the twentieth century. And if you know enough about the elegant flânerie of the pre-war French Riviera to lay your story in that locale, you don't know that a couple of capsules of barbitol small enough to be swallowed will not only not kill a man—they will not even put him to sleep, if he fights against them.

Every detective story writer makes mistakes, and none will ever know as much as he should. Conan Doyle made mistakes which completely invalidated some of his stories, but he was a pioneer, and Sherlock Holmes after all is mostly an attitude and a few dozen lines of unforgettable dialogue. It is the ladies and gentlemen of what Mr. Howard Haycraft (in his book *Murder for Pleasure*) calls the Golden Age of detective fiction that really get me down. This age

is not remote. For Mr. Haycraft's purpose it starts after the first World War and lasts up to about 1930. For all practical purposes it is still here. Two-thirds or three-quarters of all the detective stories published still adhere to the formula the giants of this era created, perfected, polished and sold to the world as problems in logic and deduction. These are stern words, but be not alarmed. They are only words. Let us glance at one of the glories of the literature, an acknowledged masterpiece of the art of fooling the reader without cheating him. It is called *The Red House Mystery*, was written by A. A. Milne, and has been named by Alexander Woollcott (rather a fast man with a superlative) "one of the three best mystery stories of all time." Words of that size are not spoken lightly. The book was published in 1922, but is quite timeless, and might as easily have been published in July 1939, or, with a few slight changes, last week. It ran thirteen editions and seems to have been in print, in the original format, for about sixteen years. That happens to few books of any kind. It is an agreeable book, light, amusing in the *Punch* style, written with a deceptive smoothness that is not as easy as it looks.

It concerns Mark Ablett's impersonation of his brother Robert, as a hoax on his friends. Mark is the owner of the Red House, a typical laburnum-and-lodge-gate English country house, and he has a secretary who encourages him and abets him in this impersonation, because the secretary is going to murder him, if he pulls it off. Nobody around the Red House has ever seen Robert, fifteen years absent in Australia, known to them by repute as a no-good. A letter from Robert is talked about, but never shown. It announces his arrival, and Mark hints it will not be a pleasant occasion. One afternoon, then, the supposed Robert arrives, identifies himself to a couple of servants, is shown into the study, and Mark (according to testimony at the inquest) goes in after him. Robert is then found dead on the floor with a bullet hole in his face, and of course Mark has vanished into thin air. Arrive the police, suspect Mark must be the murderer, remove the debris and proceed with the investigation, and in due course, with the inquest.

Milne is aware of one very difficult hurdle and tries as well as he can to get over it. Since the secretary is going to murder Mark once he has established himself as Robert, the impersonation has to continue on and fool the police. Since, also, everybody around the Red House knows Mark intimately, disguise is necessary. This is achieved by shaving off Mark's beard, roughening his hands ("not the hands of a manicured gentlemen"—testimony) and the use of a gruff voice and rough manner. But this is not enough. The cops are going to have the body and the clothes on it and whatever is in the pockets. Therefore none of this must suggest Mark. Milne therefore works like a switch engine to put over the motivation that Mark is a thoroughly conceited performer that he dresses the part down to the socks and underwear (from all of which the secretary has removed the maker's labels), like a ham blacking himself all over to play Othello. If the reader will buy this (and the sales record shows he must have) Milne figures he is solid. Yet, however light in texture the story may be, it is offered as a problem of logic and deduction. If it is not that, it is nothing at all. There is nothing else for it to be. If the situation is false, you cannot even accept it as a light novel, for there is no story for the light novel to be about. If the problem does not contain the elements of truth and plausibility, it is no problem; if the logic is an illusion, there is nothing to deduce. If the impersonation is impossible once the reader is told the conditions it must fulfill, then the whole thing is a fraud. Not a deliberate fraud, because Milne would not have written the story if he had known what he was up against. He is up against a number of deadly things, none of which he even considers. Nor, apparently, does the casual reader, who wants to like the story, hence takes it at its face value. But the reader is not called upon to know the facts of life; it is the author who is the expert in the case. Here is what this author ignores:

1. The coroner holds formal jury inquest on a body for which no competent legal identification is offered. A coroner, usually in a big city, will sometimes hold inquest on a body that cannot be identified, if the record of such an inquest has or may have a value (fire, disaster, evidence of murder, etc.). No such reason exists here, and there is no one to identify the body. A couple of witnesses said the man said he was Robert Ablett. This is mere presumption, and has weight only if nothing conflicts with it. Identification is a condition precedent to an inquest. Even in death a man has a right to his won identity. The coroner will, wherever humanly possible, enforce that right. To neglect it would be a violation of his office.

2. Since Mark Ablett, missing and suspected of murder, cannot defend himself, all evidence of his movements before and after the murder is vital (as also whether he has money to run away on); yet all such evidence is given by the man closest to the murder, and is without corroboration. It is automatically suspect until proved true.

3. The police find by direct investigation that Robert Ablett was not well thought of in his native village. Somebody there must have known him. No such person was brought to the inquest. (The story couldn't stand it.)

4. The police know there is an element of threat in Robert's supposed visit, and that it is connected with the murder must be obvious to them. Yet they make no attempt to check Robert in Australia, or find out what character he had there, or what associates, or even if he actually came to England, and with whom. (If they had, they would have found out he had been dead three years.)

5. The police surgeon examines the body with a recently shaved beard (exposing unweathered skin), artificially roughened hands, yet the body of a wealthy, soft-living man, long resident in a cool climate. Robert was a rough individual and had lived fifteen years in Australia. That is the surgeon's information. It is impossible he would have noticed nothing to conflict with it.

6. The clothes are nameless, empty, and have had the labels removed. Yet the man wearing them asserted an identity. The presumption that he was not what he said he was is overpowering. Nothing whatever is done about this peculiar circumstance. It is never even mentioned as being peculiar.

7. A man is missing, a well-known local man, and a body in the morgue closely resembles him. It is impossible that the police should not at once eliminate the chance that the missing man is the dead man. Nothing would be easier than to prove it. Not even to think of it is incredible. It makes idiots of the police, so that a brash amateur may startle the world with a fake solution.

The detective in the case is an insouciant gent named Antony Gillingham, a nice lad with a cheery eye, a cozy little flat in London, and that airy manner. He is not making any money on the assignment, but is always available when the local gendarmerie loses its notebook. The English police seem to endure him with their customary stoicism; but I shudder to think of what the boys down at the Homicide Bureau in my city would do to him.

There are less plausible examples of the art than this. In Trent's Last Case (often called "the perfect detective story") you have to accept the premise that a giant of international finance, whose lightest frown makes Wall Street quiver like a chihuahua, will plot his own death so as to hang his secretary, and that the secretary when pinched will maintain an aristocratic silence; the old Etonian in him maybe. I have known relatively few international financiers, but I rather think the author of this novel has (if possible) known fewer. There is one by Freeman Wills Crofts (the soundest builder of them all when he doesn't get too fancy) wherein a murderer by the aid of makeup, split second timing, and some very sweet evasive action, impersonates the man he has just killed and thereby gets him alive and distant from the place of the crime. There is one of Dorothy Sayers' in which a man is murdered alone at night in his house by a mechanically released weight which works because he always turns the radio on at just such a moment, always stands in just such a position in front of it, and always bends over just so far. A couple of inches either way and the customers would get a rain check. This is what is vulgarly known as having God sit in your lap; a murderer who needs that much help from Providence must be in the wrong business. And there is a scheme of Agatha Christie's featuring M. Hercule Poirot, that ingenious Belgian who talks in a literal translation of school-boy French, wherein, by duly messing around with his "little gray cells," M. Poirot decides that nobody on a certain through sleeper could have done the murder alone, therefore everybody did it together, breaking the process down into a series of simple operations, like assembling an egg-beater. This is the type that is guaranteed to knock the keenest mind for a loop. Only a halfwit could guess it.

There are much better plots by these same writers and by others of their school. There may be one somewhere that would really stand up under close scrutiny. It would be fun to read it, even if I did have to go back to page 47 and refresh my memory about exactly what time the second gardener potted the prize-winning tea-rose begonia. There is nothing new about these stories and nothing old. The ones I mentioned are all English only because the authorities (such as they are) seem to feel the English writers had an edge in this dreary routine, and that the Americans, (even the creator of Philo Vance—probably the most asinine character in detective fiction) only made the Junior Varsity.

This, the classic detective story, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. It is the story you will find almost any week in the big shiny magazines, handsomely illustrated, and paying due deference to virginal love and the right kind of luxury goods. Perhaps the tempo has become a trifle faster, and the dialogue a little more glib. There are more frozen daiquiris and stingers ordered, and fewer glasses of crusty old port; more clothes by Vogue, and décors by the House Beautiful, more chic, but not more truth. We spend more time in Miami hotels and Cape Cod summer colonies and go not so often down by the old gray sundial in the Elizabethan garden. But fundamentally it is the same careful grouping of suspects, the same utterly incomprehensible trick of how somebody stabbed Mrs. Pottington Postlethwaite III with the solid platinum poignard just as she flatted on the top note of the Bell Song from Lakmé in the presence of fifteen ill-assorted guests; the same ingenue in fur-trimmed pajamas screaming in the night to make the company pop in and out of doors and ball up the timetable; the same moody silence next day as they sit around sipping Singapore slings and sneering at each other, while the flat-feet crawl to and fro under the Persian rugs, with their derby hats on.

Personally I like the English style better. It is not quite so brittle, and the people as a rule, just wear clothes and drink drinks. There is more sense of background, as if Cheesecake Manor really existed all around and not just the part the camera sees; there are more long walks over the Downs and the characters don't all try to behave as if they had just been tested by MGM. The English may not always be the best writers in the world, but they are incomparably the best dull writers.

There is a very simple statement to be made about all these stories: they do not really come off intellectually as problems, and they do not come off artistically as fiction. They are too contrived, and too little aware of what goes on in the world. They try to be honest, but honesty is an art. The poor writer is dishonest without knowing it, and the fairly good one can be dishonest because he doesn't know what to be honest about. He thinks a complicated murder scheme which baffles the lazy reader, who won't be bothered itemizing the details, will also baffle the police, whose business is with details. The boys with their feet on the desks know that the easiest murder case in the world to break is the one somebody tried to get very cute with; the one that really bothers them is the murder somebody only thought of two minutes before he pulled it off. But if the writers of this fiction wrote about the kind of murders that happen, they would also have to write about the authentic flavor of life as it is lived. And since they cannot do that, they pretend that what they do is what should be done. Which is begging the question—and the best of them know it.

In her introduction to the first Omnibus of Crime, Dorothy Sayers wrote: "It (the detective story) does not, and by hypothesis never can, attain the loftiest level of literary achievement." And she suggested somewhere else that this is because it is a "literature of escape" and not "a literature of expression." I do not know what the loftiest level of literary achievement is: neither did Aeschylus or Shakespeare; neither does Miss Sayers. Other things being equal, which they never are, a more powerful theme will provoke a more powerful performance. Yet some very dull books have been written about God, and some very fine ones about how to make a living and stay fairly honest. It is always a matter of who writes the stuff, and what he has in him to write it with. As for literature of expression and literature of escape, this is critics' jargon, a use of abstract words as if they had absolute meanings. Everything written with vitality expresses that vitality; there are no dull subjects, only dull minds. All men who read escape from something else into what lies behind the printed page; the quality of the dream may be argued, but its

release has become a functional necessity. All men must escape at times from the deadly rhythm of their private thoughts. It is part of the process of life among thinking beings. It is one of the things that distinguish them from the three-toed sloth; he apparently—one can never be quite sure—is perfectly content hanging upside down on a branch, and not even reading Walter Lippmann. I hold no particular brief for the detective story as the ideal escape. I merely say that all reading for pleasure is escape, whether it be Greek, mathematics, astronomy, Benedetto Croce, or *The Diary of the Forgotten Man*. To say otherwise is to be an intellectual snob, and a juvenile at the art of living.

I do not think such considerations moved Miss Dorothy Sayers to her essay in critical futility.

I think what was really gnawing at her mind was the slow realization that her kind of detective story was an arid formula which could not even satisfy its own implications. It was second-grade literature because it was not about the things that could make first-grade literature. If it started out to be about real people (and she could write about them—her minor nor characters show that), they must very soon do unreal things in order to form the artificial pattern required by the plot. When they did unreal things, they ceased to be real themselves. They became puppets and cardboard lovers and papier mâché villains and detectives of exquisite and impossible gentility. The only kind of writer who could be happy with these properties was the one who did not know what reality was. Dorothy Sayers' own stories show that she was annoyed by this triteness; the weakest element in them is the part that makes them detective stories, the strongest the part which could be removed without touching the "problem of logic and deduction." Yet she could not or would not give her characters their heads and let them make their own mystery. It took a much simpler and more direct mind than hers to do that.

In the *Long Week-End*, which is a drastically competent account of English life and manners in the decade following the first World War, Robert Graves and Alan Hodge gave some attention to the detective story. They were just as traditionally English as the ornaments of the Golden Age, and they wrote of the time in which these writers were almost as well-known as any writers in the world. Their books in one form or another sold into the millions, and in a dozen languages. These were the people who fixed the form and established the rules and founded the famous Detection Club, which is a Parnassus of English writers of mystery. Its roster includes practically every important writer of detective fiction since Conan Doyle. But Graves and Hodge decided that during this whole period only one first-class writer had written detective stories at all. An American, Dashiell Hammett. Traditional or not, Graves and Hodge were not fuddy-duddy connoisseurs of the second rate; they could see what went on in the world and that the detective story of their time didn't; and they were aware that writers who have the vision and the ability to produce real fiction do not produce unreal fiction.

How original a writer Hammett really was, it isn't easy to decide now, even if it mattered. He was one of a group, the only one who achieved critical recognition, but not the only one who wrote or tried to write realistic mystery fiction. All literary movements are like this; some one individual is picked out to represent the whole movement; he is usually the culmination of the movement. Hammett was the ace performer, but there is nothing in his work that is not implicit in the early novels and short stories of Hemingway. Yet for all I know, Hemingway may have learned something from Hammett, as well as from writers like Dreiser, Ring Lardner, Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson and himself. A rather revolutionary debunking of both the language and material of fiction had been going on for some time. It probably started in poetry; almost everything does. You can take it clear back to Walt Whitman, if you like. But Hammett applied it to the detective story, and this, because of its heavy crust of English gentility and American pseudo-gentility, was pretty hard to get moving. I doubt that Hammett had any deliberate artistic aims whatever; he was trying to make a living by writing something he had first hand information about. He made some of it up; all writers do; but it had a basis in fact; it was made up out of real things. The only reality the English detection writers knew was the conversational accent of Surbiton and Bognor Regis. If they wrote about dukes and Venetian vases, they knew no more about them out of their own experience than the well-heeled Hollywood character knows about the French Modernists that hang in his Bel-Air château or the

semi-antique Chippendale-cum-cobbler's bench that he uses for a coffee table. Hammett took murder out of the Venetian vase and dropped it into the alley; it doesn't have to stay there forever, but it was a good idea to begin by getting as far as possible from Emily Post's idea of how a well-bred debutante gnaws a chicken wing. He wrote at first (and almost to the end) for people with a sharp, aggressive attitude to life. They were not afraid of the seamy side of things; they lived there. Violence did not dismay them; it was right down their street.

Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not with hand-wrought duelling pistols, curare, and tropical fish. He put these people down on paper as they are, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. He had style, but his audience didn't know it, because it was in a language not supposed to be capable of such refinements. They thought they were getting a good meaty melodrama written in the kind of lingo they imagined they spoke themselves. It was, in a sense, but it was much more. All language begins with speech, and the speech of common men at that, but when it develops to the point of becoming a literary medium it only looks like speech. Hammett's style at its worst was almost as formalized as a page of Marius the Epicurean; at its best it could say almost anything. I believe this style, which does not belong to Hammett or to anybody, but is the American language (and not even exclusively that any more), can say things he did not know how to say or feel the need of saying. In his hands it had no overtones, left no echo, evoked no image beyond a distant hill. He is said to have lacked heart, yet the story he thought most of himself is the record of a man's devotion to a friend. He was spare, frugal, hardboiled, but he did over and over again what only the best writers can ever do at all. He wrote scenes that seemed never to have been written before.

With all this he did not wreck the formal detective story. Nobody can; production demands a form that can be produced. Realism takes too much talent, too much knowledge, too much awareness. Hammett may have loosened it up a little here, and sharpened it a little there. Certainly all but the stupidest and most meretricious writers are more conscious of their artificiality than they used to be. And he demonstrated that the detective story can be important writing. The Maltese Falcon may or may not be a work of genius, but an art which is capable of it is not "by hypothesis" incapable of anything. Once a detective story can be as good as this, only the pedants will deny that it could be even better. Hammett did something else, he made the detective story fun to write, not an exhausting concatenation of insignificant clues. Without him there might not have been a regional mystery as clever as Percival Wilde's *Inquest*, or an ironic study as able as Raymond Postgate's *Verdict of Twelve*, or a savage piece of intellectual double-talk like Kenneth Fearing's *The Dagger of the Mind*, or a tragi-comic idealization of the murderer as in Donald Henderson's *Mr. Bowling Buys a Newspaper*, or even a gay and intriguing Hollywoodian gambol like Richard Sale's *Lazarus No. 7*.

The realistic style is easy to abuse: from haste, from lack of awareness, from inability to bridge the chasm that lies between what a writer would like to be able to say and what he actually knows how to say. It is easy to fake; brutality is not strength, flipness is not wit, edge-of-the-chair writing can be as boring as flat writing; dalliance with promiscuous blondes can be very dull stuff when described by goaty young men with no other purpose in mind than to describe dalliance with promiscuous blondes. There has been so much of this sort of thing that if a character in a detective story says, "Yeah," the author is automatically a Hammett imitator.

And there are still quite a few people around who say that Hammett did not write detective stories at all, merely hardboiled chronicles of mean streets with a perfunctory mystery element dropped in like the olive in a martini. These are the flustered old ladies—of both sexes (or no sex) and almost all ages—who like their murders scented with magnolia blossoms and do not care to be reminded that murder is an act of infinite cruelty, even if the perpetrators sometimes look like playboys or college professors or nice motherly women with softly graying hair. There are also a few badly-scared champions of the formal or the classic mystery who think no story is a detective story which does not pose a formal and exact problem and arrange the clues around it with neat labels on them. Such would point out, for example, that in reading *The Maltese*

Falcon no one concerns himself with who killed Spade's partner, Archer (which is the only formal problem of the story) because the reader is kept thinking about something else. Yet in *The Glass Key* the reader is constantly reminded that the question is who killed Taylor Henry, and exactly the same effect is obtained; an effect of movement, intrigue, cross-purposes and the gradual elucidation of character, which is all the detective story has any right to be about anyway. The rest is spillikins in the parlor.

But all this (and Hammett too) is for me not quite enough. The realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities, in which hotels and apartment houses and celebrated restaurants are owned by men who made their money out of brothels, in which a screen star can be the fingerman for a mob, and the nice man down the hall is a boss of the numbers racket; a world where a judge with a cellar full of bootleg liquor can send a man to jail for having a pint in his pocket, where the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of moneymaking, where no man can walk down a dark street in safety because law and order are things we talk about but refrain from practising; a world where you may witness a hold-up in broad daylight and see who did it, but you will fade quickly back into the crowd rather than tell anyone, because the hold-up men may have friends with long guns, or the police may not like your testimony, and in any case the shyster for the defense will be allowed to abuse and vilify you in open court, before a jury of selected morons, without any but the most perfunctory interference from a political judge.

It is not a very fragrant world, but it is the world you live in, and certain writers with tough minds and a cool spirit of detachment can make very interesting and even amusing patterns out of it. It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little, and that his death should be the coin of what we call civilization. All this still is not quite enough.

In everything that can be called art there is a quality of redemption. It may be pure tragedy, if it is high tragedy, and it may be pity and irony, and it may be the raucous laughter of the strong man. But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor, by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. I do not care much about his private life; he is neither a eunuch nor a satyr; I think he might seduce a duchess and I am quite sure he would not spoil a virgin; if he is a man of honor in one thing, he is that in all things. He is a relatively poor man, or he would not be a detective at all. He is a common man or he could not go among common people. He has a sense of character, or he would not know his job. He will take no man's money dishonestly and no man's insolence without a due and dispassionate revenge. He is a lonely man and his pride is that you will treat him as a proud man or be very sorry you ever saw him. He talks as the man of his age talks, that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness. The story is his adventure in search of a hidden truth, and it would be no adventure if it did not happen to a man fit for adventure. He has a range of awareness that startles you, but it belongs to him by right, because it belongs to the world he lives in.

If there were enough like him, I think the world would be a very safe place to live in, and yet not too dull to be worth living in.

[American Literature at the Second High School of Texas](#)

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

America's unhappiest cities

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

[MSN](#) article lists them in painstaking detail.

These cities have some things in common:

- Very multicultural.
- Cosmopolitan.
- Former darlings of the yuppie.

What happened? A trend subsumed a place with bad ideas, tore it down, and left a ruin.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

The stupidity of trends

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Trends: when something “looks cool” so a group of people do it, figuring that because others are doing it, there’s no need to critically analyze the behavior. For this reason, trends are exclusively oriented toward appearance and not structure or reality.

For decades he was almost an urban legend, his harrowing performances — the year he punched a time clock hourly, the year he lived on the streets, the year he spent tethered by a rope to a female artist — kept alive by talk.

Mr. Hsieh found himself ensnared in the benumbing life of an illegal immigrant. With the downtown art scene vibrating around him, he eked out a living at Chinese restaurants and construction jobs, feeling alien, alienated and creatively barren until it came to him: He could turn his isolation into art. Inside an unfinished loft, he could build himself a beautiful cage, shave his head, stencil his name onto a uniform and lock himself away for a year.

Thirty years later Mr. Hsieh’s “Cage Piece” is on display at the Museum of Modern Art as the inaugural installation in a series on performance art.

[NYT](#)

This isn’t art; it’s shit.

But when you have a crowd of mostly incompetent irresponsible people, they want to tear down all difficult things and make them trivial, so they can imagine they, too, would be capable of the redefined “greatness.”

This is why our crowds fall all over themselves trying to praise illiterate pentatonic warblers as geniuses, stoned incoherent novelists as visionaries, and finally, poseur jerkoffs as “great artists.”

Is it any wonder that we always have favorites like this Hsieh guy, but none of them ever find an enduring place in the hearts of normal people, like great art from the past? Normal people love Jane Austen; stupid hipster elites who are justifying their meagre salaries through the pretension of being ueber-educated artists love Hsieh.

Signs of the decline, my droogs.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Defining “corruption”

Mar 4th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In a first-year pharmacology class at Harvard Medical School, Matt Zerden grew wary as the professor promoted the benefits of cholesterol drugs and seemed to belittle a student who asked about side effects.

Mr. Zerden later discovered something by searching online that he began sharing with his classmates. The professor was not only a full-time member of the Harvard Medical faculty, but a paid consultant to 10 drug companies, including five makers of cholesterol treatments.

[NYT](#)

My hypothesis: humanity is universally impoverished *except* in rare situations where a strong leader with a positive, morally-vigilant vision intervenes.

Corruption is a word that can be re-defined by image, when it is an abstract concept. Concept: taking a personal reward to avoid doing what is right. Image: shady people in back alleys sliding cops bundles of twenties. Reality: in any situation, there can be a reward — publicity, cash, free vacations, shared favors — for leaning *slightly* toward an outcome not inherent to the task itself.

What we see at Harvard Medical School is corruption. But will we recognize it as such? Or has our society, in its rush to decline, redefined corruption already for its own convenience, so that we do not recognize this practice for what it is, and see it as “business as usual” so “don’t rock the boat”?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#) · [redefinition](#)

Public education has failed

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

But of the more than three million families with at least one child in private school, according to the 2005 census, almost two million of them have a household income of less than \$100,000. According to a Department of Education survey, in 2003-4, the median annual tuition of nonsectarian schools was \$8,200; for Catholic schools, \$3,000.

So for every family that pays \$30,000 and up to attend elite schools in Manhattan, thousands more will pay tuitions closer to \$2,700 — next year's cost for St. Agnes Catholic School in Roeland Park, Kan.

To many parents who step outside the public system, an independent or parochial school is not a luxury but a near necessity, the school itself a marker of educational values, religious identity, social standing or class aspirations.

[NYT](#)

Public education panders to the slowest kids in each class, because if you ignore the supposed victims, that looks really bad — worse than failing those who are competent and could go farther.

As a result, smart parents want nothing to do with public education.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Loneliness epidemic

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In a society based on pandering to others, is it any wonder we do our best to escape so we are the only judges of our fitness for survival — and that then, we're lonely, because everyone else has their heads in the cloud?

They could have more friends than ever online but, on average, Americans have fewer intimates to confide in than they did a decade ago, according to one study. Another found that 20 percent of all individuals are, at any given time, unhappy because of social isolation, according to University of Chicago psychologist John Cacioppo. And, frankly, they'd rather not talk about it.

Jacqueline Olds, a psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard Medical School, said "People are so embarrassed about being lonely that no one admits it. Loneliness is stigmatized, even though everyone feels it at one time or another."

When asked how many people they could confide in, the average number declined over that same time period from three to two. In 2004, almost a quarter of those surveyed said they had no one to discuss important matters with in the past six months; in 1985, only 7 percent were devoid of close confidantes.

"Loneliness has a terrible reputation in this country," Olds said. "It's a problem not just with a few people without social skills. It's not synonymous with being a loser."

She also points to what she calls "the cult of busyness." In an era of frantic pace and multitasking, people feel they should always be accomplishing something. They work long hours and then, in their limited spare time, they work more – catching up on e-mail, doing the laundry, going to the gym. Socializing often comes last.

[SFG](#)

Egalitarianism also means we're afraid to stand out in the crowd, so our primary motive is escape. That means loneliness. Should be obvious but magically, it's not. Hmm.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Morality versus popularity

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

We already know that [sexual promiscuity leads to breeding idiots](#). But does it reveal underpinnings that suggest our popular morality is distanced from a morality of sensibility?

Charlotte Markey, a psychologist at Rutgers University, and her husband Partrick Markey, a psychologist at Villanova University, asked 210 adults to take a test that measured their interpersonal characteristics. Each subject was also asked to list the number of people he or she had had sex with.

Patrick Markey notes that it's particularly interesting that warm people tend to be promiscuous, because in some ways, it conflicts with the moral thinking that promiscuity is bad.

Each subject was also asked to list the number of people he or she had had sex with. When they compared the participants' responses, they were able to confirm that dominance is a key trait of people who have a lot of sexual partners. They also found that individuals who are either extremely warm or extremely cold toward others tend to be promiscuous, while people who are just moderately warm have the fewest sexual partners.

Warm, affable people may enjoy sharing their warmth with others by, well...sleeping with them, while antagonistic people may jump from bed to bed to avoid having a monogamous relationship that carries the potential of being rejected or treated poorly. And having a dominant personality makes it easier to approach potential sex partners.

[Examiner](#)

If you want everyone to like you, sleep with them. Give them whatever you have. And then expect them to support you, which they might on the basis of reciprocal altruism or parochial altruism.

If you want to be moral, however, you're going to follow a *K*-strategy in your life as a whole: pick carefully your friends and neighbors, sex partners and actions, because most things are failure and you want to rise above.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Getting irked with our parasites

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has rejected calls for a multibillion-euro bailout plan for eastern European Union member states.

Eastern states, led by Hungary, are pushing for richer EU members to provide more financial aid to help them out of their economic troubles.

[FOX](#)

Eastern Europe lags behind Western Europe in every way. So they play a definitions game: since we're all Europeans now, don't you richer people owe us something? Germany told them to take a hike because Germany created its wealth, and Eastern Europe in similar circumstances did not, suggesting a problem more long-term than immediate poverty.

The struggle by outgunned Mexican authorities to contain the violence was highlighted for Arizona state police last November, when Mexican police officers pinned down in a raging gun battle in Nogales, Sonora, reached out to them with an urgent request for more bullets.

While U.S. authorities stress they have not seen anything like the kind of street battles and horrific beheadings that are now common in Mexico, they are already taking action to curb what has become known as "overspill".

Texas Gov. Rick Perry says he wants 1,000 troops to guard the border. The state's Attorney General Greg Abbott is backing legislation to crack down on money laundering and human, drug and weapons trafficking through the state by the warring Gulf and Sinaloa cartels.

[NM](#)

Mexico was originally a Spanish colony. Then mass revolt occurred, and the people there, who were descended from the slave peoples of the Aztec and Maya that the Spanish used to overthrow those empires, took over.

Since then it has been a slow downward progression of the kind of third-world disorder we expect from Iraq, Brazil or Russia. Corruption is endemic. Crime is rife. Pollution is massive. The people are numb and interested in self-amusement only.

Every rich nation builds up parasites at its borders. Every smart person builds up parasites in their friend group. But how much power can be had from cutting them free.

Returning to a land left behind poses challenges for returning migrants. In a city like Morelia, where many locals still wear traditional indigenous dress and some even wear cowboy hats, a Mexican who has lived in the United States can be spotted a mile away. The returnees wear clothes from stores like Urban Outfitters (and not the knockoff versions that are popular among ordinary Mexicans), sport new sneakers, and don baseball caps of U.S. teams (again, not the fakes). They'll shun straws that aren't pre-wrapped, and according to some local policemen, they are clueless about the "code" — in other words, when to pay a bribe in order to avoid the laborious process of paying a traffic ticket.

Although the Calderón administration is investing heavily in infrastructure, the jobs created will only be temporary. Local governments, like that of Michoacán, are appealing for federal subsidies to help spur growth of sectors such as agriculture and generate more jobs. They also want federal funding to help returnees set up small businesses. But officials throughout Mexico

acknowledge how difficult it will be to absorb those who once left. Some experts and Mexican columnists warn that if the massive southbound flood of migrants does occur in the coming months, resentment could boil to the surface.

Juana Patiño, an engineering consultant who has been working in Houston for 10 years, came back this past holiday season to sniff out opportunities in Mexico for a qualified professional like herself. She was disappointed to find that the pay is either too low or the possibility of advancement nearly nonexistent. So Patiño is returning to her adopted home. "I don't really like living there, but I'm going back," she says. "There are always more opportunities there."

[FP](#)

What a disaster immigration is.

Populations swell in the nation of origin and the nation of destination.

Economies are unraveled and people displaced.

And for what? Ah, profit. Good thinking.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Genes for eye color also influence skin color

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Human pigmentation is a polygenic trait which may be shaped by different kinds of gene-gene interactions. Recent studies have revealed that interactive effects between HERC2 and OCA2 may be responsible for blue eye colour determination in humans. Here we performed a population association study, examining important polymorphisms within the HERC2 and OCA2 genes. Furthermore, pooling these results with genotyping data for MC1R, ASIP and SLC45A2 obtained for the same population sample we also analysed potential genetic interactions affecting variation in eye, hair and skin colour.

Our results confirmed the association of HERC2 rs12913832 with eye colour and showed that **this SNP is also significantly associated with skin and hair colouration**. It is also concluded that OCA2 rs1800407 is independently associated with eye colour. Finally, using various approaches we were able to show that there is an interaction between MC1R and HERC2 in determination of skin and hair colour in the studied population sample.

[NLM](#)

Genes don't exist in a vacuum. Like computer code, our DNA consists of different patterns that were adopted to make transitions easier. Over time, these beneficial traits spread.

It's even possible there were multiple origins for the human species, and that each one brought its own evolutionary developments.

In fact, as of yet we have no idea whether sticking a lone mouse on any planet that supports life will, in fifteen million years, produce a human being. It's possible evolution is determined by inherent properties of life or DNA itself.

Now we see how non-isolated genes are, and how we've been going about this all wrong for some time. In the future, we should read genes more like computer code produced by an absent-minded programmer who snips and inserts when a problem arises, but once he finds a solution, slaps it into every new problem to which he can fit it.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Facing our own evolution

Mar 2nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

In a just world, primates would get equal time to refute the bad rap that's implicit in such put-downs. This isn't a just planet, of course, but the books of Emory University primatologist Frans de Waal go quite a ways toward setting the record straight. You can't read them without noticing how faithfully the people around you are imitating the animals de Waal has studied for three decades — chimps and their close relatives, bonobos — in ways that illuminate how admirable and complex the apes really are.

In his 2005 book, "Our Inner Ape," he tells the story of a bonobo named Kuni, who picked up a starling that had crashed in her enclosure at a British zoo, carried it up a tree, gently spread its wings, and then launched it like a toy airplane. When the still-stunned bird fluttered to the ground nearby, she protected it from curious juvenile bonobos until it recovered and flew off.

De Waal's yarn about a Machiavellian, older chimp named Yeroen should have a Washington, D.C., dateline: Yeroen helped Nikkie, a bullying simpleton, become the alpha male, then manipulated the big dope like a puppet to get what he wanted.

De Waal's nuanced, overarching theme is that both our angelic and demonic sides are rooted in behavior patterns that are readily observable in powermongering chimps and make-love-not-war bonobos. (Known for managing social tension by continually engaging in all manner of sex acts, bonobos are the free-loving "hippies of the primate world," he says.) The full, rich mix of our inner selves and outer behaviors — ruthlessness and empathy, selfishness and sharing, male competition and powerful female alliances — apparently arose in prototypical form long before Homo sapiens came forth.

[Salon](#)

Modern people love to misuse approximations. "It's almost like that other thing, therefore, we should treat it as if it were," when it's convenient for them.

When we face the apes, we see almost-like-but-not-quite, and it unnerves us, I think. We all know how far a fall down the evolutionary ladder it would be, whether ten percent or one percent of our DNA is different (thanks to SNPs and movable structures in the DNA, it's probably much larger). We also all know, unsettlingly, that we're still not so far removed that we cannot see our failures in the apes.

I once owned mice and was surprised to find out that they recognized each other, even after several weeks' absence, and were glad to see each other again (we had to separate breeding females from the rest, in addition to separating males from females). Every creature has personality and a capacity for kindness.

What makes humans different is that we can recognize our thoughts as distinct from the world and create our own map of reality. Further, we have evolved in civilization and with tools, so our brains are shaped to use those. At least, those of us who did evolve in civilization have.

If we are to treat ethnicity as clinal, as some "experts" say we should, I think we should treat species the same way as well. In fact, with our small DNA differences, it's possible we can even breed with some apes. So maybe we should assess each person as a certain percentage of monkey based on their behavior.

While that's not very PC, I noticed a gentleman driving yesterday who I would guess was 54% monkey. He was in a large pickup truck, on the phone, wearing a hat and had an Obama/Biden sticker on the truck. Predictably, for someone so narcissistic and thus oblivious to the world around him, he was ambling down the left lane at a right lane place and, when he discovered people passing him, made the most abrupt and unplanned lane change I may have ever seen.

Maybe DNA analysis will enable us to rank people by how monkey they are, and send the monkey-people away from those who might constitute the next evolutionary level of not just our species but all apes.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Racism is the new witch hunt

Mar 1st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A BLACK councillor was at the centre of a race row today after calling her Asian counterpart a "coconut" – slang for a black person who still has a "white" core – during a heated debate.

Tory Jay Jethwa who had attacked the \$750,000 of taxpayers money being proposed for a slave trade project, said "She was obviously offended that I, as an Indian, spoke out on an issue which she perceived to be white."

A furious Mrs Brown stood up and said: "In our culture we have a word for you and before I go into what I want to say and my statement, is that we have a word for you and, which many in this city would understand, is a coconut."

"I'm not aware my comments were interpreted as a racist remark. How can I be a racist when I'm black?"

[The Sun](#)

Like most passive aggressive acts, this "racism" accusation is just an excuse to take from you with impunity while you cannot criticize in return.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

Until you master your reflexes, you're a political disaster

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Why voting should be reserved for those who've gotten control of themselves:

By some stretch of the imagination, then, it's not too unreasonable to imagine asking a candidate whether he or she would smother a baby to death. It may seem abominable to pose such a question, but let's explain. Imagine we're at war, and a group of people are hiding from the bad guys in a basement. The bad guys are upstairs, prowling the home for dissidents, when the baby in the basement begins to cry. Should the baby be smothered to death? If the baby is quieted, everyone else in the group lives. If the baby keeps crying, the bad guys find you, and everyone else in the group dies as well, including the baby.

You may be able to understand rationally how it's better to sacrifice the baby for the good of the group, but could you actually be the one to put your hand over its mouth? Do you want a president who is able to? We actually might not have that much choice in the matter, if some researchers are to be believed.

...

In 2001, a research team led by philosopher and neuroscientist Joshua Greene released a paper detailing the work of using functional MRI to scan the brains of people wrestling with a moral dilemma.

The subjects in the study were presented with a scenario that involved killing a person with his or her own hands in order to save a large group of people, such as the circumstances with the crying baby we discussed on the first page. ...Several areas of the subjects' brains lit up, including two parts of the frontal lobe....This suggests that people weighed the benefit of saving the group against their emotions about killing an innocent baby.

Then the subjects were presented with a dilemma in which they didn't have to get their hands dirty. The same person would die, but someone else would do it or a switch could be flipped to accomplish the task. In this scenario, only the reasoning part of the brain was active in scans. When people didn't have to wrestle with their emotions about how they'd feel if they did something, they just completed a utilitarian analysis of what was best for the group.

[HowStuffWorks](#)

Our problem as always is that we refer to ourselves in making such decisions. How do I feel? How do I look if I do this? And, what is my gut reaction?

Disgust over an unfair or immoral social situation is hard-wired into the human body as strongly as the reaction to a foul taste, according to research published today in the journal Science.

By studying the electrical activity of a muscle in the upper lip in both physically and morally offensive situations, scientists determined that disgust is equally strong in both cases.

"People use the term disgust in terms of morally offensive situations," said Adam Anderson, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Toronto and a co-author on the study. "Our study looked at whether this reaction was genuine disgust or just a metaphor."

Discover

Our animal reactions override our thinking, in many cases. For this reason, we're better with "someone should" than "I will act to," especially since the latter involves risk to ourselves.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The socially concealed ongoing human evolution

Feb 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

While Cochran and Harpending don't have much respect for Gould, their book serves to complement the much-touted Jared Diamond's 1997 bestseller *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, showing you what Diamond left out in his successful bid for political correctness.

So, what happened 10,000 years ago?

Agriculture.

Farming changed everything. Planting crops and raising livestock allowed the human population to grow enormously.

A hundred-fold growth in world population from its pre-agriculture size to the 60 million alive during the Bronze Age 3,000 years ago meant a similar hundred-fold increase in the rate of genetic mutations.

Moreover, agriculture dramatically changed the environment that selects which mutations turn out to be favorable. To flourish, farmers have to be harder-working than hunter-gatherers, more orderly in densely crowded locations, less susceptible to alcoholism, and more foresighted (farmers can't eat the seed corn).

Different cultures bring about different genes.

[VDARE](#)

Jonathan Haidt noted this debate is just warming up:

The most offensive idea in all of science for the last 40 years is the possibility that behavioral differences between racial and ethnic groups have some genetic basis. Knowing nothing but the long-term offensiveness of this idea, a betting person would have to predict that as we decode the genomes of people around the world, we're going to find deeper differences than most scientists now expect. Expectations, after all, are not based purely on current evidence; they are biased, even if only slightly, by the gut feelings of the researchers, and those gut feelings include disgust toward racism..

A wall has long protected respectable evolutionary inquiry from accusations of aiding and abetting racism. That wall is the belief that genetic change happens at such a glacial pace that there simply was not time, in the 50,000 years since humans spread out from Africa, for selection pressures to have altered the genome in anything but the most trivial way (e.g., changes in skin color and nose shape were adaptive responses to cold climates). Evolutionary psychology has therefore focused on the Pleistocene era – the period from about 1.8 million years ago to the dawn of agriculture — during which our common humanity was forged for the hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

But the writing is on the wall. Russian scientists showed in the 1990s that a strong selection pressure (picking out and breeding only the tamest fox pups in each generation) created what was — in behavior as well as body — essentially a new species in just 30 generations. That would correspond to about 750 years for humans. Humans may never have experienced such a strong selection pressure for such a long period, but they surely experienced many weaker

selection pressures that lasted far longer, and for which some heritable personality traits were more adaptive than others. It stands to reason that local populations (not continent-wide “races”) adapted to local circumstances by a process known as “co-evolution” in which genes and cultural elements change over time and mutually influence each other. The best documented example of this process is the co-evolution of genetic mutations that maintain the ability to fully digest lactose in adulthood with the cultural innovation of keeping cattle and drinking their milk. This process has happened several times in the last 10,000 years, not to whole “races” but to tribes or larger groups that domesticated cattle.

Recent “sweeps” of the genome across human populations show that hundreds of genes have been changing during the last 5-10 millennia in response to local selection pressures. (See papers by Benjamin Voight, Scott Williamson, and Bruce Lahn). No new mental modules can be created from scratch in a few millennia, but slight tweaks to existing mechanisms can happen quickly, and small genetic changes can have big behavioral effects, as with those Russian foxes. We must therefore begin looking beyond the Pleistocene and turn our attention to the Holocene era as well – the last 10,000 years. This was the period after the spread of agriculture during which the pace of genetic change sped up in response to the enormous increase in the variety of ways that humans earned their living, formed larger coalitions, fought wars, and competed for resources and mates.

The protective “wall” is about to come crashing down, and all sorts of uncomfortable claims are going to pour in. Skin color has no moral significance, but traits that led to Darwinian success in one of the many new niches and occupations of Holocene life — traits such as collectivism, clannishness, aggressiveness, docility, or the ability to delay gratification — are often seen as virtues or vices. Virtues are acquired slowly, by practice within a cultural context, but the discovery that there might be ethnically-linked genetic variations in the ease with which people can acquire specific virtues is — and this is my prediction — going to be a “game changing” scientific event. (By “ethnic” I mean any group of people who believe they share common descent, actually do share common descent, and that descent involved at least 500 years of a sustained selection pressure, such as sheep herding, rice farming, exposure to malaria, or a caste-based social order, which favored some heritable behavioral predispositions and not others.)

I believe that the “Bell Curve” wars of the 1990s, over race differences in intelligence, will seem genteel and short-lived compared to the coming arguments over ethnic differences in moralized traits. I predict that this “war” will break out between 2012 and 2017.

There are reasons to hope that we’ll ultimately reach a consensus that does not aid and abet racism. I expect that dozens or hundreds of ethnic differences will be found, so that any group — like any person — can be said to have many strengths and a few weaknesses, all of which are context-dependent. Furthermore, these cross-group differences are likely to be small when compared to the enormous variation within ethnic groups and the enormous and obvious effects of cultural learning. But whatever consensus we ultimately reach, the ways in which we now think about genes, groups, evolution and ethnicity will be radically changed by the unstoppable progress of the human genome project.

[Edge](#)

And Tom Wolfe noted how there is one exception, which is our ability to con each other with language and appearance:

Evolution came to an end when the human beast developed speech! As soon as he became not Homo sapiens, “man reasoning,” but Homo loquax, “man talking”! Speech gave the human beast far more than an ingenious tool. Speech was a veritable nuclear weapon! It gave the human beast the powers of reason, complex memory, and long-term planning, eventually in the form of print and engineering plans. Speech gave him the power to enlarge his food supply at will through an artifice called farming.

No evolutionist has come up with even an interesting guess as to when speech began, but it was at least 11,000 years ago, which is to say, 9000 B.C. It seems to be the consensus . . . in the notoriously capricious field of evolutionary chronology . . . that 9000 B.C. was about when the human beast began farming, and the beast couldn't have farmed without speech, without being able to say to his son, "Son, this here's seeds. You best be putting 'em in the ground in rows ov'ere like I tell you if you wanna git any ears a corn this summer."

One of Homo loquax's first creations after he learned to talk was religion.

Shall we take a look at the actual nature of the human beast—an artificial selection, 100% man-made?

Weber was well known in academia for his essay "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," written after he toured the United States in 1904. It was the origin of the unfortunately non-Protestant cliché, "the work ethic." He introduced the terms "charisma" and "charismatic" in their current usage; also "bureaucracy," which he characterized as "the routinization of charisma." He coined the term "style of life," which was converted into the compound noun "lifestyle" and put to work as the title of a thousand sections of newspapers across the United States. But what caught my imagination was the single word "status."

[NEH](#)

We naturally select ourselves according to status, because people grant those of higher status more leeway. We program ourselves as to what status is by trying to work around reality, and come up with an alternate explanation of what is valuable, such as morality or religion.

Language is a powerful tool, but also a reality-denial tool, and that can effect our ongoing human evolution. Of course, no one wants to talk about it that way. We like to think we're born static like gods, immutable and forever "in control."

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Natural selection at work

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

"[Our] findings show that a natural, common mutation in the GRIK4 gene protects against bipolar disorder," said Ben Pickard, lead author of a study in this week's issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and a member of the department of medical genetics at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. "If a natural mutation can result in protection, then this may offer clues as to how future drug treatments might be directed. . ."

The GRIK4 gene provides the genetic coding for the glutamate neurotransmitter receptor known as the KA1 kainate receptor. These kainate receptors are considered "excitatory," because they generally make neurons more prone to firing signaling messages. The glutamate transmitter has been linked to different psychiatric disorders.

The deletion seems to be responsible for generating more glutamate receptors, thereby increasing glutamate signaling. "If kainate signaling can be stimulated, then that, too, might protect against bipolar disorder, Pickard said. "However, one problem with modulating glutamate activity like this is that too much glutamate is also harmful."

[USNews](#)

In nature, this means that when enough creatures without this mutation die off, it becomes a standard part of the human being — until it is no longer constantly being tested, for example, when we have drugs to keep bipolar people from killing themselves before they breed.

Of course, if these creatures are smart enough to get themselves to a source of a supplement that suppresses their bipolar tendencies, they may survive — but will have created a future line with dependencies on that supplement:

Bipolar disorder is a devastating condition that causes extremes of mood. More than 12 million Americans suffer from this disorder every year, including men, women, and children. For as yet unknown reasons, women are more likely to develop the disorder than men.

Folic Acid: Folic acid is found in fruits, such as oranges, and leafy green vegetables, like spinach. Folic acid tends to be found in low levels in people suffering from depression. A supplement may help alleviate depressive symptoms.

[Epigee](#)

This shows you one of the many reasons it's important to eat the diet of your ancestors.

Most of our "great" (but not really great) "art" comes from bipolar people trying to express themselves. I could live easily with their absence, in exchange for having people who are inherently indisposed toward bipolarity.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

The water wars

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We warned you some time ago. Now, there's some alarming news about the imminent water wars:

Dwindling water supplies are a greater risk to businesses than oil running out, a report for investors has warned.

Among the industries most at risk are high-tech companies, especially those using huge quantities of water to manufacture silicon chips; electricity suppliers who use vast amounts of water for cooling; and agriculture, which uses 70% of global freshwater, , says the study, commissioned by the powerful CERES group, whose members have \$7tn under management. Other high-risk sectors are beverages, clothing, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, forest products, and metals and mining, it says.

"Water is one of our most critical resources – even more important than oil," says the report, published today . "The impact of water scarcity and declining water on businesses will be far-reaching. We've already seen decreases in companies' water allotments, more stringent regulations [and] higher costs for water."

Droughts "attributable in significant part to climate change" are already causing "acute water shortages" around the world, and pressure on supplies will increase with further global warming and a growing world population, says the report written by the US-based Pacific Institute.

[The Guardian](#)

The loss of gasoline sounds worse, but only the most primitive of stupid monkeys thought that resource was infinite. Water? We'll always have our two liters a day.

Institutional investors are urging companies to measure, disclose and reduce their use of water to reduce long-term financial risks as supplies dry up from overuse and as higher temperatures melt glaciers away.

"Companies need to be analyzing their water risk ... and to find ways to conserve water and minimize the opportunities for literally having their business shut down," Mindy Lubber, the president of Ceres, a Boston-based coalition of investors. said in an interview.

[Reuters](#)

We may not. Water is required in abundance for our industry and infrastructure, not just personal consumption. But that's out of sight, so out of mind. Rage on, you crazed monkeys.

Flannery, who has written eloquently about global warming, drove through the fire belt, and reported:

"It was as if a great cremation had taken place... I was born in Victoria, and over five decades I've watched as the state has changed. The long, wet and cold winters that seemed insufferable to me as a boy vanished decades ago, and for the past 12 years a new, drier climate has established itself... I had not appreciated the difference a degree or two of extra heat and a dry soil can make to the ferocity of a fire. This fire was different from anything seen before."

Meanwhile, central China is experiencing the worst drought in half a century. Temperatures have been unseasonably high and rainfall, in some areas, 80% below normal; more than half the country's provinces have been affected by drought, leaving millions of Chinese and their

livestock without adequate access to water. In the region which raises 95% of the country's winter wheat, crop production has already been impaired and is in further danger without imminent rain.

In our own backyard, much of the state of Texas—97.4% to be exact—is now gripped by drought, and parts of it by the worst drought in almost a century. According to the New York Times, “Winter wheat crops have failed. Ponds have dried up. Ranchers are spending heavily on hay and feed pellets to get their cattle through the winter. Some wonder if they will have to slaughter their herds come summer. Farmers say the soil is too dry for seeds to germinate and are considering not planting.” Since 2004, in fact, the state has yoyo-ed between the extremities of flood and drought.

[Mother Jones](#)

A good compilation of drought data there, although it lacks a global model to show that the water missing in these droughts is not just distributed elsewhere. However, common sense dictates: as temperature rises, there's going to be less water around.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Why to lead a moral life

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

A mother's life experience can affect the biology of her offspring, according to new animal research in the February 4 issue of The Journal of Neuroscience. The study shows that a stimulating environment improved the memory of young mice with a memory-impairing genetic defect and also improved the memory of their eventual offspring. The findings suggest that parental behaviors that occur long before pregnancy may influence an offspring's well-being.

"While it has been shown in humans and in animal models that enriched experience can enhance brain function and plasticity, this study is a step forward, suggesting that the enhanced learning behavior and plasticity can be transmitted to offspring long before the pregnancy of the mother," said Li-Huei Tsai, PhD, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, an expert unaffiliated with the current study.

In the current study, Feig and his colleagues found that the offspring of mothers who had experienced environmental enrichment before adolescence also showed enhanced LTP (enhanced long-term potentiation (LTP), which is thought to form the cellular basis of memory), despite never experiencing the stimulating environment themselves. Offspring born to environmentally enriched mothers, but reared by other mice, showed enhanced LTP as well. These findings suggest that environmental enrichment's enhancement of LTP is transmitted to the next generation before birth.

[PhysOrg](#)

Interesting how the early debate over evolution plays itself out now that we can observe these things:

"Lamarckism" or "Lamarckianism" is now often used in a rather derogatory sense to refer to the theory that acquired traits can be inherited. What Lamarck actually believed was more complex: organisms are not passively altered by their environment, as his colleague Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire thought. Instead, a change in the environment causes changes in the needs of organisms living in that environment, which in turn causes changes in their behavior. Altered behavior leads to greater or lesser use of a given structure or organ; use would cause the structure to increase in size over several generations, whereas disuse would cause it to shrink or even disappear.

[UCMP](#)

It's a feedback loop. Darwin observed the negative side of the loop, or the culling of the unfit; Lamarck observed the positive side, which is that organisms respond actively to their environment and so direct their own evolution.

This new research is the mediate stage: that epigenetics, hormones during birth, and past experience all contribute to the recombination of genes that produces a newborn.

And the headline? Well, it's easy. If you live like a hipster or third-worlder, and really there's not much difference except that the first-world people around you support you, your life experience is one of dumbing-down. Instant gratification. Cheap sex. Anti-intellectualism, yet intellectual posing. No direction, no struggle, just an easy life of avoiding obligation and struggle.

What do you think that passes on to your kids? A dumbing-down. But if you live a moral life, working hard to do what's right and also prosper, and avoid the easy dissolution and glib self-justification of the hipster, you produce better kids.

Which is good, because they're going to be the ones who have to gun down the millions of hipsters and

grey people surging out of the cities as they fail.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

The future of our evolution

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

You will not hear this in the mainstream media, because it's socially unacceptable. That's at an even more basic level of human taboo than political correctness. It offends people who have no politics, because it offends their conception of themselves as "in control."

You have a choice for human future:

- Eugenics
- Genetic Engineering
- Natural Selection

You can have eugenics and natural selection, but with genetic engineering, the other two go out the window.

I'm not talking about trivial stuff like aborting babies with bad genes. I'm talking about these same scientists who cannot cure cancer starting to throw together genetic combinations, thinking it'll make everything better.

I don't trust them because I don't trust us because our conception of reality is rooted in having ourselves be "in control," and the tail wags the dog for everything else.

The same genetic testing, called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), has been used to test for inherited disorders such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington's disease, life-shortening diseases known to be certainly acquired by those carrying a single gene.

The events might presage other screenings designed to create designer babies based on gender, IQ or athletic ability, some ethicists fear.

"There are many complex issues to take into account and the decision will finally come down to an individual's personal ethics," said Kath McLachlan, a clinical nurse specialist at the charity Breast Cancer Care.

Some fear the worst if laws are not crafted to corral the burgeoning field of "reprogenetics," as it is called — combining reproductive technologies with genetic screening.

[Live Science](#)

Abortng a cancer-bound baby is a good thing, if you ask me. Trying to play God with genetics we barely understand is not.

Big economic interests and subtle changes in terminology are helping spread a wider acceptance of eugenics, said Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

"The term 'eugenics' seems something of the past and just mentioning the word elicits horror," he said during a Vatican press conference Feb. 17.

But, he said, scientific progress must be accompanied by greater ethical awareness that respects the full dignity of every human person.

The introduction to the congress program said excesses in the field of genetics can "lead to so-called eugenics which, in its various forms, seeks to obtain the perfect human being," which includes unethical means that violate respect of all forms and conditions of human life.

[Catholic News](#)

I think you monkeys are in denial about just how much trouble we're in. Not surprising; you want to be "in control," and you'll bend everything else you think to fit that paradigm.

As we run out of supplies, the population burgeons, water becomes scarce and fuel becomes scarce, some kind of bottleneck will occur.

If you're lucky, it'll be a combination between natural selection and eugenics. Kill off the criminals; set the smart people up to breed more, and then let nature sort the rest out.

If you're not, our arrogant and often imbecilic scientists will start trying to create the new multicultural master race — and they'll partially succeed. They will give a being some enhanced abilities, and none of the wisdom to use them.

Think about what a disaster a rifle is in the hands of someone without judgment, or compassion. Now imagine someone very, very smart and strong with that same lack of judgment and compassion.

We don't understand enough about genes to play with this technology yet.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Obama's plan: attack the upper middle class

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Most liberals are middle-class people living in cities, so they are unable to save any money and are too narcissistic to have families.

Their goal? To be the wrecking balls that does in the suburban upper middle class.

During the presidential campaign, Barack Obama tempered his pledge to substantially raise taxes for high earners with an important proviso: He'd simply restore rates to their levels during the Clinton Administration. The implication was that families in the upper brackets would see their total tax bite go back to the levels of the 1990s, but no higher.

Now, it sure looks like Obama is reneging on that promise. The burden will indeed go far higher than in the Clinton years via a technicality — one that will come as a rude shock even to the taxpayers already braced for a soaking.

The group that's hit hardest are the taxpayers I call the HENRYs, for "High Earners Not Rich Yet." The HENRYs are families who make between \$250,000 and \$500,000 a year. I wrote about the HENRYs in a Nov. 17 Fortune cover story, "Who Pays for the Bailout?" They're among America's most productive, hard-working citizens: our doctors, attorneys, architects, and entrepreneurs, the owners and builders of cleaning companies, delis and security franchises.

Though President Obama brands them as rich, they're usually far from it. "Rich" means personal wealth, or net worth, not income. These HENRYs are already strapped by a combination of high income taxes, soaring property tax levies, and college savings for the kids. Their chance of accumulating the couple of million dollars needed to qualify as rich were virtually nil even before Obama took the stage.

[CNN](#)

Revenge, always the liberal motivation.

We need these people. They are the business owners who work hard, not the lazy slackers who just kind of let stuff fall apart.

They are generally highly-motivated, family-oriented, culture-supporting people.

In fact, they're what keeps America from becoming a wasteland of whiners who contribute nothing but witty opinions.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#)

The mystery of Jewish genetics

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

While the Jews of today are connected historically and religiously to the Jews of ancient Israel, the DNA evidence also indicates that a significant amount of Jewish ancestry can be traced directly back to their Israelite/Middle Eastern ancestors. However, these ancestors represented a heterogeneous mix of Semitic and Mediterranean groups, even at their very beginnings.

While earlier studies focused on the Middle Eastern component of Jewish DNA, new research has revealed that both Europeans and Central Asians also made significant genetic contributions to Jewish ancestry. Moreover, while the DNA studies have confirmed the close genetic interrelatedness of many Jewish communities, they have also confirmed what many suspected all along: Jews do not constitute a single group distinct from all others. Rather, modern Jews exhibit a diversity of genetic profiles, some reflective of their Semitic/Mediterranean ancestry, but others suggesting an origin in European and Central Asian groups. The blending of European, Semitic, Central Asian and Mediterranean heritage over the centuries has led to today's Jewish populations.

While the Canaanites were a Western Semitic people indigenous to the area, they appear to have consisted of a diverse ethno-cultural mix from the earliest times. It is from this diverse group that the evolution of the Israelites occurred. Although little is known about these groups, they probably included some of the following populations:

1. Amorites: Western Semites like the Canaanites. They were probably the pastoral nomadic component of the Canaanite people.
2. Hittites: A non-Semitic people from Anatolia and Northern Syria.
3. Hurrians (Horites): A non-Semitic people who inhabited parts of Syria and Mesopotamia. Many kings of the early Canaanite city-states had Hurrian names.
4. Amalekites: Nomads from southern Transjordan. Even inimical references to this group in the Hebrew Bible "tacitly" acknowledge that the Israelites and Amalekites shared a common ancestry.
5. Philistines: Referred to in ancient texts as "Sea Peoples." They invaded and settled along the coasts of ancient Canaan. Their culture appears to stem from that of Mycenae.

(Dever 2003, pp. 219-220).

Ironically, however, many scholars believe the Ashkenazi population probably had its earliest roots in Rome, where Jews began to establish communities as early as the second century B.C. While some of these Jews were brought to Rome as slaves, others settled there voluntarily. There were as many as 50,000 Jews in and around Rome by the first century CE, most who were "poor, Greek-speaking foreigners" scorned for their poverty and slave status (Konner 2003, p. 86). Eventually, however, many of these slaves gained their freedom, continuing to live in and around Rome.

By 600 CE, Jews were present in many parts of Europe, with small settlements in Germany, France and Spain. More to the east, there were also small Jewish settlements along the Black Sea, as well as larger communities in Greece and the Balkans (Konner 2003, p. 110).

By the 12th-13th centuries CE, Jews were expelled from many countries of Western Europe, but were granted charters to settle in Poland and Lithuania (Ostrer 2001). The Ashkenazi Jewish population expanded rapidly in Eastern Europe, growing from an estimated 15,000-25,000 people in the 13th-15th centuries, to two million by 1800 and eight million in 1939 (Ostrer 2001, Behar 2004b). Thus, Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe became the dominant culture of the

European Jews, and then of most Jews throughout the world.

[JOGG](#)

For anyone like me who loves history told through genes, this article from 2005 is a complete goldmine. Newer data has come out that does not radically contradict anything found here.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

How we exterminate species

Feb 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Researchers have been racing against time to find a cure for the deadly facial tumour disease threatening the tasmanian devil with extinction.

The problem is a lack of genetic diversity because of inbreeding.

"We're also looking at ancient DNA from samples that have been collected from animal skins, collected from animals that have gone extinct on the mainland.

"Perhaps that will give us some indications of how much genetic diversity there was in the past."

[ABC](#)

When humans encroach on their land, species are reduced to too low of a breeding population to maintain any kind of internal health. Inbreeding is one problem; another is that when there are too few breeding partners, standards drop radically. As a result, the species appears to slip away rather than suddenly die, which is what modern morons would require to see it's a human cause.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

When altruism is suicide

Feb 28th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People still do it for that sense of group approval:

Suicide attacks—today most often associated with acts against Americans or Israelis by Muslims—seem to be one aspect of a wider phenomenon in which collective religious ritual fosters a mindset known as parochial altruism, according to psychologists. Parochial altruism is a combination of negative attitudes toward another social group and sacrifice for one's own.

Suicide attacks would be an extreme form of parochial altruism, said the psychologists who conducted the study, from the New School for Social Research in New York and the University of British Columbia. And when forms of parochial altruism other than suicide attacks were considered, the researchers found many cultures and religions followed the pattern identified in the Middle East.

[World Science](#)

This “parochial altruism” explains many dysfunctional behaviors in our own society, like ethnocide, which is probably why our media and pundits foam at the mouth when talking about Islam.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [parochial altruism](#)

More bad data analysis

Feb 28th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A new nationwide study (pdf) of anonymised credit-card receipts from a major online adult entertainment provider finds little variation in consumption between states.

Those states that do consume the most porn tend to be more conservative and religious than states with lower levels of consumption, the study finds.

"Some of the people who are most outraged turn out to be consumers of the very things they claimed to be outraged by," Benjamin Edelman says.

[New Scientist](#)

Consider:

1. These receipts are anonymized.
2. Not everyone in a conservative state is conservative.
3. Not everyone consumes the same amount of porn.

This means that in a conservative state, a relative minority could be responsible for this porn consumption.

The headline "Conservatives are biggest consumers (of porn)" is misleading, as is Edelman's statement.

In fact, since there's no direct proof chain leading to his conclusion and that headline, we have to wonder: why would a scientist make such an un-scientific declaration?

Oh right: it makes a great headline. It's ironic. It entitles us to feel a revenge impulse against those who do believe in something other than themselves.

How easily science sells itself to the highest bidder.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#)

The moral state, the nanny state, and the total state

Feb 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When you think about it, the motivations for becoming a total state don't matter; the eventual condition of that state does, which is that a government is trying to apply political dogma to a population.

Genetic information taken from nearly 1.1 million children is now stored on the national DNA database, official figures show, and campaigners believe that as many as half of them have no criminal convictions.

The figure fuels the row about retention of personal information on the DNA register and on the police national computer for years after it ceases to be relevant.

The figures, revealed in a parliamentary answer to the Liberal Democrats, show that 1.09 million DNA profiles of people aged under 18 were held on the database with 337,000 under 16.

[The Guardian](#)

The sad thing is the police are probably right to do this. Walk a beat, and you see that apples don't fall far from the tree, so you keep track of some even if they haven't been caught yet. Sure, you're wrong on some... but you're right on most.

Anarchists and libertarians want us to believe that we can just stop enforcing laws, and let nature sort this mess out, but they deny how much that would enable the parasites and criminals to destroy good people — who are fewer in number. The only thing that kept the Wild West stable was that there was a steady influx of new people, many of whom being settlers and not criminals eventually civilized the place.

Instead, society has to make some hard choices. Do we want to live in a surveillance society? Then we tolerate everyone, hope we catch the bad guys, and watch our supply of good people dwindle as stuff gets more disordered. Do we not want to live in a surveillance society? Great — then we should boot out the parasites and criminals and idiots, and move on with a middle-class, stable, higher-IQ world.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Doubling the workforce was a dumb idea

Feb 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Does the woman in your life really need a job?

Admittedly, this is not a fashionable question. From Iceland to Australia, men are blamed for causing the credit crunch, while a more feminine approach to finance is proposed as the solution.

Indeed, working women almost certainly caused the credit crunch by bringing a second income into the average household, pushing property prices up to unsustainable levels.

Whether working women actually caused the credit crunch is now a moot point. The point is that removing women from the workforce would mitigate its effects.

[The Irish Times](#)

While this article is a purely surly Irish troll, he makes a good point: by putting two wage earners in the home, we raised expenses and raised costs, but incomes did not follow.

It might be better to have sacralized roles where being in charge of the house is recognized as more important than a day job. That also takes the paranoid stress off of men who fear they have no identity outside of their jobs, and would make good economic sense.

Posted in: [Politics](#).
Tagged: [gender ambiguity](#)

Big business big immigration supporter

Feb 27th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When you think of those who support immigration, you think of hippies who just love everyone right? It couldn't be as cynical as... a business venture, could it?

I mean, I thought the only big business people were Republicans.

521 corporations, trade associations, business groups, labor organizations, government entities, and nonprofit organizations reported lobbying on three critical immigration bills introduced in Congress over the past three years.

98 percent of those lobbying on these bills were on record supporting amnesty for illegal aliens, increases in government mandated immigration, new or expanded guest worker programs, and elimination of effective procedures to verify worker eligibility.

Collectively, those who reported lobbying on these immigration bills spent \$345 million during this time period. The business sector accounted for more than 59 percent of those seeking to influence immigration policies. The technology sector, interested in increased access to guest workers, was the most active business interest lobbying on immigration.

Other key business players included the hospitality industry, construction, and agriculture—all of which benefit directly from low-skill foreign labor, many of whom are in the country illegally.

[FAIR](#)

The Republicans and Democrats, because they need to run money to stay in office, each have their own industry lapdogs, and sometimes the two groups crossover.

The Dems, traditionally supported by media and manual labor-intensive businesses, support agriculture, construction, hospitality, technology and banking.

The Republicans support the bankers and technology. Both of those groups also support having easy access to cheap foreign labor.

So now we've got both parties colluding to flood the place with new people.

Hippies and liberals have always been dupes because if you wave the "civil rights & equality" flag in front of them, they rush forward like retarded bovines in a cut-rate bullfight. Because they're low self-esteem cases, they are desperate for anything to make themselves seem more important, and that it's offered by corporate America doesn't seem to enter their minds.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Hope, maybe, but not through change

Feb 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A Pentagon report requested by President Obama on the conditions at the Guantánamo Bay detention center concluded that the prison complies with the humane-treatment requirements of the Geneva Conventions.

The report concluded that the Pentagon was in compliance with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions. The review included some of the most contentious issues, including the forced feeding of hunger-striking detainees and claims that many prisoners were suffering from psychosis as a result of conditions in the detention center.

[NYT](#)

You mean this media blitz we've faced, telling us how it's the new Auschwitz, played fast and loose with the facts?

O RLY

President Obama's administration is moving aggressively to protect what the government insists are "state secrets" from a Bush-era wiretapping program.

Justice Department lawyers filed an emergency motion Friday with a federal appeals court in an effort to block a lower court's order that the government must show lawyers for the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation a copy of a document indicating that the group's communications were being intercepted. The document has been the subject of a running legal battle since the papers were accidentally sent to attorneys for the group in 2004 and subsequently retrieved. ...

The government wants the wiretapping lawsuit thrown out on the basis of the state secrets privilege, but a federal judge in San Francisco ruled that the privilege is overruled by a law Congress wrote, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

[Politico](#)

So the two most controversial aspects of the Bush presidency are either determined to be legitimate, or adopted by his successor.

President Obama, who took a no-earmark pledge on the campaign trail, is listed as one of dozens of cosponsors of a \$7.7 million set-aside in the fiscal 2009 omnibus spending bill passed by the House on Wednesday.

On Thursday, Rob Blumenthal, a spokesman for the Senate Appropriations Committee said the one earmark in the bill that carries Obama's name will be edited.

The \$7.7 million earmark — for Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational Institutions — is cosponsored by a long list of other members of both chambers.

[CQ](#)

Hope! Change! Hope! Change!

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Feedback loops we don't like to see

Feb 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Recessions snowball because we panic:

Shopping centers are caught in a bind driven by the steep pullback in consumer spending: Lower sales have forced many mall tenants to close stores, leading to higher vacancy rates and lower foot traffic, which further drives down sales.

[WAPQ](#)

People cut costs so can do less business so get less business, and there's a trickle-down effect to that, too.

THE British Army is facing increasing numbers of British Muslims fighting for the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Senior officers claim they are engaged in a "surreal mini civil war", having to face fighters from the West Midlands and Yorkshire.

Interceptions of Taliban communications have revealed "seemingly committed jihadists" speaking with "West Midlands accents".

Recent ground and air surveillance has shown increasing numbers of "British voices" in the front line.

[The Evening Standard](#)

Liberty encourages people to do their own thing, so they do, and then consensus is lost and civilization falls into chaos.

Multiculturalism encourages each person to pursue their own culture, which they do, and then find out that all strong ideas oppose all others within the same scope.

Hence, increasing jihad between people who grew up nearby.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Green reality

Feb 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Illusion: someday, humanity will wake up, drop everything else and focus on being green.

Reality: the green solutions that will win will be gradually adopted because they are both green and superior to the way we're doing things now.

The national obsession with soft paper has driven the growth of brands like Cottonelle Ultra, Quilted Northern Ultra and Charmin Ultra — which in 2008 alone increased its sales by 40 percent in some markets, according to Information Resources, Inc., a marketing research firm.

But fluffiness comes at a price: millions of trees harvested in North America and in Latin American countries, including some percentage of trees from rare old-growth forests in Canada. Although toilet tissue can be made at similar cost from recycled material, it is the fiber taken from standing trees that help give it that plush feel, and most large manufacturers rely on them.

[NYT](#)

Surely with all of our technology we can find a way to use a faster-replenishing plant, like woody hemp, to grow in place of these trees. We need to re-order our priorities and throw more R&D money into a solution.

People, if given a choice between two tissues, will probably always pick the softer one, even if marginally softer. So we must be realists and address the need.

A prominent Canadian academic in the tech-policy field has said that "Green IT" initiatives don't work.

"Most of the negative environmental impacts [of IT] occur in the form of completely unintended, second and third order effects," says Professor Richard Hawkins of Calgary Uni. "These 'rebound' effects may not be mitigated by inventing 'greener' IT products and, indeed, may be intensified by such changes."

[University of Calgary](#)

He's right — the real green impact is our infrastructure, which directly relates to the number of people we have.

Each person requires at minimum a liter of water, two pounds of food, a half-mile of road, 30 minutes of government agency attention, 40 square feet of consumer space, etc. per day. Even if we halve those numbers, our population when it doubles will erode those gains — and it's unlikely we can halve them.

Green products are generally made with the convenient idea that if we make more efficient gadgets, we have solved the problem. Nope, we've shaved off a little bit, but even that is dubious, considering how much more energy goes into green products and their notorious decreased reliability — meaning they need to be replaced sooner.

It's better to target green where it's needed: population control and infrastructure reform.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

An underworld

Feb 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

He might not be a household name, but Ricardo Fanchini is one of the world's most well-connected gangsters, with mobster friends as far afield as Moscow, New York, London, Antwerp, Naples, Poland and Israel.

"He was like the CEO of crime and used to organise crime summits in Austria, where people from the Camorra [Neapolitan mafia], the Colombian cartels, the Russian mafia, met up and divided up the world," said a Belgian reporter who has investigated Fanchini for years but does not wish to be identified.

[BBC](#)

The difference between conspiracy and reality: it's feasible that underworlds and black markets exist because they have some means of support.

That weird conspiracies exist — for what gain? — and rule invisibly is less logical.

But it's not illogical to recognize that media elites, mafia underworlds, black markets and others produce profit, which can be used to purchase the loyalty of public officials.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The fallacy of pure logic

Feb 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Only a true ingenue would fall for this one:

Here, mathematician Manil Suri suggests that children should be encouraged to find answers purely using logic.

Everyone should think for themselves more, rather than relying on ideology.

Don't ride along with the teachings of your left- or right-wing politics – or even worse, your religion I'd say.

Instead, try to reason out the correct path from common sense and basic humanist principles.

[BBC](#)

It's the censor within: use logic, but also assume "humanist principles" as well.

But those are the basis of left-wing politics.

It took this enlightened idiot two paragraphs to make a fatal logical error, one that approximately 2% of her audience will notice.

(Polite golf clap.)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Culture is produced by biology

Feb 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People often speak of culture in the plural ("cultures") because they believe that there are many different cultures in the world. At one level, this is of course true; the American culture is different from the Chinese culture, both of which are different from the Egyptian culture, and so on. However, all the cultural differences are on the surface; deep down, at the most fundamental level, all human cultures are essentially the same.

But the grave error of traditional sociologists and others under the influence of the Standard Social Science Model (a term attributable to the co-founders of evolutionary psychology, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby) is to believe that human behavior is infinitely malleable, capable of being molded and shaped limitlessly in any way by cultural practices and socialization. Available evidence shows that this view is false. Human behavior, while malleable, is not infinitely malleable by culture, because culture is not infinitely variable. In fact, despite all the surface and minor differences, evolutionary psychologists have shown that all human cultures are essentially the same.

[Psychology Today](#)

An oldie but a goodie, this article reminds us of a fact: human behavior is a response to the human environment. Sensible behaviors survive; insane or delusional ones do not. Similarly, cultures are collected knowledge for intergenerational transmission that reflect the sensible behaviors that have survived. In other words, culture arises from adaptation, is encoded into biology, and that knowledge is kept together by culture.

In 1923, Margaret Mead (1901-1978), one of the most celebrated anthropologists of all time, was an anthropology graduate student of Franz Boas (1858-1942) at Columbia University. Boas was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, and was therefore politically and personally motivated to prove wrong the Nazi policy of eugenics. While this is an admirable goal in and of itself, Boas unfortunately chose the wrong tactics to achieve it. He wanted to show that biology had nothing to do with how humans behave, and that environment — culture and socialization — determines human behavior completely. He was a strong proponent of cultural determinism.

Mead knew that in the United States and the rest of the Western world, boys were sexually aggressive and actively pursued girls, while girls were sexually coy and waited to be asked out on dates by boys. "How different are things in Samoa? How are Samoan boys and girls when it comes to sex?" Mead asked her two young female informants, Fa'apua'a Fa'amu and Fofoa Poumele.

Fa'apua'a and Fofoa, just like young women everywhere, were quite embarrassed to talk about sex to a total stranger. So they decided to make a big joke about it out of sheer embarrassment. They told Mead the opposite of how things were in Samoa. They told her that boys were quite shy, and girls actively pursued boys sexually. It was a hoax, but in the minds of Fa'apua'a and Fofoa, the story that they were telling Mead was so outrageous and so obviously untrue that they couldn't believe that anyone in her right mind would believe them.

Except that Mead did, for this was exactly the type of "evidence" that Boas had sent her to Samoa to gather.

[Psychology Today](#)

Cultural determinism presumes a more flattering but unfounded principle: that we choose our culture semi-

arbitrarily.

It's a variation of pandering to the Crowd. Tell them their God-like brains, and thus their egos, make decisions and that it has nothing to do with their animal-like bodies, and they like you. Why? Because you told them they are in control.

In reality, free will is an illusion and we are our biology. First, we do what we are capable of understanding. Second, we have inherent tendencies sculpted over time by natural selection and passed on as culture that emerge in our personalities. Finally, we are regulated by our hormone levels, which are biological. We are biology.

Psychologists have conducted a study of more than 100 people and claim to have identified an optimism gene.

"We've shown for the first time that a genetic variation is linked with a tendency to look on the bright side of life," says Elaine Fox of the University of Essex. "This is a key mechanism underlying resilience to general life stress."

The fates of our unfortunate Crusoes are determined not, then, by their characters but by the genetic determinants on their characters.

I choose to believe the result, though, because it confirms what I suspected: we are the victims of our own brains. Actually, I should recast that sentence. Rather than choosing to believe this study because it confirms what I already suspected, I was genetically doomed to believe it because it confirms what I am genetically doomed to believe about the setup of the universe.

I once imagined that optimism was a matter of willpower.

[The Guardian](#)

It's only human pretense that makes us think character and willpower are separate from genetics. Our genes determine our abilities. We can choose to accelerate those abilities, like a person with musical talent practicing and so becoming a virtuoso, but we cannot create them out of thin air.

In the same way, civilizations are created by the branching of genes. Collaborating in the cold requires an awareness of morality; of 100 communities, one developed the requisite genes and survived, dominating the others. Surviving in cities requires a defensive awareness of self; those who have it thrive. And so on.

That offends our conception of ourselves as "in control" but as any scientist will tell you, we're in control of very little. We're nerve impulses as conditioned by evolution.

The argument that fairy tales and the media link physical beauty to positive attributes does not explain why children as young as 14 hours old gaze at adults judged to have attractive female faces longer than those who have unattractive faces.

To label a mental or perceptual mechanism as shaped by selection process, it is imperative to show that the mechanism is operative across diverse ethnic and cultural groups of humans. The effect of WHR (waist-to-hip ratio, which defines the female form) on female attractiveness has now been reported for almost 20 ethnic and culture groups: USA (White, Black, and Latino), England, Germany, Holland, Poland, Greece, Australia, Kenya (Africa), Guinea-Bissau (Africa), Uganda (Africa), Azore Island, Shiwiar tribe of East Ecuador, Indonesia, Hong Kong (China), India (Sugali and Yanadi tribes), Chile (South America), and Jamaica. Some researchers have suggested that the reported influence of WHR on female attractiveness cross-culturally is due to exposure to Western media. In other words, people in non-Western societies copy Western ideals when defining their own ideals of feminine beauty. The speculation that people in non-Western societies imitate Western ideals of beauty does not explain why a relationship between WHR and attractiveness exists in Western societies and why Asian and African societies, which

reportedly associate fatness with attractiveness, nevertheless attend to and are influenced by WHR.

As evident in Figure 4, all groups have practically identical ratings for all attributes in spite of extremely diverse cultural backgrounds; men from Guinea-Bissau (one of the poorest countries, with practically no exposure to Western media), Azore Island (which has government-controlled, commercial-free television), Indonesia, and U.S. (African-American and Caucasian) rate figures as less attractive, less healthy, older, and less desirable for marriage as WHR increases (Singh, 2004; Singh & Luis, 1995). Furthermore, attractiveness, healthiness, and youthfulness covary in identical manners as a function of WHR for all groups. Such systematic convergence of perceived attractiveness, healthiness, and youthfulness based solely on WHR cannot be attributed to media exposure.

[Psi Chi](#)

There are universal responses to our environment that are ideal, including feminine beauty, intelligence, and symmetry.

And while we can change ourselves, that can go either forward (us getting more competent, more moral, healthier and more beautiful) or degenerate:

Our brains—or worse, children's brains—could be rewired from the fast pace of modern social networking sites, TV shows, and video games, says Oxford University neuroscientist Susan Greenfield. The researcher said this week that kids seem to have more trouble understanding each other (in real life, that is) and focusing in school, and that it could be due to the proliferation of short, bite-sized clips of information in the online world that is causing their brains to physically change.

"My fear is that these technologies are infantilising the brain into the state of small children who are attracted by buzzing noises and bright lights, who have a small attention span and who live for the moment," she told the Daily Mail in an interview this week. "It is hard to see how living this way on a daily basis will not result in brains, or rather minds, different from those of previous generations."

[Ars Technica](#)

Natural selection is determined by how we survive.

If we survive by prostituting ourselves, only those naturally inclined to whore will survive.

When people are busy shattering their attention spans with short feedback loop devices, they will eventually set a social standard of short communication.

That social standard will determine who succeeds in the Social Darwinism enacted by our society.

That will determine who breeds and thus, what traits prevail.

Future humans may be short, squat and well-adapted to play video games, but unable to develop philosophy.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Darwinism](#), [Science](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [cultural determinism](#) · [reproduction](#)

Suicide is mostly painless

Feb 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Researchers have learned, for example, that suicide rates are rising and now account for 1.5 per cent of all deaths worldwide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 24, after vehicle accidents. Women are more likely than men to attempt suicide, while men are much more likely to succeed.

[New Scientist](#)

Suicide rates are rising? But I thought we were on our way to paradise.

Second, and most important, people who succeed in killing themselves must be capable of doing the deed. This may sound obvious, but until Joiner pointed it out, no one had tried to figure out why some people are able to go through with it when most are not. No matter how seriously you want to die, Joiner says, it is not an easy thing to do. The self-preservation instinct is too strong.

So, out of our depressed people, only the competent die, leaving the incompetent?

Must be one of nature's saprophytes, cleansing dead civilizations.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Scientists urged to put politics before truth

Feb 26th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Martin argues that determinations of where and when Iroquoian groups entered the region have political implications that relate to such modern concerns as American Indian land claims.

He writes that "archaeology's role in society is not purely academic." It can have immediate consequences for a variety of stakeholders.

Archaeologists, therefore, have a responsibility to become more attuned to the social context in which we do our work.

[The Dispatch](#)

What this article hints at is something known well among scientists: like artists, they are dependent on benefactors. Benefactors like to appear good to EVERYONE which means they cannot offend ANYONE or a negative voice against them is heard, which counts more than a thousand positive voices.

So they want no controversy. That means if a living Indian tribe says that certain artifacts came from an Indian tribe and not a European one, that has to be "the truth." After all, an underdog has more sympathy value with The Crowd than someone who is comfortably making science from a trouble-free background.

This means that our desires for conclusions overshadow our ability to discern truth; we're literally declaring what we'll find and then find it, since we have politically eliminated parts of the truth.

Posted in: [Science](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#)

Cognitive dissonance kills civilizations

Feb 26th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

From a dialogue:

The problem is that every society begins dying as soon as it is formed. The method of this death is loss of consensus — you might call it pluralism.

Without a clear goal, it becomes a free-for-all where people can use political symbols as gestures of goodwill. Like, for example, "I'll bring jobs if you'll ignore the toxic waste in the rivers" and "I am kind to the lowly minority."

Soon you get a huge population of displaced, directionless, neurotic people who are willing to cling to the first idiot who promises them peace, love, happiness or other sappy absolutes that have nothing to do with reality.

We call those liberals, The Revolution, etc. but the real symptom is cognitive dissonance. They're out of touch with reality and society makes it easy for that to be the case.

This creates a situation where anyone realistic just cares about keeping the economy, defense and law enforcement operating, and the rest of the horde indulge in emotional outbursts that have disastrous consequences, like Obama.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#)

How diversity kills

Feb 25th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

In *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (Princeton University Press), Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn report that military units were more cohesive if they were composed of men who looked, voted, and worshiped like one another. Diverse units, meanwhile, did not fare as well.

All else equal, soldiers were less likely to desert if they were born in the United States or Germany than if they were born in Ireland, England, or elsewhere. Soldiers were less likely to desert if they were literate and had high incomes.

Holding all of the individual traits constant, white soldiers were less likely to desert if they fought alongside soldiers who were similar to them in terms of occupation, region, ethnicity, and religion. In African-American companies, soldiers were less likely to desert if they fought alongside soldiers from the same region.

But the two economists insist that on its own terms, their Civil War study tells a powerful story: Social networks matter. In a forthcoming paper in the journal *Demography*, they report that in Union veterans' old age, their health was worse if they had experienced a high amount of battle stress during the war. That isn't surprising. The paper's startling finding is that among veterans whose military companies had been highly cohesive, the effect disappeared.

In a previous paper on economic diversity and community life, Ms. Costa and Mr. Kahn criticized the political scientist Robert D. Putnam's much-debated 2000 book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Mr. Putnam, they said, had exaggerated the decline of American civic life and had looked in the wrong places for explanations. According to Ms. Costa and Mr. Kahn, we shouldn't blame television or overwork or urban design. The real explanation is the rise in social heterogeneity, which makes people slower to form bonds of trust.

[Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

This should surprise no one.

To act together, we need to know that others will back us up for standing up for abstract values — basically, that there's consensus on those values.

Consensus comes best from those of the same culture, language, background and, yes, those whose ancestors went through the same evolutionary process that shaped their consciousness.

We don't create ourselves. We are not blank slates. We are what we are, biologically, and evolution is written all over us. It's ignorant and comical to deny it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [multiculturalism](#)

Signs of the recovery

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

As you may know, I don't think this "recession" is anything more than the market deflating overvalued assets from the Clinton era.

Here are some signs of recovery:

- The Conference Board's index of leading economic indicators has risen for two months in a row.
- Consumer prices rose in January — the first monthly gain in six months.
- Thanks to lower interest rates, applications for both new mortgages and refinancings of existing mortgages are rising.
- The decline in consumer credit moderated in the latest month.
- The 3-month London interbank offered rate, a measure of banks' willingness to lend to each other, has dropped to 1.2% from close to 5% a number of weeks ago.
- The corporate-bond markets are thawing out, too; some \$127 billion in dollar-denominated debt was issued in January, the most for any month since last May.

[MarketWatch](#)

Posted in: [Politics](#).

The citizens are getting restless

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

From the bullet that smashed through a Lawrence City Hall window to stinking fishes flung at the Gloucester mayor's home, city and state leaders are feeling the heat on the street from taxpayers and public sector workers fuming over impending layoffs and service cuts.

Authorities believe a bullet that slammed into the Lawrence city planner's desk last weekend may be related the recent layoffs of 11 city employees and the firing of two others.

Gloucester Mayor Carolyn Kirk, who receives plainclothes police protection on occasion, found a pile of fish on her front porch last month, and her secretary intercepts an almost daily stream of angry e-mails and letters, redirecting the most menacing to police.

Geoff Beckwith, executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, fears that the anger could morph into violence as the economic crisis deepens.

[Boston Herald](#)

70% of Americans think Congress is corrupt, almost half distrust the president, and everyone wants someone to "do something" about it?

Looks like they are. Wake me up when it gets to the "pitched battles with minutemen" stage.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Rethinking the value of democracy in a green context

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

McKibben and many other environmental writers affect an indifference toward, or transcendence of, politics in the ordinary sense, but ultimately cannot conceal their rejection of the liberal tradition. Here we observe the irony of modern environmentalism: the concern for the preservation of unchanged nature has grown in tandem with the steady erosion in our belief in unchanging human nature; the concern for the "rights of nature" has come to embrace a rejection of natural rights for humans. McKibben is one of many current voices (Gore is another) who like to express their environmentalism by decrying "individualism" (McKibben calls it "hyperindividualism"). Finding that individualism is "the sole ideology of a continent," he explains:

Fighting the ideology that was laying waste to so much of the planet demanded going beyond that individualism. Many found the means to do that in the notion of 'community'—a word almost as fuzzy and hard to pin down as 'wild,' but one that has emerged as an even more compelling source of motive energy for the environmental movement.

This is not a new theme for McKibben. Al Gore employed the same "communitarian" trope in his first and most famous environmental book, *Earth in the Balance* (1992), where, in the course of arguing that the environment should be the "central organizing principle" of civilization, he suggested that the problem with individual liberty is that we have too much of it. This preference for soft despotism has become more concrete with the increasing panic over global warming in the past few years. Several environmental authors now argue openly that democracy itself is the obstacle and needs to be abandoned. A year ago a senior fellow emeritus at Britain's Policy Studies Institute, Mayer Hillman, author of *How We Can Save the Planet*, told a reporter, "When the chips are down I think democracy is a less important goal than is the protection of the planet from the death of life, the end of life on it. This [rationing] has got to be imposed on people whether they like it or not." (Hillman openly advocates resource rationing.) Another recent self-explanatory book is *The Climate Change Challenge and the Failure of Democracy* by Australians David Shearman and Joseph Wayne Smith. Shearman argued recently that

[I]liberal democracy is sweet and addictive and indeed in the most extreme case, the U.S.A., unbridled individual liberty overwhelms many of the collective needs of the citizens.... There must be open minds to look critically at liberal democracy. Reform must involve the adoption of structures to act quickly regardless of some perceived liberties.

In *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty*, Australian political scientist Robyn Eckersley offers up an approach that, despite being swathed in postmodern jargon, is readily transparent. The "ecocentric," transnational "green state" Eckersley envisions is represented as an explicit alternative to "the classical liberal state, the indiscriminate growth-dependent welfare state, and the increasingly ascendant neoliberal competition state." Achieving a post-liberal state requires rethinking the entire Enlightenment project:

By framing the problem as one of rescuing and reinterpreting the Enlightenment goals of autonomy and critique, it is possible to identify what might be called a mutually informing set of "liberal dogmas" that have for too long been the subject of unthinking faith rather than critical scrutiny by liberals. The most significant of these dogmas are a muscular individualism and an understanding of the self-interested

rational actor as natural and eternal; a dualistic conception of humanity and nature that denies human dependency on the biological world and gives rise to the notion of human exceptionalism from, and instrumentalism and chauvinism toward, the natural world; the sanctity of private property rights; the notion that freedom can only be acquired through material plenitude; and overconfidence in the rational mastery of nature through further scientific and technological progress.

Every traditional liberal or “progressive” understanding is up for grabs in this framework.

[CMI](#)

The entire article is worth reading. The degree to which the authors seem to understand the topic is in itself impressive. It eventually veers off course to make some tidy points by looking at partial data, but as it's from a neoliberal source this is to be expected.

However, it brings to mind a vital point:

How do we create a system that accounts for top-down consequences (population expansion, pollution) when it is based on the bottom-up principle of individual liberty before all else?

The answer: the individual is a poor goal because by individual we mean both individual body and individual capacity for absolute choice, meaning the right/ability to do anything outside of social taboos like murder.

We need another goal, like “an organic civilization.” But that frightens people who are accustomed to being manipulated by those who pander to their individualism.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Fauxtroversion

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Twitter, Facebook, generally the “social web” stuff are all about fauxtroversion: a third kind of attitude to social interactions, besides the two classical ones, the extroverted and the introverted.

Communication, at least when it comes to extro- and introversion, has (at least) two aspects: content (talking about interesting stuff), and feelings.

Introverts or nerds, like me, don't like it. Which does not mean we don't like to communicate, but we only like to communicate about impersonal, interesting topics like programming languages, politics and economics, and dislike the touchy-feely feelings of content-free, chitchat-like social interaction.

This why we introverts frequent forums, blogs, Reddit: on these platforms the discussion is always about some interesting topic and never chatting, it's never like like “Hey, how are you? Haven't seen you in ages? Are you doing OK?”. That we don't like to do and we like communicating on forums and blogs because it almost never happens, but it's always about discussing a topic.

First, IRC, later on, other chatroom services, later on, MySpace and Facebook, and later on, Twitter, introduced a social, chit-chat, warm-touchy-feely emotional aspect to Internet communication. Or, to be exact: a very poor simulation of those.

So they are all about faking extroversion: you are still an asocial nerd like us introverts, sitting before the computer, not going out, not talking face to face, not looking into eyes, not clapping shoulders, not laughing together, but with these services you can act as if you were extroverted. You can “friend” (“to friend”, a verb) people on Facebook. You can send “Hey, how are you?” kind of faux-chitchat comments or messages to them. You can update these faux-friends about what you had for dinner on Twitter and read theirs and pretend you are interested. You can't smile and see them smile and high-five and give a clap on the shoulder and all that on Twitter or Facebook, but you can reply to a tweet or a comment with a smiley, which is a poor, low bandwidth simulation of it. In short it's acting as if you were social and extroverted.

[Reddit](#)

Interesting. I always think of it as externalization: letting external aspects of your existence, such as an online persona or your politics or the products you buy, replace the need for inward clarity.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#)

The mob hates the smart

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

If people are unstable, they will probably form large groups based on mutual non-noticing of their instability. So everyone gets together, no one points out the neurosis that's the elephant in the room, and oddly, this bonds them together.

Eventually, they decide to go kill the people who are smart and take their stuff. That's either the intrusion of the ghetto to the suburbs, a Revolution, or what happens when you have an incompetent HR department, depending on who you talk to.

Here's another example:

Gail Trimble, the girl with the planet-sized brain who scored 825 of the 1,235 points amassed by Corpus Christi, Oxford, on the road to last night's final of University Challenge, which they won – has become the new public pariah.

Across the country, bitter bloggers have sniped at a woman who knows about everything from Rudyard Kipling to Kazakhstan banknotes, from Homer to human genetics.

'Smug', 'brain-rupturingly irritating', 'vicious bitch', 'a horse-toothed snob'. . . With every insult there emerges a new member of the growing ranks of a nasty, insecure tribe who need to be comforted in their own dumbness, rather than impressed by another's brilliance.

I have nothing against Jade Goody: it would be odd to feel anything other than sympathy for any mother dying so young. But that doesn't take away from the fact that she has achieved little of lasting merit in her short life.

That shortcoming is, in fact, exactly what she has been celebrated for. The reason why she became so famous is precisely because, unlike Miss Trimble, she knows so little.

If you know nothing, and see someone getting rich and famous precisely for that reason, you are instantly validated. You, too, could become the next poster girl for ignorance.

How comforting, too, if the moment an awesomely intelligent woman does come along, you're allowed to attack her for being smug and snobbish.

[The Daily Mail](#)

The Crowd sees themselves in their chosen heroes. For that reason, they don't want too smart or too healthy or too beautiful; they want someone like them, a true champion of the people, a lowest common denominator done right!

People would rather see someone who is broken, flawed, a wreck, one of life's victims. That's because they themselves feel like that.

Anyone who is not, and who is successful, brings home to them just what they are lacking. So they blame such people for being arrogant, toffee-nosed or holier-than-thou.

It's like a giant national inferiority complex that makes people lash out at those who are not just successful but wholesome – precisely because they are wholesome. Only Victims of Life can be national icons.

[The Daily Mail](#)

It could even explain why Americans elected a corrupt do-nothing on a platform of “hope!” and “change!”

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [self-deception](#)

Jobs can eat your brain

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A study of 2,214 British civil servants, published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, suggests they are underestimating the long-term damage they could be doing to their brains.

Some 39 per cent worked fewer than 40 hours a week, 53 per cent between 41 to 55 hours and eight per cent more than 55. In their early fifties, they were put through a series of brain function tests.

Those doing the most overtime recorded lower scores in two of the five key brain function tests – reasoning and vocabulary.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Probably years of exhaustion and futility — trying to cram too much into a day, then having to sit through painfully slow meetings while they try to make sure every numb nodding head “Gets It” — take their toll.

We’d do better if we designed jobs like natural selection, where those who get it move on, and those who do not — no matter who they’re related to, what underprivileged or overprivileged group they’re from, or how much we want to pity them — do not move on and in fact get moved out of the office.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Glimpses of transcendent order in material-energy similarities

Feb 25th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

There are several materials that evince a clear phase shift in all thermodynamic properties when the temperature falls below a certain transitional temperature, but no one has been able to explain the new collective order in the material. Until now, it has been called the hidden order.

Extremely small magnetic fluctuations prompt changes in the macroscopic properties of the material, so an entirely new phase arises, with different properties.

"Never before have we seen the so-called 'magnetic spin excitations' produce a phase transition and the formation of a new phase. In ordinary material this excitation cannot change the phase and properties of the material because it is too weak. But now we have shown that this is in fact possible," says Peter Oppeneer.

[Science Daily](#)

In the same way, details seem to alter the big picture when they get enough momentum. The microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm, but it may occur in stages, like a Russian doll or measuring cups.



One within another.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Absolute political ideals are manipulations

Feb 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Over the last 30 years human rights have triumphed. They unite left and right, north and south, church and state. The cosmopolitan world order promises the fulfilment of Enlightenment principles and an end to strife.

Yet human rights have only paradoxes to offer. Despite the statements about a universal right to life, every day brings more atrocious news from Darfur, Congo, Palestine and Mumbai.

Human rights are an expression of the human urge to resist public and private domination and oppression. Their force unites Chinese dissidents, the defenders of refugees, immigrants and detainees of the war on terror as well as schoolkids in Greece. In the hands of western governments however they have become the latest version of the civilising mission.

In the west, the rise of neoliberal capitalism coincided with the cosmopolitan and humanitarian turn. The spread of human rights is not the result of the liberal or charitable disposition of the west exported to the south along with the second hand clothes offered to Oxfam. Global moral and civic rules are the necessary companion of neoliberal capitalism.

Robert Cooper has called these arrangements the voluntary imperialism of the global economy. It is an imperialism "acceptable to a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values". Economic rules have been supplemented by various treaties and rhetorical statements on rights which prepare the future world citizen, highly moralised and regulated, but also highly materially differentiated despite the common rights everyone should enjoy from Helsinki to Hanoi.

[The Guardian](#)

The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

If we think of ourselves first, maybe human rights is a justification for us taking over? It's globalist cultural imperialism: removal of all things that oppose us by calling them racist, sexist, classist or homophobic.

The amazing thing is that he can print this article and it's still too complicated for the voting populace. Why? Because they're too busy considering themselves scholars and gentlemen for upholding human rights as a goal, even though both parasitic hippies and manipulative CEOs agree with them.

The United States sharply criticized China on Wednesday in its annual report on human rights, one week after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton soft-pedalled rights concerns during a visit to Beijing.

The State Department report also took aim at Russia, where it said civil liberties were "under siege," and noted a global outbreak in restrictive laws on non-governmental groups and the media, including the Internet.

In an examination of human rights in more than 190 countries during 2008, the report roundly criticized many of its usual targets, including Afghanistan, North Korea, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Myanmar and Zimbabwe.

"The most serious human rights abuses tended to occur in countries where unaccountable rulers wielded unchecked power or there was government failure or collapse, often exacerbated or caused by internal or external conflict," said the report, which regularly draws the anger of foreign governments targeted for criticism.

[Reuters](#)

Human rights is an excuse for cultural imperialism. We claim moral superiority, accuse our enemies of being Zombie Hitler, and then declare war on them.

Through this passive aggression, we force them to either participate in our system of government — where populist notions triumph over culture, ideals and long-term thinking — or go to war with us.

Those who do not compromise are terrorists or Nazis.

Most of our citizens accept this outlook because they want to look good to other people, so offer tokens of being good, like altruism, egalitarianism and their political arm, “civil rights”/“human rights.”

Manipulating each other in order for individuals to succeed, and thus destroying the collective that is essential to civilization — on and on, south of Heaven...

The Chinese have responded with an insightful view of America:

China has responded in detail to a US report published this week criticising China for alleged rights abuses.

Beijing released its own report on the US, saying crime is a threat to many Americans and racial discrimination prevails in social life across the US.

The 9,000-word Chinese report depicts a bleak picture of the US, saying violent crime is a widespread threat to people’s lives, property and personal security.

The American people’s economic, social and cultural rights are not properly protected, say the Chinese, and many young Americans “have personality disorders”.

[BBC](#)

The comedy is that both reports are correct.

It’s just that “human rights” isn’t a goal, it’s a symbol.

Most people are too disorganized/not gifted by nature to take advantage of their rights. They will be perpetual disasters.

But we invent a political token instead of addressing that problem.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [morality](#) · [self-deception](#)

After criticizing war, Europeans have no problem profiting from it

Feb 24th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

President Bush was hardly out of the White House before his European opponents to the invasion of Iraq began lining up for what are expected to be lucrative contracts to rebuild the oil-rich country.

In recent weeks, France and Germany, which Donald Rumsfeld, former secretary of Defense, once chided as “Old Europe” for their opposition to the war, spearheaded Europe’s forceful return to Baghdad. On separate visits with similar goals, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier swung through Baghdad. Their message was clear: As the danger subsides and the US scales back, Europe should move in quickly with money and know-how to rebuild everything from power stations, water systems, schools, and hospitals to roads and bridges.

[CSM](#)

Moral objections go out the window once there’s money on the table.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Fear of biological determinism creates surveillance society

Feb 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington, D.C.-based independent research organization made up of local and state police officials, released a survey in January showing that 44 percent of police departments reported increases in crimes they believed could be attributed to the economic crisis.

Peskin, who estimates that there are about 20,000 neighborhood watch groups nationwide, said there has been an increase in requests for information on starting groups from all over the country including urban, suburban and rural communities.

Crystal Zohner lives in a gated community in Las Vegas and said her neighbors are rallying to send a clear message that they are united against crime.

"It seems like now, since the economy has changed, [thieves] are getting a little bit more sophisticated and a little more brazen," she said. "It's time to get back to simpler times, when we did look out for each other."

[CNN](#)

As crimes increase and paranoia increases, we're watching each other like spies. Soon much of that will be delegated to CCTV, RFID and other digital means of surveillance.

Since we cannot admit obvious truths such as that America has two basic groups, the middle class and everyone else who wants to plunder them, or that different groups need separation, we get a paranoid society instead. Good thinking.

News websites and newspapers with online editions are grappling with how to handle a growing wave of controversial commentary from readers, according to panellists on CBC cultural affairs show Q.

"There's a question in Canadian law that has yet to be resolved. We are very fuzzy on when hateful or abusive comments are posted on a blog commentary if the owner of that blog is to be held responsible for that. There are precedents on either side and we don't quite know where Canada stands," he said during the Q discussion.

"Other countries have said, 'No, absolutely not. If you want to have these healthy conversations, website owners need to be free of any kind of liability for that,'" he added.

[CBC](#)

By hateful comments, they mean comments that affirm some parts of biological determinism, e.g. human evolutionary branching, gender differences and class differences.

So we either decide to face the truth, or make it taboo and, as with neighborhood crime, watch each other like spies.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The recession: re-adjusting false values

Feb 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

It's always awesome to see nature — and by that I don't mean your local dog park, but the rules of the cosmos: physics, mathematics, information science — showing humans just how delusional they've been:



(Graphs from [MSN](#).)

So we see here: a classic pattern of wealth spiking from late 1996 to 2007.

Late 1996? Why, that's the Clinton years. We were all so glad for the American economic miracle. But then

why did it need re-adjusting?

In addition to the fact that our wise The People are living on credit, buying junky products for the lowest price instead of lasting products for slightly higher, and generally behaving like chimpanzees with credit cards, we also had a problem: we over-valued our assets.

Think of it this way. If you have \$100 in the bank and a loaf of bread costs \$1, you might think you're poor and lean on a populist president to do something about it. He makes it easier to borrow money, and easier to value that money by what people think it's worth right after it's borrowed. So suddenly you have \$200 in the bank and are feeling better... until you go to the store and see that bread is now \$3 (or more realistically, \$2 and 30% smaller).

But I have more money! you say.

But that money is worth less! say economists. If you have 100 pennies and I have ten dimes...

That's the path down which the Clinton economy led us, and our media — few of whom earn enough money to have to worry about such things — gladly went along with it like barking dogs.

1996. So for all of you blaming this recession on George W. Bush or the ARM lenders, think again: this recession was long in the making, because in order to please you, a populist president named William Jefferson Clinton overvalued your economy.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#)

Refuting liberalism

Feb 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When I was a freshman in college, I was assigned "Reflections on the Revolution in France" by Edmund Burke. I loathed the book. Burke argued that each individual's private stock of reason is small and that political decisions should be guided by the accumulated wisdom of the ages. Change is necessary, Burke continued, but it should be gradual, not disruptive. For a young democratic socialist, hoping to help begin the world anew, this seemed like a reactionary retreat into passivity.

Over the years, I have come to see that Burke had a point. The political history of the 20th century is the history of social-engineering projects executed by well-intentioned people that began well and ended badly. There were big errors like communism, but also lesser ones, like a Vietnam War designed by the best and the brightest, urban renewal efforts that decimated neighborhoods, welfare policies that had the unintended effect of weakening families and development programs that left a string of white elephant projects across the world.

I was no longer a liberal. Liberals are more optimistic about the capacity of individual reason and the government's ability to execute transformational change. They have more faith in the power of social science, macroeconomic models and 10-point programs.

[NYT](#)

Individual reason (computing power) is limited by the experience, capacity (hardware) and discipline (software) of the individual.

Few of us are fit to be brain surgeons, but almost all of us think we could be.

The tendency that people have to overrate their abilities fascinates Cornell University social psychologist David Dunning, PhD. "People overestimate themselves," he says, "but more than that, they really seem to believe it. I've been trying to figure out where that certainty of belief comes from."

In a series of studies reported in the December 1999 Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Vol. 77, No. 6), he and co-author Justin Kruger, PhD, then a Cornell graduate student and now an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, examined the idea that ignorance is at the root of some self-inflation.

In another article in the January issue of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Vol. 84, No. 1), Dunning and Cornell doctoral candidate Joyce Ehrlinger describe four studies revealing a potential source of people's errors in self-judgment: their longstanding views of their talents and abilities. Depending on which measure the team looked at, such self-views were equally or more related to performance estimates than to their performance itself, and these self-views often produced errors in their reporting on how well they had just performed.

One antidote to inaccurate self-assessment is high-quality feedback, Dunning says.

[Dunning-Kruger Effect](#)

So stupid people think they're smart because they lacked the smarts to notice they weren't performing intelligently, and once they've thought this and it goes unchallenged, they take it as dogma.

On the other hand, smarter people have more experience with failure, so are more realistic in their self-assessments.

This is why we need to compile knowledge and test ourselves against it constantly so that we know where we stand, and so we shape our brains for our appropriate place in a social hierarchy.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Artificial scarcity means big margins

Feb 24th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Access control technologies such as DRM create “scarcity” where there is immeasurable abundance, that is, in a world of digital reproduction. The early years saw tech such as CSS tapped to prevent the copying of DVDs, but DRM has become much more than that. It’s now a behavioral modification scheme that permits this, prohibits that, monitors you, and auto-expires when. Oh, and sometimes you can to watch a video or listen to some music.

The basic point is that access control technologies are becoming more and more refined. To create new, desirable product markets (e.g., movies for portable digital devices), the studios have turned to DRM (and the law) to create the scarcity (illegality of ripping DVDs) needed to both create the need for it and sustain it. Rather than admit that this is what they’re doing, they trot out bogus studies claiming that this is all caused by piracy. It’s the classic nannying scheme: “Because some of you can’t be trusted, everyone has to be treated this way.” But everybody knows that this nanny is in it for her own interests.

[ARS](#)

The music industry, book industry, and movie industry were founded on a simple principle: the scarcity of their product.

They really hit the big time when they stopped aiming for quality. Classical? That’s difficult — we’ve got trendier and simpler jazz, blues and rock/pop. Literature? That’s difficult — we’ve got Romance novels and self-help books. Artistic movies? That’s difficult — instead, there’s blockbusters and pseudo-art films to depress then uplift you.

They liked products they could pump out easily and make a ton of profit by convincing people these easily-created products were important because they were:

- New/novel.
- Shocking/groundbreaking.
- Unique/ironic.
- Important/Revolutionary.

But they never said: whole, good or informative.

Like junk food, there’s an unstated assumption customers must state to close the gap. “Oh, it’s *food!*” they say. The McDonald’s rep says nothing, having just told a federal court that actually, it’s a confection not intended as nutritional sustenance.

This is why the publishing, movie and music industries are failing right now. It’s not that piracy did them in; and despite how good this Ars Technica article is, it’s not that lack of individual product scarcity did them in. It’s that lack of scarcity across the board plus piracy has shown people how the product is only rewarding for a short period of time, so they’re less likely to pay for it.

The industry needs to reinvent itself along some lines other than the blockbuster — cheap product, massive sales to lowest common denominator — model.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Advantages of a caste system

Feb 24th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Why, for example, did Britain produce several women novelists of genius during the 19th century — Jane Austen, George Eliot and the Brontës, as well as accomplished lesser artists like Elizabeth Gaskell — while America did not? That question could (and sometimes does) lead to a lot of speculation on the national characters of the English-speaking peoples, but Showalter mentions an equally plausible, practical cause: “While English women novelists, even those as poor as the Brontës, had servants, American women were expected to clean, cook and sew; even in the South, white women in slaveholding families were trained in domestic arts.” Quite a few of the short biographical sketches she offers feature women complaining about being compelled by parents to learn to make pies or mend when they would rather write. In 1877, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps made the heroine of her novel, “The Story of Avis,” fume, “I hate to make my bed, and I hate, hate to sew chemises, and I hate, hate, hate to go cooking round the kitchen.”

Housework in America has never been an uncomplicated matter. The class system in Britain consigned a certain set of people to this humble labor, while America promised the enterprising among them an opportunity to make something more of their lives. Nevertheless, the cooking and cleaning still had to be done — especially on the small family farms that were the economic engines of early America — and so the responsibility for it was transferred from a servant class to the female relatives of the new republic’s self-made men.

America is the first nation united by ideas rather than a shared cultural and racial history, and foremost among those ideas is the paradigm of self-invention, via hard work, in the free territory of the frontier. Our literary culture has always hankered after fiction that, in one way or another, embodies this hope. “The answer to the American quest for originality,” Showalter writes, “seemed to lie in the coming of the poet-hero, a genius who, through divine inspiration, would create immortal works, and an art commensurate with the vastness of the nation and the scope of its dreams.”

[Salon](#)

Like most things liberalized, the writers at Salon sometimes seem to be arguing for the other side, as if they’ve tired of the neurotic underpinnings of their own belief and, although they must go on pleasing their audience, they’re going to slip in a joke of their own.

If a woman has high intelligence, like Jane Austen or Emily Dickinson, it makes sense that she has someone else to do the menial tasks of life — whether this means living in a monastery/cloister or having servants; doesn’t matter which. A caste system provides either or both as options.

The Great American Novel is a fiction of the Ego; the idea that each of us creates him or herself, and so at some point, we make brilliance out of who we are through sheer gumption. It’s interesting that the great American novels in existence are mostly negative critiques of that idea.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [feudalism](#)

We repeat the memes around us

Feb 24th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Teens who prefer popular songs with degrading sexual references are more likely to engage in intercourse or in pre-coital activities, U.S. researchers say.

Dr. Brian A. Primack of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine says the study demonstrates that, among this sample of young adolescents, high exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex in popular music was independently associated with higher levels of sexual behavior. In fact, exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex was one of the strongest associations with sexual activity.

Surveys were completed by 711 ninth-grade students at three large U.S. urban high schools. The participants were exposed to more than 14 hours each week of lyrics describing degrading sex. About one-third said they had previously been sexually active.

[UPI](#)

Animals try to adapt to their surroundings. In the case of humans, if we are surrounded by sexual lyrics and sexual movies, we become hypersexualized because we are accustomed to high levels of stimulation.

It's monkey-see, monkey-do coupled with addiction to external stimulation.

This is why healthy civilizations admit they [censor](#) or otherwise regulate the memes in the lives of their citizens.

Social networking websites are causing alarming changes in the brains of young users, an eminent scientist has warned.

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Bebo are said to shorten attention spans, encourage instant gratification and make young people more self-centred.

'We know how small babies need constant reassurance that they exist,' she told the Mail yesterday.

'My fear is that these technologies are infantilising the brain into the state of small children who are attracted by buzzing noises and bright lights, who have a small attention span and who live for the moment.'

[The Daily Mail](#)

In other words, as both Kaczynski and Nietzsche warned us, externalized people become dependent on surrogate activities that replace real experience in assuring them of their self-value. Since this self-value is hollow, as in addictions (as noted by Burroughs), it creates an ever-widening void.

Why do we have hollow souls, again?

Would you censor or regulate behavior to prevent most of your citizens from having hollow souls?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [censorship](#) · [reproduction](#)

Comparing racial genetics shows how genes shape faces

Feb 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

To pinpoint genes that influence the shape of the human face and head, Shriver began with an online database of genes linked to disease — Online Mendelian Inheritance of Man. If the symptoms of the disease involved the face or skull the gene implicated in the disease became a candidate for those facial traits.

This approach works because although Shriver looked at genes implicated in disease, those same genes in a healthy person may also influence the same physical trait — length, width, shape, size — but within the range normal for healthy individuals. Facial traits vary among humans, but do tend to group by population. For example, in general, West Africans have wider faces than Europeans and Europeans have longer faces than West Africans.

From their DNA profiles, Shriver could determine the admixture percentages of each individual, how much of their genetic make up came from each group. He could then compare the genetically determined admixture to the facial feature differences and determine the relative differences from the parental populations.

[Science Daily](#)

Next time someone tells you race isn't biological/genetic: they're wrong.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Who watches the watcher watchers

Feb 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Prosecutors claimed this senior Senatorial scalp last year, winning an ethics conviction a fortnight before the octogenarian Republican narrowly lost his bid for a seventh term from Alaska.

Though media interest stopped there, the story has since become one of ambitious prosecutors who at the very least botched the job and may have miscarried justice.

Judge Emmet Sullivan berated the prosecutors for failing to act on his January 21 demand to deliver internal documents to Mr. Stevens's attorneys. Those 33 documents relate to a complaint filed December 2 by one of the two FBI agents assigned to the case. Chad Joy claimed prosecutors covered up evidence and tried to keep a witness from testifying. He also said his partner, Mary Beth Kepner, had an unspecified "inappropriate relationship" with the state's star witness, Bill Allen, and other potential witnesses.

The Stevens indictment was unveiled in July by Matthew Friedrich, tapped by the Bush Administration to run the division. He had served on the Enron task force, helping bring down Arthur Andersen. That verdict was later overturned by the Supreme Court, albeit too late for Andersen.

Mr. Welch, the prosecutor, is a career Justice lawyer appointed to his post by Ms. Fisher. In a profile last week in his hometown newspaper, the Springfield, Mass., Republican, he was described as a registered Democrat vying for a promotion to U.S. Attorney in Boston. The day this story appeared, he was found in contempt.

So what we seem to have here are young lawyers eager to make their reputations by bagging a big-name Senator. Justice rules forbid issuing indictments too close to elections. These columns were tough on Mr. Stevens at the time, but the facts that have since come to light cast real doubt on the case

[WSJ](#)

Not exactly the news, since political show trials happen all the time, but still a vital question: if we cannot trust each other to be moving roughly in the same direction, how many layers of watchers do we need to establish trust?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

How great civilizations think

Feb 23rd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

These settlements, which were occupied roughly between 800 and 1600 AD, included houses and moats and palisade walls. There were causeways and roads, which connected the settlements together. There were plazas laid out along cardinal points, from east to west, and roads positioned at the same geometric angles. (Fawcett had reported that Indians told him legends that described "many streets set at right angles to one another.") According to the scientists, each cluster of settlements contained anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 people, which means that the larger communities were the size of many medieval European cities.

"These people had a cultural aesthetic of monumentality," Heckenberger said. "They liked to have beautiful roads and plazas and bridges."

[Boston Globe](#)

Foolish people — idiots — think that great civilizations are linear rationalists who approximate [literal mindedness](#), holding up an eggplant and saying "well the box said this is a spark plug, so put it in the engine, even if it doesn't fit!"

But really, great civilizations are formed by aestheticians. These are the kind of people who can think: wouldn't it be awesome if we made civilization into something beautiful, so we could all unite in happy labor toward a never-ending goal, instead of becoming soulless materialists who sit at home pleasing themselves with video games, drugs, religion, sex and money?

A cultural aesthetic of monumentality... sounds like ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, et al to me.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The real issue: privacy is dead by nature of technology

Feb 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People are going to tell you a whole bunch of things about how you should protect your privacy.

They tend to be of two types:

1. How to hide.
2. Insist on more freedom.

Neither is really rational. You can't hide when multiple data streams measure you at all times. You walked past an ATM on your way somewhere? You're tagged. You bought something? It's going to be RFID tagged. And because these technologies save money and time, shopping at places that don't use them and living in places that don't use them will not be an option — at least in the cities.

Further, trying to insist on more freedoms is going to bring a surveillance society even faster. More freedoms mean more divergence, in a civilization (didn't you ever play Civ?). That means in turn, more chaos and crime, and so you're either going to end up being one of those voices crying out for more enforcement, or a victim. Don't count on your sidearms to do much against angry mobs, either.

Google makes a really good point here, and one that all mature people should own up to:

Google (NASDAQ: GOOG) is being sued by a Pittsburgh couple for posting images of its house on the Internet in Google's Street Views pages. Google responded, in court no less, that complete privacy simply doesn't exist in today's world and the couple should stop crying about it.

Google may be right, in theory. It said in papers filed with the court, "Today's satellite image technology means that even in today's desert, complete privacy does not exist." That's partially true. With satellites, cameras and other monitoring devices all being tied together by the Internet, it is becoming more and more difficult to completely isolate yourself from view.

[Information Week](#)

I guess that leaves the interesting question: if you cannot escape the power, and you cannot hide from the power, isn't it time to start talking about finding more responsible power?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

States asserting sovereignty

Feb 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

What does it mean? 11 states, possibly more, have written legal code saying that retain their 10th amendment sovereignty rights.

Here's a typical talking head on this issue:

A Friend of Unfair Park directs our attention to this Texas Observer item concerning House Concurrent Resolution No. 50, filed Tuesday by three Republican state representatives — Leo Berman of Tyler, Brandon Creighton of Conroe and Bryan Hughes of Marshall — who more or less want to declare Texas a sovereign state.

[The Dallas Observer](#)

Implication: asserting 10th amendment sovereignty is a prelude to secession.

More informed reality: asserting 10th amendment sovereignty is a way to keep the feds from putting too many contingent demands — “strings attached” — on their new aid package:

Worried the federal government is increasing its dominance over their affairs, several states are pursuing legislative action to assert their sovereignty under the 10th Amendment of the Constitution in hopes of warding off demands from Washington on how to spend money or enact policy.

In other states, lawmakers say they are bracing to repeal federal mandates to spend their money that they expect will emanate from Washington once President Obama begins delivering some of the big-ticket programs promised during his presidential campaign.

[Washington Times](#)

Another source puts it even more succinctly:

Hearing that the Obama administration is pushing for immediate passage of the nearly \$1 trillion deficit spending plan without allowing time for legislators to read the 1400 page document may be the last straw. Some who have read parts of the package have found it to be slanted toward more Democratic-supported social welfare programs, as well as laying the groundwork for sweeping health care reform that should be subject to scrutiny and debate by the people.

[Natural News](#)

Translation: it's an expansion of the welfare state and the states don't want to be obligated to do it, because any experienced politician knows that expansion of the welfare state means more crime and parasites.

It's a sensible response. Instead of trying to cast off the idea of collectivity with civilization entirely, as anarchists and libertarians do, they're trying to make sure responsible power can exist at the local level.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

USA leans on Swiss banks, shocked that anyone can object

Feb 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

If you make yourself the moral leader, you always have the right to be upset when others don't like your plan — after all, you were just trying to Christianize the hottentots errr I mean educate the rednecks errr I mean bring the good news to the impoverished.

U.S. tax authorities said on Thursday they were still pursuing a civil case against UBS seeking access to thousands more names of U.S. citizens it says are hiding about \$14.8 billion in assets in secret Swiss bank accounts.

UBS agreed on Wednesday to pay a fine of \$780 million and to disclose about 250 names of U.S. clients it said had committed tax fraud to settle U.S. criminal charges that it had helped rich Americans dodge taxes.

The right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) called on Saturday for retaliation against the United States over a U.S. tax probe into the country's biggest bank UBS that threatens prized banking secrecy.

The populist SVP, the country's biggest party, said Switzerland should not take in any detainees from the U.S. prison for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which the Swiss government said last month it could consider to help shut the camp down.

[Reuters](#)

"We're doing right" is not an excuse for strong-arming smaller nations, and some people notice this, although most are too drugged on modern individualism to have a clue.

In the meantime, why would any nation sign up to take ex-Gitmo prisoners?

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Women figuring out modern society has taken them for a ride

Feb 23rd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I have a job that makes no allowances for the fact I have children who don't always get sick with three weeks' advance notice.

The boarding school and nursery assume I wait around at home with nothing to do but attend conferences and plays and sports events on their schedule. No wonder I'm filled with a permanent nebulous, undirected rage that my life has become a Gordian knot of obligations, responsibilities, guilt, duties and expectations.

I'm angry with a world that still doesn't acknowledge how hard women work, in and out of the workplace. I'm angry with men for dumping the childrearing problem in our laps. I'm angry with women for refusing to admit it's too much, that we can't do everything all the time.

In the days when a woman stayed home to raise a family while a man went out to work to put bread on the table, this division of labour was fair enough. But why these days, when women work just as hard as men outside the home, are they still responsible for pretty much everything that goes on in it?

I feel guilty that I'm not pulling my weight by being at the office – even though I work just as hard and long as anyone else – and I feel guilty because I'm not giving my daughter the 24/7, one-on-one time a fulltime mother would be able to.

[DailyMail](#)

Well, look at what happened:

You allowed the marketers to convince you that you were “empowered” by having a career, and so you took up the cause of feminism.

You convinced yourself that all men were out to get you, when opening your legs for the price of a few drinks brought out the predators in sheep's clothing — even if they were a relatively small percentage of the male population.

You also convinced yourself, thanks to some deft marketing, that you wanted to have both a career and a family.

Now you're angry at men for not rising up to fill in the gap. From a male perspective, all of the above things are women's choices and have been made politically inaccessible, so they just watch.

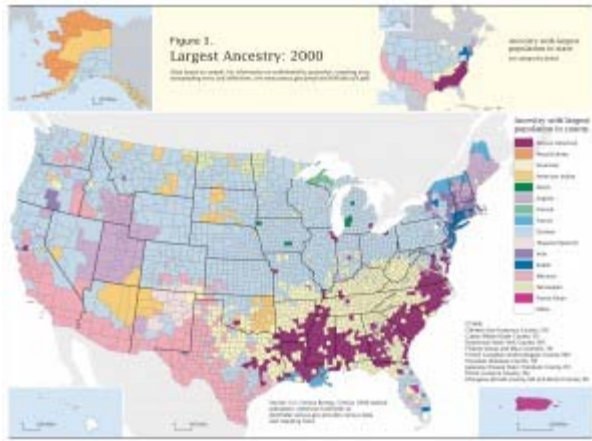
Don't confuse lack of agreement that your plan is sane with laziness.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The heritages of Americans

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).



[The Electoral Map](#)

Kind of neat to see where we all come from. In many places, we have more in common locally than with the rest of the country. Watch those to break away as the USA spirals into third-world corruption and disorder.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

How the crowd drags down a winner

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

As recently as July 2005, Google was ahead of Yahoo in market share by just six percentage points, at 36.5 percent to 30.5 percent, according to comScore, the market research company. Today, however, that advantage is much wider, at 63 percent to 21 percent.

"You almost feel sorry for Google," said Danny Sullivan, editor in chief of Search Engine Land. "They're doing a good job and people are turning to them. But when they pass 70 percent share, people are going to be uncomfortable about Google becoming a monopoly."

It estimates that Google has 72 percent of the United States market, versus 17.9 percent for Yahoo. Microsoft's two search services, MSN and Live.com, constitute a distant third, at a combined 5.4 percent.

[NYT](#)

When you get too big, they turn on you.

When you get big enough, they each want a part, and flood you with parasites.

Google's search engine is better than its competitors. They seem unable to act because of management and not technological issues.

So it surges forward as they flounder.

But the crowd always likes to tear down the top dog, so it can believe that some magic force raises up the little guy.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Since the most corrupt president ever got elected, Americans have been busy buying guns

Feb 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Increases in firearm sales since the November election are a strong indicator these polls are correct. The NSSF cited data from the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which showed a 24 percent increase in firearms purchaser background checks for the month of December 2008 over the prior December.

This increase followed a 42-percent rise in NICS checks for the preceding month, which incidentally was the highest number in NICS history. The trend has continued through January as firearms dealers saw an increase of 28.8 percent when compared to the previous January.

Floridians have requested 187,162 concealed-weapon permit applications over the last six months – an 82 percent increase compared with a year earlier.

[The Examiner](#)

We know what third world countries are like. We have ghettos in our cities, and rural poor rotlands we drive through. There's Mexico to the south, and Puerto Rico isn't too distant of an experience. Americans know that in the third world, government is corrupt, the voters are always fooled by Revolutionary rhetoric, and it's up to the individual to defend themselves.

As it is in Brazil, Africa, the Middle East, Mexico and other places where great civilizations collapsed through disorder and genetic waffling into third world dysfunction.

Expect this run on guns to go on for some time.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

What is “morality”?

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

PARENTS should avoid trying to convince their teenage children of the difference between right and wrong when talking to them about sex, a new government leaflet is to advise.

Instead, any discussion of values should be kept “light” to encourage teenagers to form their own views, according to the brochure, which one critic has called “amoral”.

It advises: “Discussing your values with your teenagers will help them to form their own. Remember, though, that trying to convince them of what’s right and wrong may discourage them from being open.”

[The Times Online](#)

As I’ve mentioned before, corrupt people try to tell you that anything other than the convenient and pandering is [unrealistic](#) because it makes them feel profound.

This tendency toward twisting the truth so the individual can feel superior — morally superior, intellectually superior, or socially superior — to another is what has given morality a bad name.

Actual morality is a form of reverent attention to life. Strategies that produce optimal rewards are adaptations to reality. We create morals to enforce these on those who cannot necessarily understand them, so these people do not destroy those who do. This especially applies to [breeding strategies](#).

Our nanny state is telling us to tell teens to “make their own choices.” We know what this is, if we think about it — it’s that ethic of convenience that says never offend another by suggesting their unrealistic assumptions are not valid. Instead, use passive aggression, and push the decision off onto them, so you can blame them later and feel blameless yourself. “The stupid kid went and got herself knocked up... I’m kicking her out! That’ll show her!”

Brilliant.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [reproduction](#) · [self-deception](#)

Most corrupt president ever continues crony coziness

Feb 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Hope! Change! Hope! Change!

Barack Obama has been embroiled in a cronyism row after reports that he intends to make Louis Susman, one of his biggest fundraisers, the new US ambassador in London.

The selection of Mr Susman, a lawyer and banker from the president's hometown of Chicago, rather than an experienced diplomat, raises new questions about Mr Obama's commitment to the special relationship with Britain.

American commentators denounced the selection of a rich friend to the plumb post, regarded as one of the most prestigious in the president's gift, as worthy of a "banana republic".

And they pointed out that there is little difference between handing a major diplomatic post to a fundraiser and the "pay to play" scandal in which disgraced former Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich apparently auctioned off Mr Obama's senate seat to the highest bidder.

[The Telegraph](#)

Barack Obama mastered the most corrupt political machine in North America, the Chicago crony corps. He did it through relentless corruption while banking on his racial reconciliation appeal and his personality.

He also knew that Americans were going to throw a tantrum because of their frustration with George W. Bush, and so if he promised them something intangible that sounded good, the little brats would throw their tantrum his way and then congratulate themselves for being "Progressive."

In doing so, they elected the most corrupt president in history. It's change at least... and hope for someone.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Could climate change bring endless war?

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

But if negotiators falter, if emissions reductions are not made soon and deep, the severe climate shifts and sea-level rises projected by scientists would be "disastrous."

It would "transform where people can live," Stern said. "People would move on a massive scale. Hundreds of millions, probably billions of people would have to move if you talk about 4-, 5-, 6-degree increases" — 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. And that would mean extended global conflict, "because there's no way the world can handle that kind of population move in the time period in which it would take place."

[SFG](#)

Resource wars could come as well.

So could wars for who has access to the rich countries, who like a fat layer in winter represent a potential plunder of past wealth.

And as he points out, so could convergence on spots undestroyed by global warming or cooling.

Well, nature's gotta thin the herd somehow.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

American manufacturing

Feb 22nd, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Just interesting:

But manufacturing in the United States is not dead or even dying. It is moving upscale, following the biggest profits and becoming more efficient.

The United States remains by far the world's leading manufacturer by value of goods produced. It hit a record \$1.6 trillion in 2007 – nearly double the \$811 billion of 1987. For every \$1 of value produced in China factories, the United States generates \$2.50.

The United States sold more than \$200 billion worth of aircraft, missiles and space-related equipment in 2007, and \$80 billion worth of autos and auto parts. Deere, best known for its bright green and yellow tractors, sold \$16.5 billion worth of farming equipment last year, much of it to the rest of the world.

Then there are energy products like gas turbines for power plants made by General Electric, computer chips from Intel and fighter jets from Lockheed Martin. Household names like GE, General Motors, International Business Machines, Boeing and Hewlett-Packard are among the largest manufacturers by revenue.

[IHT](#)

Not surprising: production of low-value goods goes overseas, while we use a bigger industrial/educational base and raw material (including wetware) to make the complicated stuff.

But if that complicated stuff requires any parts from offshore, we could be in a quandary.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Means-Ends confusion

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Modern society is a sophomoric time, meaning that we have all this great technology, but any abstract or complex order eludes us. We're good with the tangible things that can be held up to a crowd or a machine, but the idea of complex interrelated consequences is difficult to communicate so we've left it for more civilized species.

Two major confusions of the modern time relate directly to this. People understand one-step procedures very well; complex, branching procedures that require the user to be aware of the long-term goal at all times are much less popular. As a result, there are two major confusions of long-term versus short-term, strategy versus method, ends versus means.

- I. Goals and methods. For example, people will say they want "peace" or "liberty," but really, those are means to an end. The end is a stable civilization where they can raise their kids among peers. Even if people claim that's absolutely not what they want, their actions reveal it's what they want, as they work hard for money to live in neighborhoods of people like them.
- II. Plans and disadvantages. For example, people will say that we cannot stop overpopulation because injustice will result. Injustice is a disadvantage, but it doesn't change the fact that stopping overpopulation fixes the problem of ecocide. If injustice meant that an action intended to prevent ecocide was unable to prevent ecocide, that action would be a failed plan; otherwise, injustice is a side effect only.

This means we have "wise fools" who understand the methods they want to use, but not the goals they hope to achieve, and who cannot tell the difference between success with side effects and failure to achieve that goal.

No wonder it's a lonely time for ideas. People have no idea how to interpret anything but that which is spoon-fed to them, and the requisite dumbing-down renders it into gibberish.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why libertarians are daft

Feb 22nd, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Why libertarians aren't daft:

- They endorse Social Darwinism, or stopping society from compensating those who fail at life and thus forcing those who do not fail to pay for those who do.
- They endorse a fascist outlook toward transgression: make it clear what is desired, and what is not desired, and everything else is legal. (Democratic societies tend to avoid this step, and so make things ad hoc illegal or taboo when they offend a powerful group or individual.)

However, libertarians are also daft, in that they think (a) liberty and (b) free markets magically take care of problems. Here's a contrary view:

Next comes democracy and the democratic man, out of oligarchy and the oligarchical man.

Oligarchy

Insatiable avarice is the ruling passion of an oligarchy; and they encourage expensive habits in order that they may gain by the ruin of extravagant youth. Thus men of family often lose their property or rights of citizenship; but they remain in the city, full of hatred against the new owners of their estates and ripe for revolution.

The usurer with stooping walk pretends not to see them; he passes by, and leaves his sting—that is, his money—in some other victim; and many a man has to pay the parent or principal sum multiplied into a family of children, and is reduced into a state of dronage by him. The only way of diminishing the evil is either to limit a man in his use of his property, or to insist that he shall lend at his own risk.

But the ruling class do not want remedies; they care only for money, and are as careless of virtue as the poorest of the citizens.

Now there are occasions on which the governors and the governed meet together,—at festivals, on a journey, voyaging or fighting.

The sturdy pauper finds that in the hour of danger he is not despised; he sees the rich man puffing and panting, and draws the conclusion which he privately imparts to his companions, —‘that our people are not good for much;’ and as a sickly frame is made ill by a mere touch from without, or sometimes without external impulse is ready to fall to pieces of itself, so from the least cause, or with none at all, the city falls ill and fights a battle for life or death.

Democracy

And democracy comes into power when the poor are the victors, killing some and exiling some, and giving equal shares in the government to all the rest.

The manner of life in such a State is that of democrats; there is freedom and plainness of speech, and every man does what is right in his own eyes, and has his own way of life.

Hence arise the most various developments of character; the State is like a piece of embroidery of which the colours and figures are the manners of men, and there are many who, like women and children, prefer this variety to real beauty and excellence. The State is not one but many, like a bazaar at which you can buy anything.

The great charm is that you may do as you like; you may govern if you like, let it alone if you like; go to war and make peace if you feel disposed, and all quite irrespective of anybody else. When you condemn men to death they remain alive all the same; a gentleman is desired to go into exile, and he stalks about the streets like a hero; and nobody sees him or cares for him.

Observe, too, how grandly Democracy sets her foot upon all our fine theories of education,—how little she cares for the training of her statesmen! The only qualification which she demands is the profession of patriotism. Such is democracy;—a pleasing, lawless, various sort of government, distributing equality to equals and unequals alike.

The Psychology of Democratic Man

Let us now inspect the individual democrat; and first, as in the case of the State, we will trace his antecedents. He is the son of a miserly oligarch, and has been taught by him to restrain the love of unnecessary pleasures.

Perhaps I ought to explain this latter term:—Necessary pleasures are those which are good, and which we cannot do without; unnecessary pleasures are those which do no good, and of which the desire might be eradicated by early training. For example, the pleasures of eating and drinking are necessary and healthy, up to a certain point; beyond that point they are alike hurtful to body and mind, and the excess may be avoided. When in excess, they may be rightly called expensive pleasures, in opposition to the useful ones.

And the drone, as we called him, is the slave of these unnecessary pleasures and desires, whereas the miserly oligarch is subject only to the necessary.

The oligarch changes into the democrat in the following manner:—The youth who has had a miserly bringing up, gets a taste of the drone's honey; he meets with wild companions, who introduce him to every new pleasure.

As in the State, so in the individual, there are allies on both sides, temptations from without and passions from within; there is reason also and external influences of parents and friends in alliance with the oligarchical principle; and the two factions are in violent conflict with one another.

Sometimes the party of order prevails, but then again new desires and new disorders arise, and the whole mob of passions gets possession of the Acropolis, that is to say, the soul, which they find void and unguarded by true words and works. Falsehoods and illusions ascend to take their place; the prodigal goes back into the country of the Lotophagi or drones, and openly dwells there.

And if any offer of alliance or parley of individual elders comes from home, the false spirits shut the gates of the castle and permit no one to enter,—there is a battle, and they gain the victory; and straightway making alliance with the desires, they banish modesty, which they call folly, and send temperance over the border.

When the house has been swept and garnished, they dress up the exiled vices, and, crowning them with garlands, bring them back under new names. Insolence they call good breeding, anarchy freedom, waste magnificence, impudence courage. Such is the process by which the youth passes from the necessary pleasures to the unnecessary.

The Modern Neurotic Human (The Californian)

After a while he divides his time impartially between them; and perhaps, when he gets older and the violence of passion has abated, he restores some of the exiles and lives in a sort of

equilibrium, indulging first one pleasure and then another; and if reason comes and tells him that some pleasures are good and honourable, and others bad and vile, he shakes his head and says that he can make no distinction between them. Thus he lives in the fancy of the hour; sometimes he takes to drink, and then he turns abstainer; he practises in the gymnasium or he does nothing at all; then again he would be a philosopher or a politician; or again, he would be a warrior or a man of business; he is

"Every thing by starts and nothing long."

Tyranny

There remains still the finest and fairest of all men and all States— tyranny and the tyrant. Tyranny springs from democracy much as democracy springs from oligarchy. Both arise from excess; the one from excess of wealth, the other from excess of freedom. 'The great natural good of life,' says the democrat, 'is freedom.' And this exclusive love of freedom and regardlessness of everything else, is the cause of the change from democracy to tyranny.

[Plato, The Republic](#)

The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

This means: good "as it appears" and good "in the structure of things" are two different things.

I may recognize that food is good, and going hungry is bad, and so feed others... but if I feed idiots and parasites, I'll breed more of them and destroy the civilization.

Most people cannot tell the difference between the situational (food is good) and the "absolute" or "universal," which is their attempt to derive a fixed principle from a presumed perspective of the whole (feed the good people).

This is why libertarianism is an endorsement of an intermediate stage in democracy, but not a solution to its problems or a good long-term design for humanity.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [democracy](#) · [plato](#)

Depression

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I think most people are depressed by modern society. Humanity controls so much, yet can't control itself, and where chaos reigns one has to either get oblivious (and thus neurotic) or be aware, and therefore, at odds with society at large.

Those with a certain amount of brainpower choose the latter because they know the former is impossible without becoming one of those people who sees trees but misses the forest. In too many ways, conforming your mind to a broken order means programming it to live in a fantasy world — yet to have to deal with real world consequences.

The only solution I have ever found to depression is action, no matter how small, consistently and fervently. Be a force of positivity, meaning the creation of sensible order and the destruction of stupidity. You are at war with the disorganized, the dysfunctional, the lazy, stupid and unrealistic.

Although it seems horrible to encourage warlike aggression in life, it helps to see nature — a mathematical order pervading all things — as a ladder of exceptions. Life rewards the functional but mediocre, yet if you're willing to fight life and rise above that, there are new rewards and new plateaus.

In the same way while not rocking the boat seems like a good plan, you face either depression or neurosis or worse, alternating between the two. Fight life (as you see it, it's already in the past tense, so you might phrase that: fight life as it was a moment ago). Fight for life (that which can be and therefore is just as inherent as what is now).

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Is capitalism alone Social Darwinism?

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The free — or freeish — market is the best way we've found so far to ensure that more people are eating than are starving. It works. But it doesn't work pretty. It's crude. It's messy. It works like a 20 year-old Compaq with a frayed power cord. It gets the job done, but magic? No. So don't make a religion out of it.

The marketplace is devoid of morality. It doesn't reward the good and punish the bad. It doesn't even reward the hard working. Or the smart. Or the capable. It shoves a bunch of money into the pockets of people who may, taken as a group, be somewhat more capable than those who aren't getting the cash, but that in no way suggests that any blessed individual is deserving or any screwed individual is undeserving.

The winners need to believe they deserve what they get, and the losers need to believe that all they really need to do is try again and they, too, will be winners. It's about 75% bullshit. Because as much as people hate to hear it, success or failure is, like all of life, affected by more than free will and positive thinking. DNA, environment and pure luck all have a role in your life. And the magic of the marketplace doesn't somehow exert its magical magitude and reshuffle that deck.

[Sideways Mencken](#)

He makes a good point here. Nature is like an engineer: she'll put together whatever hack works, and perfect it later through a process known as *kaizen* in Japan, or incremental upgrades.

Natural selection works demographically. You may be the better lemming in a fight, or have saved more food for winter but alas, a limb above was weak and fell... doom on you. So you die, but statistically, the better lemmings prevail and so lemmings as a species get stronger.

Same way with social Darwinism, but capitalism isn't a perfect form of it. Yes, most poor people are that way because they're disorganized mentally... but there's 2% of them who are probably not. Same with the upper middle class... 98% are that way because they worked hard and worked smart. But 2% are just flukes, or work in Hollywood.

While everyone around us seems to be panicking because of this recession, we should use this time instead to think about what society would most accurately reward our best people and encourage the rest not to breed.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Typical Crowdist mentality

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A 23-year-old visitor from the East Coast had just gotten money from an ATM when he told his friend on a cell phone that he had a bad feeling about two men approaching him at the Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland.

His worst fears were realized when one suspect, Victor Veliz, 18, held a folding knife with a 5-inch blade to his neck and the other, Christopher Gonzalez, 18, threatened to shoot him Thursday night, authorities said.

In a blind panic, he lashed out at his attackers, grabbing the knife from one of them. Without realizing it, authorities say, the man stabbed Gonzalez in the chest.

Gonzalez's father, Javier Gonzalez, sobbed at the loss of his son, who worked with him in his roofing business and at Oakland Raiders games.

"I'm angry at both of them," he said of the robbery victim and Veliz. "They took my son away from me. He was a hard-working kid. My son is dead. I want somebody to pay for this."

[SFG](#)

The entitlement mentality is this:

Because I'm human, the world owes me something. I have consciousness, therefore, I should be expected to survive because I value this consciousness.

It's an artifact of our monkey intelligence which makes it difficult for us to place ourselves in context. And most people just don't want to — it's inconvenient.

The entitlement mentality causes people to think the world should support them, even if they do nothing toward that direction.

It also makes them think that their human-ness trumps their behavior that gets them cut out of the gene pool.

The people voting for Obama and Clinton, supporting social welfare programs, agitating for pacifism and claiming that pride in one's ancestors is hate — they are all from the group of entitlement-prone morons.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Our laws are based on unrealistic assumptions

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Megge gives presentations across the state explaining the idea that faster roads can often be safer. If a speed limit is set too low, he explained, some people will still drive fast while others will obey. Drivers going a wide variety of speeds is dangerous, he said.

"The majority of people think slower is safer," Megge said. "In reality, that's not the case."

Megge said most drivers tend to go a speed they view as safe, regardless of the speed limit.

"In every case, the speed limit sign does next to nothing to change the way people drive," he said.

Megge said if the speed limit is set correctly — based on how fast people actually drive on the road — drivers tend to go similar speeds, which is safer.

[Grand Haven Tribune](#)

Again, we discover this painful principle:

Although we like to think of ourselves as God-like individualists, for civilization to work we need to be pulling in roughly the same direction.

Individualists think they can allow everyone to do whatever they want, and then just punish dissenters, but the problem with that is that everyone doing what they want makes society dysfunctional.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Fallout from the selfish generation

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The USA, UK and USSR won WWII. The USSR went on to ideological suffocation, but the UK/USA were based on the same model: accumulation of personal wealth to overcome social caste distinctions.

That attitude produced the most spoiled generation ever, the Baby Boomers.

The children of early Baby Boomers, born in the 1960s when said boomers were in their 20s, now face an ugly reality:

- Their parents, selfish and improvident, have partied away their lives and now need supporting.
- Their children, selfish and improvident, are delaying getting their own lives started.

Why would the children be as wasteful as their grandparents? The same reason: while the great gold rush of capitalist expansion was on, they were ignored and bought off with gifts. Worse, society's decayed so much their prospects are very minimal anyway. So they rely on their parents.

So much damage from a single generation — the Baby Boomers — as it trickles down to the rest of us.

Figures for The Daily Telegraph reveal that a typical Babygloomers – defined as someone who is having to support both their children and their parents – will forego more than £100,000 of their own pension pot by helping their parents financially in retirement instead.

The figures, calculated by wealth managers Hargreaves Lansdown, suggest that a 45-year-old who gives £250 a month to their parents instead of putting into their pension pot, will lose out on £104,007 by the time they reach 65.

That separate research, carried out by Norwich Union, revealed that 1.3m adults aged between 17 and 65 are paying their parents more than £250 each month, with many paying up to £1,000.

[The Telegraph](#)

These figures are from Brokeback Island but it's likely this problem is just as present in the USA.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The literal-minded

Feb 21st, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I've been looking for this type of description for some time:

Pride of place in the Philogelos goes to the "egg-heads", who are the subject of almost half the jokes for their literal-minded scholasticism ("An egg-head doctor was seeing a patient. 'Doctor', he said, 'when I get up in the morning I feel dizzy for 20 minutes.' 'Get up 20 minutes later, then'").

After the "egg-heads", various ethnic jokes come a close second. In a series of gags reminiscent of modern Irish or Polish jokes, the residents of three Greek towns – Abdera, Kyme and Sidon – are ridiculed for their "how many Abderites does it take to change a light bulb?" style of stupidity. Why these three places in particular, we have no idea. But their inhabitants are portrayed as being as literal-minded as the egg-heads, and even more obtuse.

"An Abderite saw a eunuch talking to a woman and asked if she was his wife. When he replied that eunuchs can't have wives, the Abderite asked, 'So is she your daughter then?'"

[The Times](#)

We might try to laugh this off as ancient silliness until we realize that it applies today.

Literal-minded = confuses the ostensible, or how reality is sampled by human categories, with the real.

The real is organic, or made of billions of small factors working together to create a whole.

The literal is like assuming that a name controls something: if we call a squirrel a pit bull, it still will not attack.

We see plenty of literal-mindedness in society today, and to me it seems like the byproduct of people having no idea how reality works, because to them living means buying things in stores.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Whole Foods Are Always A Better Option

Feb 20th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

What is it about this recession that is making us obsessed with food? Half of the country wants to dig its way out of misery, preferably on allotments from the National Trust. The other half is flocking to McDonald's, Greggs and Domino's Pizza, which are reporting surging sales. Kentucky Fried Chicken is planning to create 9,000 jobs. The junk-food boom is being portrayed as evidence of hard times. Maybe. But I can pick up a pizza in Tesco for half what I pay at Domino's. I can make my family dinner for less than the £10 family bucket that KFC is so proud of. Joanna Blythman, in her wonderful book *Bad Food Britain*, points out that poverty has spawned some of the world's greatest cuisines, like that of southern Italy. But these are based on fresh, local ingredients. We Brits seem addicted to our comforting, effortless jumbles of water, fat, sugar and additives. We consume half of all the crisps and ready meals in Europe. Most of us are confused. We bleat about animal welfare, but shun the pricey local butcher in favour of meat that may or may not have ever seen a daisy. We balk at paying for raw ingredients, but readily cough up for extortionate ready meals. We spend hours watching TV chefs but apparently only 13 minutes on average making a meal – down from one hour in 1980. Thirteen minutes is about the time it takes to unwrap an overpackaged pie, wait for it to cook and boil up some frozen veg. (I know this because I retain a deep childhood nostalgia for Fray Bentos).

[+]

Different country (US), same idea.

In the US, I'd be willing to bet that McDonald's and all the other fast-food places are doing very well. These are tough times, why not spend \$7 or so for a meal instead of spending the time to cook it? Most families are two-income now, so when times get tough, it's not just about the money, it's about the time investment in cooking and preparing vs. buying ready-made meals.

This causes health problems down the line, and we seem to be ignoring that as a culture. Health food as snobbery is nothing new; that goes back to the 1960s, and its most recent and familiar incarnation was in the 1980s – yogurt, jogging, salads, etc. We've replaced that in the new millennium with organic products, which has now spurned an industry of "green" products – that still come in plastic bottles or have mercury, like those "green" light bulbs everyone loves so much, and do more damage to the environment than before.

Even two bags of groceries at a place that sells mostly organic products, like Whole Foods or Trader Joe's, will yield a bill of \$40-\$50 for two people. Most of that food – hopefully – is fresh, so it has to be consumed within a week, and then it's back to the grocery store for more staples.

Where's the benefit in this, besides the obvious health benefits? If \$40-\$50 feeds two people with fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and maybe even some dried but unsalted and unprocessed snacks for the better part of a week, you're only spending about \$5 a day EACH to eat. Throw in some meat and, okay, you might be talking \$7 a day each. If you go to McDonald's, you get a crappy meal for \$7, and you're left wanting more because the food is designed to make you more thirsty and even more hungry for the same type of junk.

Do your body a favor and stick to as many fresh greens and fruits as possible. Make fruit smoothies, boil instead of fry unless using extra virgin olive oil. The one-time hit to your wallet each week will seem like a lot, but if you're going to a discount grocery store for processed crap AND eating out at places like McDonald's, you're spending more money to put more chemicals into your body than it can handle.

Or you can have fun with diabetes.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [consumerism](#)

Control and In-Group/Out-Group politics

Feb 20th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

What is the most vital aspect in human lives?

Nietzsche calls it the "will to power"; when we exist in a civilization, however, our minds are so busy being assaulted by [homo loquax](#) and his memetics that we seek instead control.

Control over ourselves first, and second, our environment including society.

How do you manipulate masses? Convince them to act on the basis of this control principle, namely by telling them that they have absolute control over themselves, so what they need is "freedom" to express that.

Nevermind that freedom is a negative formula; you are freed from something, but without that something, you have no need for freedom.

The best control viruses do three things:

1. Tell you that you have absolute control over yourself and should do only what you want to do, mediated only by "within reason of course" or some other vague disclaimer.
2. Tell you that you have a reason to justify your self-absorption, usually some form of moral Right or Good that is projected as being absolute (essence), even though it can only be spotted in situational instances.
3. Tell you that there is another group out there that wants to take this freedom from you, and that they're bad.

This makes people addicted to your message and to identification with your politics. You also can tell them what is Right, and have them run toward it, and what is Wrong/Other, and have them destroy it.

We can construe this as a form of In-Group/Out-Group politics:

SIT as a technical model appeared for the first time in a 1972 article by Henri Tajfel entitled "La Catégorisation Sociale." Tajfel argued that people categorize themselves into groups and that these groups attempt to establish a positive sense of value by distinguishing their group, the in-group, from other groups, the out-groups. Positive group (and self) value is derived by making clear distinctions between the in-group and the out-group, distinctions which view the out-group in a negative manner and the in-group more favorably.

Tajfel's theory relied partially upon studies that compared the formation of groups and social comparison that occurred in a United States Boy's Camp in the 1950s which indicated that "as soon as the boys were allocated into groups, the groups began strenuously competing with one another, even though their members had friends in the other groups.

Accordingly, Tajfel defines Social Identity Theory as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his [sic] membership of a group together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership." This phenomenon is described in three dimensions:

1. Cognitive – recognition of belonging to the group,
2. Evaluative – recognition of the value attached to the group,
3. Emotional – attitudes group members hold toward insiders and outsiders.

Since SIT involves social identification and comparison, certain characteristic generalizations

must be established concerning both the in-group and the out-group. This phenomenon of generalizing group characteristic is called "stereotyping."

Indeed, negative stereotyping, which seems to be what Esler is referring to, is virtually always used to describe the out-group. On the other hand, those who belong to the in-group generally stereotype themselves in a more favorable manner. Thus stereotyping runs both directions, negatively toward the out-group and positively toward the in-group.

JCB

Notice how In-Group/Out-Group theory works both as a gentle way of emphasizing collectivism and competition, but when directed toward empty goals, as a superior method for making people bicker uselessly.

A historical example of a model for our current political system can be found in the origins of Christianity. As many of you have already surmised, secularized Christian dogma is modern liberalism — which is the heart of both Republican and Democratic dogma, as they are both defenders of liberal democracy:

Evolutionary theorists argue that identical twins will naturally treat each other according to the gold standard of morality: "love thy neighbor as thyself." In kin selection terms, such twins have no room for conflict because their "degree of relatedness," or " r " is 100% ($r=1$) (Hamilton, 1964). Their self-interests are identical with their concern for each other, because each twin is as genetically related to their twin's offspring as they are to their own.

...

Have you ever watched a flock of birds dart across the sky like an animated cloud, turning on a dime, in unison, through three-dimensional space? Before the mid-1960s we knew what flocking birds were up to—they were surveying their breeding territory in order to assess its nutritional abundance. That way each female could adjust the number of eggs that she would lay, her objective being to prevent over-exploitation of the environment. How could natural selection produce such a morally sound arrangement? Simple, by group selection—birds that overcrop their territory would eat themselves into oblivion, leaving only environmentally conscientious groups to perpetuate their kind. Domestic sheep are a counter example. If not herded along, sheep will crop all edible plants beyond recovery. That's the main reason that shepherds have jobs—because left to their own devices, or lack thereof, sheep would decimate otherwise renewable resources.

...

So why do individuals cooperate if there is no group selection? Two answers helped fill the gap and form the foundation of contemporary evolutionary theory: inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964) and reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971). For the purpose of calculating how fast a gene can spread, inclusive fitness is the realization that an individual's total reproductive success should include his or her effects on the success of individuals who also carry the gene in question—i.e., relatives. So we expect relatives to cooperate. In humans, this covers everything from mothers nursing infants to nepotism in politics and industry.

Reciprocal altruism is "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." In humans this covers everything from two individuals sharing a load, to groups of individuals hunting Woolly Mammoths, to groups of people hunting other groups of people. The key ingredient here is payoff—reciprocal altruism works if each individual's share of benefits is more than could have been obtained by not cooperating.

So where did Christian universalism come from?...Paul's new target audience, gentile Christians, became an inordinately powerful in-group. Unlike Judaism, out-group members were encouraged to join, or were compelled to join, but payback for following the rules was to be

reaped in heaven. Pie in the sky was Paul's hook. Meanwhile, in this life, the proceeds of wars and tithes to the Church were shared disproportionately by supportive government officials and Church dignitaries, who were often one and the same persons.

...

The strategic practicality of killing locals and bringing slaves from afar was not lost upon God's New Israelites. Because they were already there, Indians could not be pulled out by their roots, transported halfway around the world, and terrorized into servitude as thoroughly as Africans. Once again, in-group morality worked its magic. African slaves were difficult to manage before they were converted, but upon seeing the light, their spirit was chained to the bottom rung of an in-group ladder (Maier, 1993).

...

History is replete with in-groups that have disintegrated from within after running out of enemies to parasitize and defend against.

[Love Thy Neighbor](#)

[The Evolution of In-Group Morality](#), by John Hartung, *Skeptic*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1995

Both major political parties in America work by this equation.

Republicans

In-Group: self-made people, populist traditional values, economic sense, defense.

Out-Group: global warming nuts, godless anarchists, socialists.

Justification: freedom, specifically economic freedom.

Positive: the idea of not being indebted to take care of those without a clue, and the knowledge that most of humanity are worthless parasites barely evolved from apes.

Democrats

In-Group: egalitarians, socialist values, pro-abortion, green.

Out-Group: anti-egalitarians, biological determinists, Christians, the Rich.

Justification: freedom, specifically social freedom, or the idea that you can do whatever you want and society will still take care of you.

Positive: the idea that you should do what is fair even if it is economically inconvenient.

At the heart of both movements: freedom, an inflated sense of self-worth for not being the Out-Group, and a sense of a good excuse to revenge oneself on those in the Out-Group (we call this "hatred" in non-technical parlance).

Why do our politics go nowhere? Because we're still scrabbling over control. Republicans use collective-oriented control, and Democrats use individual-oriented control. But the end result is the same.

Instead of working to make ourselves better as individuals, we work to assert our Control, which we presuppose exists because we exist, even though we're not necessarily disciplined — will is like any ability, talent plus disciplined work equals outcome — to take advantage of it.

In order to defend individual Control, we invent group Control, which means defending the rights of ourselves as a mob to be individuals who are not susceptible to the demands of the Out-Group yet gain the rewards in self-esteem and identification from the In-Group.

This is how you create a cult. How do you rule a nation? Divide the issues in two, and create an In-Group for each direction, then let them fight it out. The result will be that they cancel each other out and it's business as usual, with the most financially savvy extracting wealth from the civilization and squirreling it away in international trade.

Eventually, this parasitic situation leads to third-world conditions, but you knew I'd say that.

Most of us are somewhere in the middle of the two political extremes. I would consider myself a Liberal by motivation (do what's fair even though inconvenient) but a Conservative by strategy (history is a scientific experiment that tells us what's right, and collectivism is inherent to civilization and technology).

But somehow, there's no party for that.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [democracy](#) · [in-group/out-group](#)

Globalism and multiculturalism killing true diversity

Feb 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Of the 6,900 languages spoken in the world, some 2,500 are endangered, the UN's cultural agency UNESCO said Thursday as it released its latest atlas of world languages.

That represents a multi-fold increase from the last atlas compiled in 2001 which listed 900 languages threatened with extinction.

Australian linguist Christopher Moseley, who headed the atlas' team of 25 experts, noted that countries with rich linguistic diversity like India and the United States are also facing the greatest threat of language extinction.

UNESCO deputy director Francoise Riviere applauded government efforts to support linguistic diversity but added that "people have to be proud to speak their language" to ensure it thrives.

[AFP](#)

Thrust everyone together into corporate nation-states, reward mass appeal behavior, and suddenly... diversity dies and we all become generic gray people.

Those witty, hip urban types always tell you that's a paranoid vision but yet, here's more of the ongoing proof. But they don't notice, do they?

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Democrats become inconsistent on Katrina

Feb 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The economic stimulus signed by President Barack Obama will spread billions of dollars across the country to spruce up aging roads and bridges. But there's not a dime specifically dedicated to fixing leftover damage from Hurricane Katrina.

And there's no outrage about it.

Democrats who routinely criticized President George W. Bush for not sending more money to the Gulf Coast appear to be giving Obama the benefit of the doubt in his first major spending initiative. Even the Gulf's fiercest advocates say they're happy with the stimulus package, and their states have enough money for now to address their needs.

[AP](#)

Hope! Change! Hope! Change! errrr... not so fast. It's just another power grab.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Holder calls for “honest dialogue” about race

Feb 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Attorney General Eric Holder described the United States Wednesday as a nation of cowards on matters of race, saying most Americans avoid discussing awkward racial issues. In a speech to Justice Department employees marking Black History Month, Holder said the workplace is largely integrated but Americans still self-segregate on the weekends and in their private lives.

“If we’re going to ever make progress, we’re going to have to have the guts, we have to have the determination, to be honest with each other. It also means we have to be able to accept criticism where that is justified,” Holder told reporters after the speech.

[AP](#)

Honest dialogue require that all positions be accepted.

That's very, very far from what the truth is.

So there cannot be honest dialogue until “I am a nationalist and prefer to live with my own kind by culture, values, heritage, language and class” is an acceptable statement.

There's not going to be honest dialogue until we admit that most people in every ethnic group feel this way.

There's no hope of honest dialogue until we accept that some of us realize what history tells us about diversity: it doesn't work, unless you like living in the third world, and even then, after a few generations you get a population that has lost all unique adaptations of its admixed elements.

Bravo to him for making a brave statement; he's setting up a dialogue into which more insightful statements can be made.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Ending global warming is not rocket science

Feb 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We have two easy, practical solutions to global warming but they share one tiny problem.

First, the solutions:

- I. [Biochar](#). Easily made, can be decentralized, with few negative consequences if any.
- II. Reforestation:

But new research has included tropical forests in Africa to give the most up-to-date picture of the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by trees. It found 4.8 billion tonnes of CO₂ are sucked up every year.

The study suggest trees are currently sucking up a significant amount of global pollution from factories and cars but if carbon emissions continue to increase forests will die or even burn out, causing a "feed back" effect that will accelerate climate change.

Dr Simon Lewis, a Royal Society research fellow at the University of Leeds and author of the paper, said: "We are receiving a free subsidy from nature.

"Tropical forest trees are absorbing about 18 per cent of the CO₂ added to the atmosphere each year from burning fossil fuels, substantially buffering the rate of climate change."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has estimated that human activity emits 32 billion tonnes of CO₂ each year, but only 15 billion tonnes actually stays in the atmosphere adding to climate change. The new research shows exactly where some of the 'missing' 17 billion tonnes per year is going.

[The Telegraph](#)

Thinking clearly about this, planting more open spaces with trees and/or fast-growing woody plants like hemp would deal effectively with global warming.

If the two were done together: an easy solution.

The tiny problem: it would require humanity to cut itself back, which involves telling individuals they are not gods but animals with the minds of gods (sometimes), and that as a result we can't all do whatever we think we want to do.

What we need is not what we want. But to think of that, we have to think outside the individual, and that's taboo in consumerist-democratic-liberal society.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

The best way to view this recession

Feb 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Backstory: your fellow monkeys [created artificial wealth](#), by borrowing on the future, and now it's readjusting itself.

Worse: they made [convenient political decisions](#) that set the problem up for a fall.

Thesis: the current recession is the economy slowly bleeding off value so that its valuation of its wealth is closer in line with reality — which will prevent bigger recessions when we compete with foreign nations who do not have to take our inflated self-worth at face value.

Basically what happens is that after a period of time, economies go through a long-term debt cycle — a dynamic that is self-reinforcing, in which people finance their spending by borrowing and debts rise relative to incomes and, more accurately, debt-service payments rise relative to incomes. At cycle peaks, assets are bought on leverage at high-enough prices that the cash flows they produce aren't adequate to service the debt. The incomes aren't adequate to service the debt. Then begins the reversal process, and that becomes self-reinforcing, too. In the simplest sense, the country reaches the point when it needs a debt restructuring. General Motors is a metaphor for the United States.

Let's call it a "D-process," which is different than a recession, and the only reason that people really don't understand this process is because it happens rarely. Everybody should, at this point, try to understand the depression process by reading about the Great Depression or the Latin American debt crisis or the Japanese experience so that it becomes part of their frame of reference. Most people didn't live through any of those experiences, and what they have gotten used to is the recession dynamic, and so they are quick to presume the recession dynamic. It is very clear to me that we are in a D-process.

You can describe a recession as an economic retraction which occurs when the Federal Reserve tightens monetary policy normally to fight inflation. The cycle continues until the economy weakens enough to bring down the inflation rate, at which time the Federal Reserve eases monetary policy and produces an expansion. We can make it more complicated, but that is a basic simple description of what recessions are and what we have experienced through the post-World War II period. What you also need is a comparable understanding of what a D-process is and why it is different.

[Barrons](#)

Yeah, I chopped the hell out of it to make it read coherently.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Objectification of women

Feb 19th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Sexy women in bikinis really do inspire some men to see them as objects, according to a new study of male behavior.

Brain scans revealed that when men are shown pictures of scantily clad women, the region of the brain associated with tool use lights up.

Men were also more likely to associate images of sexualized women with first-person action verbs such as "I push, I grasp, I handle," said lead researcher Susan Fiske, a psychologist at Princeton University.

And in a "shocking" finding, Fiske noted, some of the men studied showed no activity in the part of the brain that usually responds when a person ponders another's intentions.

[National Geographic](#)

Project yourself into an advertisement for no-strings-attached vagina, because you think it's sexy, and get treated like a Fleshlight.

Big surprise. I'm not a huge fan of the burkha but maybe we need to find a happy mean.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [reproduction](#)

What makes tyranny? Liberty, because people choose to deny reality

Feb 19th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

We'd all love to hear that we're gods. That way, we can choose what we want, and we're immune to consequences in reality.

As mortals, instead we not only face consequences, but suffer under them. If we guessed wrong about how the world was going to respond to us, we get screwed.

Even worse, our fellow enlightened monkeys (humans) are constantly talking a good game into our head. This or that is hot; this or that is cool; this or that is the way to beat the system. They're influencing our ability to predict with our fear of results.

As a result, if you put a group of humans together and they have no forward agenda, the first thing they do is make a kind of tacit internal treaty: I won't point out publically where you're out of step with reality if you won't point out publically where I am. Done deal, contracted sealed, and a crowd is formed — a crowd of individualists who behave like a mob.

Before we start talking about liberty, freedom and other negatively defined (freedom = not unfree) absolute symbols, we should look at the effects of liberty: tyranny — by the mob.

In the last few years, I have woken up – late in the day, but better late than never – to the way in which individual liberty, privacy and human rights have been sliced away in Britain, like salami, under New Labour governments that profess to find in liberty the central theme of British history.

Almost every week brings some new revelation of the way in which our government has taken a further small slice of our liberty, always in the name of another real or alleged good: national security, safety from crime, community cohesion, efficiency (ha ha), or our "special relationship" with the United States.

As Dominic Raab writes in his excellent book *The Assault on Liberty*, this government "has hyperactively produced more Home Office legislation than all the other governments in our history combined, accumulating a vast arsenal of new legal powers and creating more than three thousand additional criminal offences".

The peculiarity of Britain is that we have nibbled away individual liberty on so many different fronts.

[The Guardian](#)

Timothy Garton Ash is correct in noting that liberty is being eroded; he's being silly in demanding more of it. We're talking about New Labour here, the most liberal government Britain has ever had. They're in favor of diversity. They want equal rights for gays. They want you to be able to do whatever it is you want to — to act like a god without fear of consequences — but in return, you're going to have to empower the mob to crush those who don't agree.

That's the devil's bargain of every Revolution.

In Russia, they murdered the aristocracy, and reduced one of the most cultured places on earth to a backward third world mafia.

In France, they destroyed their aristocracy and began the process of slowly relinquishing the dominance on the arts, culture and letters that France had held for centuries.

In the New World, the domesticated natives have risen up and overthrown those who built the infrastructure that defines New World countries as separate from the third world ruins that went before.

Revolutions revert nations to third world status through this mob-mentality. The mob wants the powers of a god, so it takes revenge on those who will know the difference between reality and illusion — those naturally gifted with intelligence.

This is why Nietzsche termed the liberal impulse — all liberal movements aim at Revolution — as “revenge”: it was designed to compensate through cognitive dissonance and violence for those who were not given what others got, namely the beauty, brains and health.

I don't think Lars Hedegaard realizes how accurate this quote is:

In a society where religion cannot be criticized, everything becomes religion — from the length of your beard to what hand to use when wiping your backside.

My only caveat: what about when that religion is secular? Like, say, liberty or Revolution.

We know that the broad Left – which in Europe would include various shades of the hard, Communist or Marxist Left, the New Left, which has now transformed itself into tree huggers, and the traditional Social Democratic parties – has vacated its traditional ideological positions in order to preach ideologies that used to be hallmarks of the far right. Positions such as the need for censorship, kissing up to demands that “religions” (i.e. Islam) must not be criticized or ridiculed, the institution of ethnic or tribal special privileges and inequality before the law – depending on what ethnic, tribal or clan chief or holy man can ingratiate himself to the top of the totem pole as most aggrieved victim.

This new weltanschauung takes us back to a legal order – or rather lack of order – the like of which we haven't seen in the civilized world since – when? The democratic revolutions of the 19th century, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, England's Glorious Revolution, John Milton's Areopagitica, Magna Carta?

The road chosen by the parties on the Left permits no return. Having alienated – not to say discarded – large chunks of their traditional working class voters, they are now increasingly dependent on the Muslim vote, which they hope will guarantee them a perpetual foothold at least in the major populations centers.

[International Free Press Society](#)

Every human action has two layers.

- a. The public layer, or how it is explained to others.
- b. The inner layer, in which the biochemical workings of the mind are laid bare — in contrast to how the mind explains itself, which is part of the public layer. The mind sees itself from outside. The inner layer however can only be studied on the level of biology, sociology/psychology, and impetus to power.

Hindus and their offspring, Buddhists, explain this as mind/body dualism: the mind sees itself from outside, so its perception is part of that outside, in which we form ostensible reasons for our actions using the language of civilization and its reward structure. “I fired John because we need some order on this team” frequently masks “He challenged my authority or competed with me for females, so I had to destroy him.” Mother Nature triumphs over all our pretentious little justifications.

In the case of the modern liberal, the private layer comes out when they're given power. All those justifications — help the poor, justice, liberty — get thrown out the window and we see liberalism for what

it really is: a group of monkeys throwing out the more qualified monkeys because, since the Revolutionists have more numbers, they can grab power and wealth — so they will.

These liberty-monkeys use whatever groups they can to support them in their power grab.

This is why liberals on all continents always support the importation of foreign workers. Why? These people should be grateful and dependent on the liberals, for a generation or two. They're soldiers in the war against the Majority, or those who've done well in life thanks to their inherent smarts, health and beauty.

This is why liberal movements all tend toward Stalinism as they gain power. They need to assert total control in order to legitimize their power grab, and to cover their basic incompetence at ruling — if they'd been good at anything, they would have been in power before the Revolution.

That reversal in action:

TWO decades ago, on 14th February 1989, Salman Rushdie received one of history's most notorious Valentine greetings. Ayatollah Khomeini, then Iran's Supreme Leader, issued a fatwa (a religious edict) calling for the death of the Indian-born British author in response to his novel, "The Satanic Verses".

Horrific though these consequences were, many argued that freedom of speech itself was at stake. To cave in, by withdrawing publication or sale of the work, would represent the crumbling of a defining principle of liberal societies.

Yet critics today, such as Kenan Malik, a writer and broadcaster, argue that the detractors have gradually won their war. Mr Malik and others suggest that free speech in the West is in retreat. Other publishers, faced with books that were likely to cause widespread offence, have been less resolute. In 2008 Random House was set to publish "The Jewel of Medina", a misty-eyed account of romance between Muhammad and his wife Aisha. The firm reversed its decision after a series of security experts and academics cautioned them against publication (one American academic described the work as historically inaccurate "soft core pornography") warning it would be dangerously offensive. Gibson Square, another publisher, took up the novel and saw its offices firebombed in September 2008, 20 years to the day after the publication of "The Satanic Verses". "The Jewel of Medina" has since been released in America, but it remains under wraps in Britain.

[The Economist](#)

The term "civilized" belongs to the public layer. It means that we censor things by making them politically unpopular, thus taboo, thus economically unpopular, so those who were trying to use them to make a profit then withdraw them. No one had to ban NWA's albums back in 1987, but you couldn't find them in most record stores.

Now these Revolutionists want to tell us that we're ignorant and primitive, and they know better — and somehow, the new power grabbing liberty-monkeys have paired up with their old nemesis, The Corporate State:

Elite members of the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland, recently considered a proposal for a new global television network to usher in a state of "global governance." The concept strikes some as authoritarian, even totalitarian. But the parent company of Fox News was one of the sponsors of this year's gathering.

The WEF is an exclusive club of very rich and powerful people from around the world. It describes itself as "an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas."

This year's conference featured speeches by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Chinese Premier We Jiabao. Many U.S. corporations, including some getting Wall Street bailout money, were sponsors. News Corporation, the parent of Fox News, was a "strategic partner" of the event.

Other members of the Council on the Future of Media were Betsy Morgan of the left-wing Huffington Post (former general manager of CBSNews.com); Rui Chenggang of China Central Television, an official political propaganda arm of the communist regime; and Zafar Siddiqi of CNBC Arabiya, a subsidiary of General Electric which is described as a 24-hour Arabic language financial and business information channel.

[World Tribune](#)

It's not left-wing or right-wing propaganda.

It has one message: don't rock the boat. We know what we are doing. Our way is the best, and you are an uneducated hick who doesn't know anything. Accept what we tell you, and don't rock the boat, because there's profit to be made.

Profit for the post-Revolutionary elites, that is.

The Soviet Union lost a generation of genetics research to the politicization of science when Trofim Lysenko, director of biology under Joseph Stalin, parlayed his rejection of Mendelian genetics into a powerful political scientific movement.

Yet the spectre of Lysenkoism lurks in current scientific discourse on gender, race and intelligence. Claims that sex- or race-based IQ gaps are partly genetic can offend entire groups, who feel that such work feeds hatred and discrimination. Pressure from professional organizations and university administrators can result in boycotting such research, and even in ending scientific careers.

Nobel prizewinner William Shockley became a subject of controversy in the 1970s, after his work turned to racial differences in intelligence. In recent decades, the writings, statements and teachings of Arthur Jensen, Michael Levin and John Philippe Rushton, also on racial differences in intelligence, have met variously with acclaim, outcries and demands for job termination. So have writings of Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray on the differential distribution of IQ by race. And Frank Ellis, a lecturer at the University of Leeds, UK, took early retirement in the face of an ethical storm that developed after he suggested in a student newspaper that intelligence levels were related to ethnicity. The list goes on. Many have been dissuaded from even looking at the research topic for fear of condemnation.

The outcries against those who speak of racial and gender gaps in IQ have become deafening, at times resembling Lysenkoism in language if not in deed.

[Nature](#)

This is why we must not allow politics to dominate us: it blocks our view of reality, and replaces it with an ethic of convenience that acts so we don't rock the boat.

200 years after Darwin, we cannot discuss Darwin's effects on us as people.

And there's an even more threatening aspect of social censorship of science:

Analyzing the last 40 years of data from the tens of thousands of Americans who contribute to the count, the Audubon Society has found that 177 of 305 species of birds common in early winter have "moved" as much as 300 miles north to follow warmer temperatures. More bluntly, they are being evicted by global warming.

Sightings that were once “preposterous,” according to ornithologist Wayne Petersen of Mass Audubon, are continental evidence of planet alteration.

[Boston Globe](#)

Have we, er, come to a conclusion on Global Warming yet?

I’m pretty sure the elites want us to not rock the boat. Recycle those condoms. Buy those fluorescent bulb replacements. Get yourself a new pair of Green(tm) cigarette lighters. But don’t talk about overpopulation or ecocide through humans consuming too much land for natural habitats to exist.

Climate change — which is a subset of the issue of human effects on the environment, at least in part — cannot be discussed because we’ve politicized it.

Are you in the pro-camp? Or the con-camp?

There’s no voice for those who believe the Revolution has brought an elite which has allowed humanity to grow out of control. Climate change is just one part of it. We’ve made our groundwater toxic and full of hormonoactive chemicals. We’ve divided up the earth with fences and roads, and shattered ecosystems in doing so. Even worse, Malthusian man keeps growing — with no plans for stopping — and the worst damage is in third world populations (first-world populations in Europe and North America are breeding below replacement levels).

We’re out of control, thanks to our liberty, and the liberty it gave us to squash dissenters who rock the boat. And what it leaves us with is empty debate, castrated science and lots of lies to keep us company as we watch our world crumble around us.

Liberty creates tyranny. What prevents tyranny? Using power responsibly. That means recognizing that to stay in power is to defend yourself against others; that we are biological/sociological creatures, and almost all ideology is just justification; implementing some form of Social Darwinism and being able to use censorship and law responsibility to eliminate destructive behaviors.

That probably requires too much maturity for those who want easy, one step answers like “just implement liberty!” or “just implement democracy!”, which they tell you with cheerfully blank faces, because everything else is too complicated — and crosses that public/private barrier described above.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [democracy](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Barack Obama: Prelude to Oligarchy

Feb 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).



What do you call it when a candidate is popular with two groups:

- The self-described proletariat, or those with low self-esteem and low performance, who really hate anyone who's doing well.
- The media and government and social elites, who are doing well because they're able to fool the above group into buying their products.

I call it a prelude to oligarchy.

The rich elites get their candidate.

The middle class, traditional values, hard-working people who generate the actual wealth and create the social stability of the nation — they get revenged upon by the people who aren't making it and have ended up disillusioned underachievers.

Hipsters, the impoverished, criminals, media elites, Hollywood glamour cases, and big multinational business all agree: vote Obama. Vote for the image and not the reality. Defer any difficult decisions.

Let us continue the plunder, and ruling from behind the scenes.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Signs of a dying, lazy civilization

Feb 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A recent study by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, found that a third of students surveyed said that they expected B's just for attending lectures, and 40 percent said they deserved a B for completing the required reading.

James Hogge, associate dean of the Peabody School of Education at Vanderbilt University, said: "Students often confuse the level of effort with the quality of work. There is a mentality in students that 'if I work hard, I deserve a high grade.' "

"I tell my classes that if they just do what they are supposed to do and meet the standard requirements, that they will earn a C," said Prof. Marshall Grossman. "That is the default grade. They see the default grade as an A."

[NYT](#)

When you're using to BSing people to get by, you feel entitled to grades and money for just showing up and punching the clock.

You also expect to be equal in that if you work just as hard as a smarter person, you should be rewarded exactly the same.

Anyone else realize this is a downward spiral?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The real privacy threat: your DNA made public

Feb 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Forget deleting browser cookies.

What if you were judged — like you are socially, and economically — but now *biologically*?

Time named direct-to-consumer DNA exams its Invention of the Year for 2008, following the emergence of companies like 23andMe and Navigenics, which report on your genetic risk of illnesses such as prostate cancer or Parkinson's. Academic medical research efforts like Harvard's Personal Genome Project aim to study the DNA of volunteers, hoping to find genetic links to diseases. So do healthcare providers: In December, California-based Kaiser Permanente announced plans to study the DNA of 400,000 members.

The promise of these tests includes drugs that may someday be tailored to treat your illnesses. The peril is that your personal data could circulate more widely than you expect. DNA provides a rich digital source of medical information, which has great scientific value and lends itself to data sharing. But DNA testing currently involves a lightly regulated tangle of private and nonprofit researchers. Once you take a DNA test, it ceases to be your property. Your genetic data could circulate among insurers and employers, or even data brokers and pharmaceutical companies hoping to profit from it.

"Information can be harmful, and the risks great for individuals," says Patrick Taylor, deputy general counsel at Children's Hospital in Boston, who has written about genetic privacy. Those risks include the loss of a job or insurance — employers or insurers might not like your DNA profile — and the disclosure of medical secrets or the creation of family traumas. And with DNA, Taylor notes, "Once it's out, it's out." You can change your credit card number, but you can't apply for a new genetic code.

[Salon](#)

At first, they're going to charge you extra for genes that suggest there's cancer in the family.

Next, it's going to be on entrance exams.

Finally, they'll demand you adjust yourself. *You're gonna need to fix that H1V-zA-D4 gene... I can do it for only \$2500 if you sign this disclaimer, just in case — it's less than 1% of the procedures — we turn you into a drooling vegetable instead. Hey, it happens. We're changing your blueprint after all.*

All from the same imperfect science that can't cure cancer as it is, and is often wrong about many things.

Maybe it'll get political.

Not diverse enough? Too diverse? *To the ovens.*

Or it could get social.

You've been pulled over, so we need a DNA sample — oops, there's that anti-social gene. You... um... need to come with us.

Or even become the ultimate control method.

The following samples lacked the genes for proper docility, sir. I recommend they be neutralized.

But there's an even greater threat.

When people start linking up data from multiple sources, they can form a picture of you that's completely revelatory. Especially if those sources sell their data to private databases, which they will need to do to bolster ad revenue.

It's not a far-off assumption to assume people will look through your public persona, find things they don't like, and then use that as an excuse to look for DNA they don't like.

Facebook's new terms of service say that it owns—or at least shares—your uploaded content. Your photos from a company retreat could show up in a Facebook ad. Or Facebook could sublicense the rights to your company jingle in a video. Does Facebook want to use your content like this? It doesn't matter—the company says it can.

Technically, the terms say that by joining and uploading, “you grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to (a) use, copy, publish, stream, store, retain, publicly perform or display, transmit, scan, reformat, modify, edit, frame, translate, excerpt, adapt, create derivative works and distribute...” your content. Facebook also specifies it can “use your name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial or advertising... .”

[PC World](#)

Facebook reversed its policy early today, but the principle remains: solid business logic was the basis for this decision. We don't want to get sued, and we have all this information we can capitalize on, or at least use in our advertising and sell to our business partners.

How many other businesses will do this? And what other data can they link into it:

A Vietnamese researcher will demonstrate at Black Hat DC next week how he and his colleagues were able to easily spoof and bypass biometric systems that authenticate users by scanning their faces.

The researchers cracked the biometric authentication embedded in Lenovo, Asus, and Toshiba laptops by spoofing the biometric systems with everything from a photo of the authorized user to brute-force hacking using fake facial images. They successfully bypassed Lenovo's Veriface III, Asus' SmartLogon V1.0.0005, and Toshiba's Face Recognition 2.0.2.32 — each set to its highest security level — demonstrating vulnerabilities in the systems that let an attacker cheat them with phony photos of the legitimate user and gain access to the laptops.

These Windows XP and Vista laptops come with built-in webcams that work with the facial-recognition technology. This form of authentication is considered more convenient than fingerprint scans and more secure than traditional passwords. The software scans the user's face and stores the images and facial characteristics. Then the user can log in by scanning his or her face, which is then matched against the image data.

[Dark Reading](#)

Run that facial recognition software behind the CCTV cameras that cover just about all of the cities now. ATMs, security cameras, police cameras, weathercams, you name it.

So now we have an activity profile from Facebook and sites like it, a facial profile, and the DNA to match. We can easily filter for those we don't like, whether we are large corporations, a government, or — most likely the case — an ideologically-minded mob purging biological elites so its Revolution can succeed.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Drunken people notice no problems

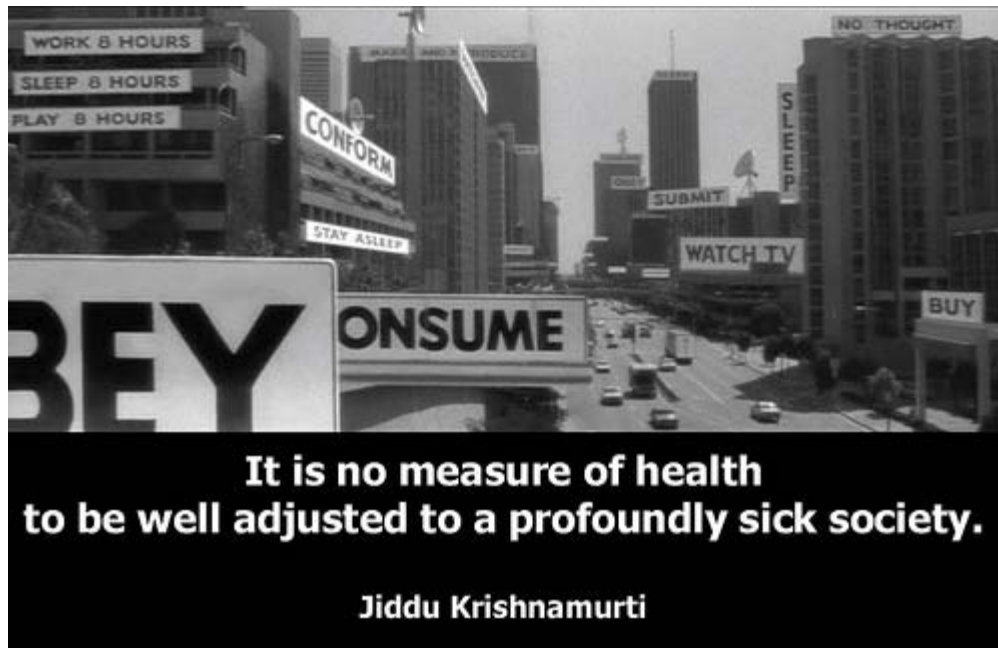
Feb 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Different types of dangerous lives. — You have no idea what you are living through; you rush through life as if you were drunk and now and then fall down some staircase. But thanks to your drunkenness you never break a limb: your muscles are too relaxed and your brain too benighted for you to find the stones of these stairs as hard as we do! For us life is more dangerous: we are made of glass—woe unto us if we merely *bump* ourselves! And all is lost if we *fall*!

[The Gay Science \(1882\)](#)

My guess is, he's saying this:



Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Self-discipline versus narcissism

Feb 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

As you know if you've read this blog before, I believe there are two basic meta-political — psychological, sociological, biologically-determined — stances people take.

Either they know themselves, and then discipline themselves to adapt to the world and to achieve what they inwardly desire;

-or-

They become narcissists, refuse to pay attention to reality, and indulge in themselves instead of pursuing what they inwardly desire, because in pursuing something you can fail and thus endanger your fragile sense of self-esteem.

The first group builds its self-esteem by being able to comfortably predict reality; the second group assumes it has self-esteem through "love" of itself.

So now translating this to politics:

All over the news on Tuesday were clips of 18-year-old new mother Bristol Palin stuttering awkwardly in an interview with Fox News' Greta Van Susteren and saying what many Americans already know all too well: that the idea of teenage abstinence is unrealistic.

Bristol, sitting down with the Palin-friendly Van Susteren, did not come across as any more eloquent or incisive on matters of sex, pregnancy and new motherhood than anyone would expect of an utterly average teenager, but she did offer up an inarticulate, bumbling and nakedly honest interview about how her life has changed since the birth of her son, Tripp, two months ago. Wittingly or not, she touched on issues close to the heart of reproductive rights activists and feminists who fiercely opposed her mother's candidacy: how her life is no longer her own, how she wishes she had waited 10 years, how the choice to have the child was hers and not her mother's and how abstinence was not a realistic answer.

[Salon](#)

It's unrealistic to ask people not to indulge in giant mountains of cocaine.

It's unrealistic to ask people not to steal, rape, rob, etc.

It's unrealistic to ask them to pay attention to reality.

Who's defining "realistic" here?

Oh... someone who failed at reality and so had to get a media job that underpays her to have "bold, poignant, ironic" opinions.

So we're supposed to let her program our minds with what is realistic or not.

The answer is that you're either self-disciplined, or you're narcissistic.

It's unrealistic to expect people not to be narcissistic, but it's realistic to say that if they are realistic, they'll adapt instead — through self-discipline.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why democracy is our doom

Feb 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

There are people who walk with confidence to the podium and then conquer it while showing off a victorious smile. They open their mouths and speak with ease, because they know that the larger portion of the audience agrees. Together they transform their moral values into laws that suit themselves and imprison the few who disagree. Then the majority rejoices in the fruits of the highest of all possible utopias: Democracy!

[Anti-Democracy](#)

A great site that points out how democracy is a type of distributed totalitarianism. Of course, they could find out more by reading [Plato's Republic](#), but maybe they'll do that next.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Criticism of Israel is veiled anti-Semitism

Feb 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

It has been the same here these past couple of months with the fighting in Gaza. Only the air has been charred not with devastation but with hatred. And I don't mean the hatred of the warring parties for each other. I mean the hatred of Israel expressed in our streets, on our campuses, in our newspapers, on our radios and televisions, and now in our theatres.

But I am not allowed to ascribe any of this to anti-Semitism. It is, I am assured, "criticism" of Israel, pure and simple. In the matter of Israel and the Palestinians this country has been heading towards a dictatorship of the one-minded for a long time; we seem now to have attained it. Deviate a fraction of a moral millimetre from the prevailing orthodoxy and you are either not listened to or you are jeered at and abused, your reading of history trashed, your humanity itself called into question. I don't say that self-pityingly. As always with dictatorships of the mind, the worst harmed are not the ones not listened to, but the ones not listening.

Berating Jews with their own history, disinherit them of pity, as though pity is negotiable or has a sell-by date, is the latest species of Holocaust denial, infinitely more subtle than the David Irving version with its clunking body counts and quibbles over gas-chamber capability and chimney sizes. Instead of saying the Holocaust didn't happen, the modern sophisticated denier accepts the event in all its terrible enormity, only to accuse the Jews of trying to profit from it, either in the form of moral blackmail or downright territorial theft. According to this thinking, the Jews have betrayed the Holocaust and become unworthy of it, the true heirs to their suffering being the Palestinians. Thus, here and there throughout the world this year, Holocaust day was temporarily annulled or boycotted on account of Gaza, dead Jews being found guilty of the sins of live ones.

[The Independent](#)

Mr. Jacobson, I think it's even simpler:

They hate you for being successful.

The [Crowd](#) always sides with the underdog. (They want to believe that they can be whatever they want to be, and powerful people losing when they should win suggests this psychology is correct.)

Israel was OK with the left and the undifferentiated crowd when they were victims that the crowd could help... but now that Israel is a successful nation, they're the oppressors.

It's simple: they hate you for being successful and not being a victim with no options... a victim like Palestine... a victim like them.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

What makes people vote Republican?

Feb 18th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

What makes people vote Republican? Why in particular do working class and rural Americans usually vote for pro-business Republicans when their economic interests would seem better served by Democratic policies? We psychologists have been examining the origins of ideology ever since Hitler sent us Germany's best psychologists, and we long ago reported that strict parenting and a variety of personal insecurities work together to turn people against liberalism, diversity, and progress. But now that we can map the brains, genes, and unconscious attitudes of conservatives, we have refined our diagnosis: conservatism is a partially heritable personality trait that predisposes some people to be cognitively inflexible, fond of hierarchy, and inordinately afraid of uncertainty, change, and death. People vote Republican because Republicans offer "moral clarity"—a simple vision of good and evil that activates deep seated fears in much of the electorate. Democrats, in contrast, appeal to reason with their long-winded explorations of policy options for a complex world.

[Jonathan Haidt](#)

All political parties must pay attention to this knowledge: they are being judged by sociological factors, not ideological ones.

You must separate the world in two:

- (a) What we say we're doing
- (b) What our inner machines are doing

Our inner machines want to breed, prosper, justify themselves and feel a sense of community.

Beyond that, all of our "caring" is deception.

Republicans do well when they appeal to middle class Western European values: family, morality, defense, justice and stability.

Democrats, on the other hand, appeal to the destabilized, atomized modern individual: self-justification, morally poignant stances, revenge against those nature has gifted.

Pay attention when you choose a third way.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The death of civilizations

Feb 18th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When I was a kid, I often worried that my lifespan would not include any epic or cool events.

Life punished me for that thought. I'm rewarded with a front-row seat to the collapse of one of the most powerful empires in history. Unfortunately, this also means that much of what I do is doomed with it.

All civilizations die the same way.

They get wealthy, and people get detached from how hard it is to **successfully** do things. Not do them OK, mediocre, or just get them done, but do them well, so that they endure and do not cause secondary problems.

To do things well requires a whole vision, meaning that you see every factor of the task at once, much as you'd appreciate a fine wine, admire a fine painting or lose yourself in conversation with a brilliant woman.

What replaces the whole vision is the linear vision: take one factor of many, call the rest "details" and "context," and throw them away.

This leads to people having no idea how the world works, and fearing for the future "subconsciously" as they know things as described in public aren't right but cannot articulate how they're wrong, they demand more personal power and less government intervention. This is called a Revolution.

After the Revolution, the people optionally kill the elites, and then start voting, so popular illusions become more important than reality.

At that point, it's easier to import help than to face real problems head-on. Mercenaries, migrant laborers, foreign financiers, etc. appear.

Then they find that all the problems for which there were not politically acceptable (or later, politically correct) solutions did not go away. Instead they festered and created more problems, damaging that part of the whole that gets called context or details, which in turn damages whatever part we look at linearly.

It's the same with Western civilization.

All those problems we thought "disappeared" during the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s... just festered and caused others, causing our ruin.

Our grandfathers saying things were going to ruin, they don't make 'em like they used to, etc. — they were right, just gradually.

All the doomsayers — they were wrong. Sudden decisive doom is not on the menu. Slow decline into disorganization and third world status? You mean, becoming Brazil or Mexico? Yes, that's the future plan for the USA and Europe.

It's a fascinating thing to observe — criminals are empowered by wealth to deceive, people feel flattered for deceiving themselves, and then they pull it apart from within.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [individualism](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [self-deception](#)

Knut Hamsun rehabilitated as American-style liberal democracy fails

Feb 17th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The idea behind liberal democracy: gain moral right by accepting everyone, and gain strength through being a melting pot that is ideologically motivated yet build on a solid foundation of capitalism.

The reality: diversity destroys nations, a lack of culture empowers rapacious commerce, proletarian mass revolt denies unpopular truths so commits ecocide, capitalism isn't stable, wars have gotten worse not better, and people are psychologically afflicted with depression, misery and anomie because their lives are pointless servitude to simultaneously lofty goals and mundane self-consumptive reality.

Hamsun pointed out that society was neurotic, and that its values decayed as cities and international trade came about, and that such a society empowers idiots who glibly lie to make money yet are blind to complete solutions, but are so drugged on their own egos they resist any attempts to assert reality over "whatever you wanna believe is true, man."

Knut Hamsun, the Nobel prize-winning Norwegian author who fell from grace for supporting the Nazi occupation of Norway, is to be put on a commemorative coin by his homeland's central bank.

The coin is the first to celebrate Hamsun, a Norwegian national hero until his sympathy for the Nazi party emerged. "NORWEGIANS! Throw down your rifles and go home again," he wrote in a newspaper article after the Nazis arrived in Norway in 1940. "The Germans are fighting for us all, and will crush the English tyranny over us and over all neutrals." His post-war trial for treason was ended after two psychiatrists ruled he was suffering from "permanently impaired mental faculties", but he was sentenced to the loss of his property, put under psychiatric observation, and died in 1952 in poverty.

Hamsun is best known for his novel *Hunger*, which is seen as one of the first genuinely modern Norwegian novels, telling of a starving young writer driven to extremes of euphoria and despair, and for the classic works *Mysteries*, *Pan*, *Victoria* and *Growth of the Soil*.

[The Guardian](#)

Regardless of his politics or personal, he's an awesome writer, one of those brave and bright minds who can literally invent themselves because they have a clear grasp of reality outside of themselves.

- [Sult/Hunger](#) (1890)
- [Pan](#) (1894)
- [Markens Grøde/Growth of the Soil](#) (1917)

The University of Adelaide does etexts the right way: easy reading, wide-formatted HTML pages.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Liberal elites are the same worldwide

Feb 17th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A selection of comments from a UK newspaper reveals the mentality of our liberal elites — who are social elites, meaning they're selected for how they appear and not how they perform, just like the latest American travesty, Barack Obama — is the same worldwide. This suggests liberalism is an outward manifestation of a psychological condition:

"What comes over as the heart of labour is how much money they can make any which way they can get their hands on money, how to think up the latest soundbite, what is inovative even if it doesn't do much good, idiotic phrases like 'ASBOs', keystone one etc., cheap celebrities, overpaid footballers, and knighting at the drop of a hat their pals with or without any real merit. Finally is the unelected, power hungry Gordon Brown trying to keep the crown on his head any which way, holding on to the belief he is here to Save the World."

"Gordon Brown hates everything that is British and if he could he would get rid of the pound and parliament and have Britain run by Brussels."

"Perhaps if we said that most WAAFs at Bletchley Park were lesbian group outreach workers, the grounds of the house were occupied by an army of Gypsies and the farm was run by Peruvian guinea-pig breeders, we might get some Lottery funding!"

"'Our' Labour governments have spent immense energy smearing and slagging off British culture in schools, local authorities, NHS chaplaincies, let alone the race relations industry. We are barely 'a nation' anymore. British history, for this regime, is on a par with that of the Third Reich.

Surely you must know that Bletchley Park would be like a white farm to Robert Mugabe – uproot it, it is a token Nazi colonialism, homophobic, enslaving, women hating....Labour hates British cultural history, with a deep irrational hate. And the BBC is its propaganda arm. And the Tories stink of fear at even disagreeing with all this."

[The Telegraph](#)

Once you have seen it, you'll never see politics the same way.

Please don't interpret this post as a defense of walking lock-step conservative — while I think the Republicans are more realistic than liberals, more realistic than stark raving delusional isn't a prize-winner, if you know what I mean.

We need to act like scientists: figure out what has worked in history, compile it, apply it, and watch it carefully. We also need less ego-drama in our lives, because ego-drama and fear of being inconsequential are the psychological voids that push people toward liberalism and other excuses.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Europe turns against political correctness

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Action, then words:

Action:

The authorities in Rome have begun dismantling illegal camps amid an outcry over three rapes last weekend that have been blamed on immigrants.

Mayor Gianni Alemanno supervised the demolition of about 30 camps, home to many Roma, or Gypsies, from Romania.

The call by Mr Calderoli, a leading member of the anti-immigrant Northern League party, comes as the government prepares new measures aimed at dealing with both crime and illegal immigrants.

Police say a mob of around 20 masked men beat up four Romanians outside a kebab restaurant in Rome on Sunday in an apparent vigilante attack.

[BBC](#)

Diversity failing as usual creates a backlash, and government's smart enough to realize "Italy for Italians" isn't as knuckle-dragging, immoral and intolerant as our media elites would have us believe.

Words:

Carol Thatcher refused to apologise for calling a French tennis player a 'golliwog' and claimed people were 'far too easily offended in modern society'.

'Ironically, it's like we're back 20 years ago before the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany,' she told Channel 5's The Wright Stuff.

The 55-year-old daughter of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher also branded the person who leaked her comments a 'bully'.

[Metro UK](#)

People are sick of pretentious elites who tell us what's wrong, but never have a plan for what's right, other than to just go with the flow, not rock the boat and never, ever tell someone else their ideas are unrealistic — it's bad for business.

They're reacting among other things to the type of government created by such elites, which is tolerant of dysfunction because its goal is to exploit.

Witness:

Father-of-three Peter Drummond was so angry when he discovered someone had sold heroin to his family that he took matters into his own hands.

He confronted John Nellies in his home and flushed five of the drug dealer's bags of heroin down the toilet.

But yesterday it was Drummond – not Nellies – who was ordered to serve two months for

breaching the peace by barging into Nellies's home and threatening him.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Government cannot and will not protect us against parasites. Its vision: we are each small islands, and we are totally autonomous and accountable to no one.

Why does it have this vision? It's popular: people like to think they are in control of themselves and are fascinating, witty and important.

Reality tells us we're all part of something larger, and when we deny that, we make horrors like ecocide and social decay.

The backlash gains momentum.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

“Change” is all talk, no walk

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I'm not sure whether Obama's bipartisan strategy was truly genuine. It's true, the president acted in a bipartisan manner — he invited Republicans to talks in the Oval Office and organized bipartisan parties to watch football in the White House together. But his outreach was poisoned by the way the Democrats put together the stimulus bill in Congress.

He should have publicly called on the House and Senate Democrats to take Republican input more seriously early in the process. After all, there are real ideological differences between the two parties on the question of whether the current giant public spending is the way out of the crisis or just a huge liability to our federal budget and our children.

And one should not forget: Every president has a honeymoon. But that will fade and the Democratic Congress is not at all popular, even now.

[Der Spiegel](#)

Democrats are good at the external game. Sound good, look good, make nice... but they don't understand structure.

As a result, when they talk about “change” and “hope,” what they mean is increased one-party domination.

It's the same with leftist parties everywhere: promise what people want to hear, but beneath it, there's an ugly hatred of the majority and a desire to implement a system to smash them.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Can our species handle power over itself?

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

A drug which appears to erase painful memories has been developed by scientists.

But British experts said the breakthrough raises disturbing ethical questions about what makes us human.

They also warned it could have damaging psychological consequences, preventing those who take it from learning from their mistakes.

Dr Daniel Sokol, a lecturer in medical ethics at St George's, University of London, said:
'Removing bad memories...will change our personal identity since who we are is linked to our memories.'

[Daily Mail](#)

We are not our bodies.

We are our experiences and our choices, as we grow from being isolated in our minds to adapting to our world to bettering our world.

We are our memories. They are both experience and choice, bound with the realization of how well-adapted that choice was.

This lets us learn from our mistakes.

Without our mistakes, we are in stasis, in a permanent present tense, never exerting Will.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

USA to resume deporting Haitians

Feb 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

U.S. immigration authorities say they've ordered 30,000 Haitians to leave the country.

Handfuls of deportees with valid passports have been returned to Haiti since Dec. 5, following a three-month break in deportations, according to the South Florida Sun Sentinel. But Haitian officials say the storm-battered Caribbean country needs time to recover and can't handle the return of its citizens.

[Sun Times](#)

The third world will take whatever it can get, because it has no hope of achieving it by itself.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

The problem of individual awareness

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The main struggle our society faces is that of finding a balance between individual and whole.

If the whole is oppressive, the individual and its distinct abilities get destroyed.

If the individual is oppressive, the whole fragments into individuals who then combat each other, and it is destroyed.

One major problem is people playing individual politics with ideas. If a new idea comes about, it challenges them personally because they didn't think of it, and so are "looking old, tired and less evolutionary fit" in contrast.

This is how we get politics of individual defensiveness, revenge and cognitive dissonance.

It's also why most religions, including Buddhism and Christianity, stress non-judgmentalism when it comes to people. Stick to the ideas. Ignore the people. That allows them to switch ideas without feeling personally assaulted.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

It's better to fight than stop talking

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

You'll hear many people say a very trendy thing:

*Peace at all costs.
Anything but war.
Pacifism is the way to enlightenment.*

The problem with putting peace before solving disputes is that these disputes get addressed with bad compromises, then fester, and then explode.

Just as it happens between individuals, it happens between groups:

But just because you seldom argue doesn't mean your marriage is strong. The real silent killer of marriage is distancing yourself from your partner.

The solution? Don't worry so much about your fight response – that instinct to duke it out verbally. Instead, focus on your flight response – the instinct to avoid your partner. If we can learn to spot the distancing pattern in our relationships, we can help prevent family problems and divorce.

Soon after they married, Mr. and Mrs. Smith were surprised at some of the tension and dissatisfaction they felt with each other. At first, they tried to talk it out. Over time, this didn't seem to be working, so they'd lose patience and argue more often. But open conflict is unpleasant, and pop psychology has taught us that arguing and anger are bad things that doom a marriage.

So the Smiths (subconsciously) decided to keep the peace, and avoid the touchy topics. They communicated less of their true thoughts, feelings, and dreams to each other. As they distanced themselves from each other, he filled the gap by focusing on his career and she focused on the kids. Everything seemed fine, because he was succeeding at his career and she could meet her need for affection with the children. But over the years, this pattern slowly, insidiously, became a problem.

[CSM](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Beware of nations with lots of attractive men

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

It's a cliché. Go to that sunny southern nation, where there's lots of studs, and have a rockin' vacation. But in biological terms, what does a surplus of attractive males mean?

So physical attractiveness, while a universally positive quality, contributes even more to women's reproductive success than to men's. The generalized Trivers-Willard hypothesis would therefore predict that physically attractive parents should have more daughters than sons. Once again, this indeed appears to be the case. Young Americans who are rated "very attractive" have roughly a 44% chance of having a son for their first child (and thus a 56% chance of having a daughter). In contrast, everyone else has roughly a 52% chance of having a son (and thus a 48% chance of having a daughter) for their first child. Being "very attractive" increases the odds of having a daughter by 36% or decreases the odds of having a son by 26%!

If physical attractiveness is heritable, such that beautiful parents beget beautiful children (and less attractive parents beget similarly less attractive children), and if beautiful parents are more likely to have daughters than others, then it logically follows that, over time, generation after generation, women will become more attractive on average than men. Once again, studies confirm this implication of the generalized Trivers-Willard hypothesis. The average level of physical attractiveness among women is significantly higher than the average level of physical attractiveness among men, both in Japan and the United States. Women are more beautiful than men on average because beautiful parents have significantly more daughters than less beautiful parents.

...In fact, as I explain in a previous series of posts, physically attractive men may not make desirable long-term mates, precisely because other women seek them out for their short-term mating and thus attractive men are less committed to their long-term mates.

[Psychology Today](#)

Connect the dots:

If there is a surplus of attractive women, the society is operating on the principle of long-term commitment from parents, which leads to [K-strategies instead of r-strategies in reproduction](#).

However, if there's a surplus of attractive men, women have already given up on K-strategies — the idea of having a stable family unit and heavy parental investment. Now it's ejaculate and dash, and hope some of the abundance of offspring survive, albeit in much greater poverty.

That in turn leads to decline into banana republic status.

So if you land in someplace with lots of attractive men... run in fear. It's a dying society.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).
Tagged: [r/K strategies](#)

Reproductive health of populations: K/r strategies

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

How does a population increase its power? By increasing the intelligence, strength and health of its members.

r strategy: breed chaotically, frequently, and invest little in offspring;

K strategy: breed deliberately, with partners for life, and invest a lot in the offspring.

Sluts are *r* strategists, e.g. nonstrategists. Breed like an *r*, end up producing dumb, narcissistic, reckless children — a path to the third world.

Traditional values (home in first world nations!) emphasize not only *K* strategies, but finding a transcendent reason to see and amplify beauty in it. We call that love.

[AMERIKA](#)

In evolutionary terms, what is progressive in social terms is the exact opposite, and what is considered not progressive, is:

The *r*-strategy is characterized by a high rate of propagation. It occurs especially with species specialized on colonizing new habitats with variable conditions or with species with strongly fluctuating population sizes. The *K*-strategy, in contrast, describes a regulated, density-dependent propagation in view of the capacity limit of the habitat *K*. It occurs in species living in stable habitats, where a high rate of propagation is of no advantage. It is regarded as more progressive than the *r*-strategy in an evolutionary sense. In nature, all conceivable transitions between these two extremes occur. A given species will therefore mainly adopt one strategy, even though shares of the other strategy cannot be overlooked. Sometimes, external circumstances like unpredicted changes of the living conditions trigger a change from one strategy to the other.

[BUH](#)

In other words, *K*-strategies recognize the carrying capacity and are designed to maximize it.

r-strategies recognize only how much food there is today and attempt to saturate the population so that some survive.

Humanity's lack of a *K*-strategy, across the board, is what is responsible for ecocide through overpopulation, as well as class war.

When it is applied, on a personal or social level, results improve:

A genetic risk factor that increases the likelihood that youth will engage in substance use can be neutralized by high levels of involved and supportive parenting, according to a new University of Georgia study.

The study, published in the February issue of the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, is the first to examine a group of youth over time to see how a genetic risk factor interacts with a child's environment to influence behavior.

"We found that involved and supportive parenting can completely override the effects of a

genetic risk for substance abuse,” says study co-author Gene Brody, Regents Professor in the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences. “It’s a very encouraging finding that shows the power of parenting.”

[Science Daily](#)

Survival of the fittest does not mean whoever wins the fight wins. That’s too easy.

It means whoever survives, no matter how many fights, and raises a family who are in turn balanced, inclined to survive, and wise, wins.

This is why all rising populations use *K*-strategies, and all declining ones apply *r*-strategies.



Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [r/K strategies](#)

Bureaucracy destroys nursing

Feb 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

About 1 in 5 newly licensed nurses quits within a year, according to one national study.

That turnover rate is a major contributor to the nation's growing shortage of nurses. But there are expanding efforts to give new nursing grads better support. Many hospitals are trying to create safety nets with residency training programs.

The national nursing shortage could reach 500,000 by 2025, as many nurses retire and the demand for nurses balloons with the aging of baby boomers, according to Peter Buerhaus of Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

"When things are going good and I'm not overwhelmed and I'm able to help people, I love it," she said, recalling the gratification of seeing a bedridden patient finally manage to take a few steps.

"There are always those moments," she said, "but they're interrupted pretty quickly."

[MSN](#)

We have too many people going through our health care system, and too much of our effort spent on non-critical care. Why?

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

UK police accused of racism again

Feb 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Police forces in England and Wales are still institutionally racist despite attempts to confront the issue, a review claims.

The report criticised failures to recruit and keep black officers and the reliance on stop and search techniques.

The Runnymede Trust also said some forces were “dragging their feet” when it came to reporting racist offences.

[BBC](#)

In our hyper-egalitarian (read: delusional) society, “racism” is one of those crimes like pedophilia and making nuclear weapons, that one just doesn’t look deeply into.

Don’t examine the facts. Don’t look twice. Just get the offender away before the rest of us get tagged with his toxic crime.

Yet we constantly have racism charges thrown against cops because (a) they don’t have enough black people on the police force and (b) they racially profile defendants.

However, none have looked into the causes of these situations. We see the effect — too few black faces — and assume the cause.

That kind of thinking never leads to solutions.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cause-effect reversal](#) · [race](#)

Why the war in Gaza continues

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

How third world nations destroy first world nations — population as a weapon:

The population of the Gaza Strip increased by almost 40% between 1997 and 2007, according to the results of a Palestinian census.

The survey, taken before Israel's recent offensive, showed the territory has a population of 1.4 million people.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated the annual growth rate at 3.3% and said the population would double in 21 years at that rate.

The overwhelming majority of people in the territory (67.9%) continue to be UN-registered refugees.

[BBC](#)

The conflict between Israel and Gaza is a class war that can be explained by IQ differences.

For Jews, who are mostly Eastern European and German in descent at this point, the average IQ is probably somewhere near 105.

For Palestinians, who are of a similar origin to Jews before they went through Europe, the average IQ is probably 10 points lower — 95, right between Mexico and Russia on the IQ scale.

That means that Palestinians are always going to work for Jews.

Further, that 70% of them are on the UN dole suggests they live in grotesque, clueless poverty.

So when their numbers rise, Israel faces a problem: higher-IQ populations breed more slowly. Do nothing about the rising third world population among you, and they then outbreed you and with the strength of numbers, take over.

If that happens, Israel is no longer a Jewish state for the preservation of the Jewish people — it's an Arab state with a possibly ambivalent or hostile view toward the Jewish people.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [class war](#) · [eugenics](#)

Dysgenics through opposition to marriage

Feb 16th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Marriage couldn't be more unattractive – the number of us getting hitched has slumped to the lowest level since records began, 150 years ago. By next year, it's predicted that singletons will be in the majority.

No wonder the age we get married has risen over the years, to 30 for women and 31 for men – about 10 years older than our parents. Another factor in the decline of marriage is the lack of tax incentives – why bother going through with it if you're no better off? Labour has been so anxious not to discriminate against single mothers and one-parent families, and so keen to provide financial assistance to the disadvantaged, that they've omitted to sufficiently reward those who are in a stable relationship, raising children within the framework of a marriage. The result? Young women who have kids and claim housing benefit without marrying, and who marginalise men.

By contrast, a couple in their twenties contemplating marriage have almost no chance of finding a place to live that they can afford to buy. After school or college, young people are stuck at home for longer than any previous generation (their grandparents would have buggered off at 16 or 18). They're living in their childhood bedrooms – with a smaller living space than many prisoners – and thousands are crippled with massive student loans. Last week, graduates were told to set their sights low, if they wanted work, so what chance of ever affording the luxury of a wedding?

The church can bleat on about marriage being a "life-time commitment" but that's not how people think these days. In an age of social networking, speed dating and internet chat-rooms, young people are genuinely confused about what constitutes a relationship, let alone one that's supposed to last more than a couple of months.

[The Independent](#)

As has been pointed out before, the notion that one can pander to divergent groups and not penalize the majority into self-destruction is an illusion.

Ongoing social problems, liberal social reforms, and lack of consensus among Britons guarantee that marriage — and with it, stable childhood — is an endangered species.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Liberalism and revolution are always revenge

Feb 16th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

...revenge against the majority: a power grab — and profit grab — designed as moral balancing.

Breen made his motion at the Brandon University Students' Union (BUSU) annual meeting last month. One elected council member set the tone of debate, scoffing that Breen's group would be nothing but a "pornography and cigar club." As a man, he huffed, he didn't require representation. Other speakers were miffed and simply couldn't see the need. The motion was defeated.

At another forum, a female professor could barely tolerate hearing Breen's reasons for starting a Men's Collective. "She was saying that men do not have need of representation, that we have historically been the oppressors, that we have no position of disadvantage," the fourth-year geology student recalled.

But Breen isn't forming another group to compete for victim status. He questions why everyone thinks a group should be "disadvantaged" to have an advocacy group.

"Men have issues just like everyone else," he maintained.

[WFP](#)

First, you've busted into a comfy subsidy. Claim you're a victim, get all sorts of stuff given to you, courtesy of The Majority. Second, you're finding out that liberalism and The Revolution are basically just revenge against the majority. Didn't fit in? Don't have the gumption to do something else or go somewhere else? Whine, complain, demand rights, and when you breed or import enough of you, take your revenge.

That at least is how history views such things, and if you look at the history of revolutions, you'll see they leave ruined nations behind.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Signs your country is plummeting into third world status

Feb 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

President Barack Obama has turned fearmongering into an art form. He has repeatedly raised the specter of another Great Depression.

In 1930, the economy shed 4.8% of the labor force. In 1931, 6.5%. And then in 1932, another 7.1%. Jobs were being lost at double or triple the rate of 2008-09 or 1981-82.

Repeated warnings from the White House about a coming economic apocalypse aren't likely to raise consumer and investor expectations for the future. In fact, they have contributed to the continuing decline in consumer confidence that is restraining a spending pickup. Beyond that, fearmongering can trigger a political stampede to embrace a "recovery" package that delivers a lot less than it promises. A more cool-headed assessment of the economy's woes might produce better policies.

[WSJ](#)

Hope, Change, and Fear. This man rules us through emotional symbols that do not correspond to reality, and yet he is more popular than people who present difficult but necessary truths. This means we have reached a stage in decay where people believe what is convenient for them to believe because there is no consensus as to what reality is and how we should approach it.

Then, like Athens, we're reaching out for mercenaries:

The United States army is to accept immigrants with temporary US visas, for the first time since the Vietnam war, according to the New York Times.

Until now immigrants have had to have permanent residency – a "green card" – in order to qualify for the services.

Army recruiters say their job has become easier in recent months as unemployment has risen in the US. But even so, they regret having had to turn away many immigrants because they had only temporary residency.

However, the Times said there appeared to be some opposition from officers and veterans, who expressed concern that some foreigners might have divided loyalties or be terrorists seeking to infiltrate the US armed services.

[BBC](#)

When we cannot produce our own fighting forces, we become dependent on others whose interests do not lie solely in our success. That fragments us further.

All civilizations, as they prepare for death, go through these stages and others which show they are no longer unified by values, or consensus as to what is right, what defines them, and what should be done. This empowers people to act selfishly, and soon the civilization is not one but many small worlds, each pulling in a slightly different direction.

The resulting chaos causes third world conditions, which then demand tyrants who promise hope, change and fear to keep everyone in line. This cycle can be easily stopped but first it must be recognized.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

First Americans may have been from Europe

Feb 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Scientists in Britain have identified the oldest skeleton ever found on the American continent in a discovery that raises fresh questions about the accepted theory of how the first people arrived in the New World.

The skeleton's perfectly preserved skull belonged to a 26-year-old woman who died during the last ice age on the edge of a giant prehistoric lake which once formed around an area now occupied by the sprawling suburbs of Mexico City.

Scientists from Liverpool's John Moores University and Oxford's Research Laboratory of Archaeology have dated the skull to about 13,000 years old, making it 2,000 years older than the previous record for the continent's oldest human remains.

However, the most intriguing aspect of the skull is that it is long and narrow and typically Caucasian in appearance, like the heads of white, western Europeans today.

[The Independent](#)

Typically, these situations are explained away by claiming these were "a different kind of Asian" like the Ainu of Japan, who we are told do not have the genetic markers of Caucasians.

However, those explanations have holes in them. We know Tocharians existed in China; were they also of this different kind of Asian, despite having Celtic features?

I think the fear here is that we'll discover history is a lot older and more complicated than what we thought, shattering the easy answers that let us make a snap moral judgment and then go back to watching TV.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Human ecocide will replace humans with new species

Feb 15th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

A growing fear that the environment is on the brink of collapse is making many greens less willing to compromise, even with each other. And George Bush's departure from the White House has removed a common adversary.

Politicians like Mr Schwarzenegger tend to believe that energy projects should be judged on whether they improve on current practice. Activists, by contrast, prefer to measure them against an environmental ideal. "A little bit better than the status quo isn't good enough," explains Bill Magavern, the Sierra Club's California director.

Although no big environmental group is unconcerned with global warming, they view the threat in different ways. The big divide is between those who fret about measurable changes in greenhouse-gas emissions and those who worry more about harm to natural habitats, whether caused by global warming or anything else. The first group—call them the environmental nerds—includes people like Al Gore and Mr Schwarzenegger. The second group—call them the tree-huggers—includes the Sierra Club, the Centre for Biological Diversity and other established conservation groups.

[The Economist](#)

So we have no plan, because we can't agree whether to take a structural approach (fix the way we live) or incremental approach (make the way we live better).

I guess it's time to pick either one and hammer on it like the dickens however:

The pace of global warming is likely to be much faster than recent predictions, because industrial greenhouse gas emissions have increased more quickly than expected and higher temperatures are triggering self-reinforcing feedback mechanisms in global ecosystems, scientists said Saturday.

"We are basically looking now at a future climate that's beyond anything we've considered seriously in climate model simulations," Christopher Field, founding director of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Global Ecology at Stanford University, said at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Field, a member of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said emissions from burning fossil fuels since 2000 have largely outpaced the estimates used in the U.N. panel's 2007 reports. The higher emissions are largely the result of the increased burning of coal in developing countries, he said.

[WAPQ](#)

Now, take this with a grain of salt: scientists research what pays and report what's as close to popular as they can get, because scientists too are part of our economic system. The number of numbly nodding heads that buy your product, vote for you, or approve of your friendship determines success in the social economy, and that's what in turn dictates our populist politics and economics. (Oddly enough, that's utilitarian — as in bare, generic, boring, functional — taken to its logical extreme.)

However, it doesn't look good. Even assuming they're half-right, we've got a problem.

Luckily, nature has a solution — us and our planet are expendable. If we destroy ourselves, someone else might not. Think about it this way: every dandelion has 136 seeds with the hopes that one will germinate. Probably, for ever 136 planets like Earth, there's one that will survive beyond the technological stage, and the others will be hum-drum like third world states: they're all about the same, they're all dysfunctional wastelands and all of them had a shot at greatness once.

So far, telescopes have been able to detect just over 300 planets outside our Solar System.

Very few of these would be capable of supporting life, however. Most are gas giants like our Jupiter; and many orbit so close to their parent stars that any microbes would have to survive roasting temperatures.

But, based on the limited numbers of planets found so far, Dr Boss has estimated that each Sun-like star has on average one "Earth-like" planet.

This simple calculation means there would be huge numbers capable of supporting life.

"Not only are they probably habitable but they probably are also going to be inhabited," Dr Boss told BBC News. "But I think that most likely the nearby 'Earths' are going to be inhabited with things which are perhaps more common to what Earth was like three or four billion years ago." That means bacterial lifeforms.

[BBC](#)

So if we screw up and eliminate ourselves, there's another round in the clip. And another after that. At some point, one is going to produce an intelligent species that can also regulate itself, and so they will inherit the universe.

What's amazing about it all is that every single indicator suggests we should know better. We have seen civilizations fail in the past by localized ecocide. We have seen how when we as societies do destructive things, we get depressed and self-destructive as individuals. In religion, we know we should revere life and earth. In science, we know we depend on our environment and have barely begun exploring it.

And also, we can see how we benefit from the greater wisdom of natural design versus our own primitive, wasteful engineering:

A U.S. scientist says people living on tree-lined streets are happier, healthier and less likely to be victims of crime.

Frances Kuo of the University of Illinois reviewed studies on the effect of trees, The Daily Telegraph said. She reported her findings to the American Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Chicago.

"Nature calms people and it also helps them psychologically rejuvenate," she said. "They are better able to handle challenges which come their way."

Kuo said study after study shows benefits from living near trees and grass. In Japan, researchers found that the elderly have higher life expectancy if they live within walking distance of a park.

[UPI](#)

And in contrast:

Children born in areas heavy traffic areas could be at greater risk of developing asthma due to genetic changes brought on by pollution and acquired in the womb, a new study suggests.

In a study of umbilical cord blood from New York City children, researchers found a change in a

gene called ACSL3 that is associated with prenatal exposure to chemical pollutants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are byproducts of incomplete combustion from carbon-containing fuels, resulting in high levels in heavy-traffic areas.

Exposure to PAHs has previously been linked to diseases such as cancer and childhood asthma.

[Live Science](#)

...our industry, designed for a single purpose — production — and ignoring all context, such as the pollution that's left over or the effects of mindless labor on ourselves, wrecks our environment and wrecks us. Sounds like a winner.

Humanity seems to suffer from an endemic case of bad design. We do this because we limit ourselves before we even get to the design stage. We limit ourselves because the fear of individuals — I might not be included, or I might be evolutionarily pushed out of the process — causes them to bond together in mobs that demand individuals be held above accountability. The result is selfishness and self-devourment.

We need to remember instead that we're cheap. We're not the only smart species on the block. Life itself arises in many planets. None of us matter except for the role we play in life — and none of us is so exceptional that we should place ourselves above others. The exception is that if our abilities are superior, we should serve a different role than others, and beat them down so that superior abilities thrive. This is natural selection. It's also socially unacceptable. It's also the only thing that can save us.

Life is a property of the universe, and that makes us unexceptional:

A strange, new genetic code a lot like that found in all terrestrial life is sitting in a beaker full of oily water in a laboratory in Florida, a scientist said today, calling it the first example of an artificial chemical system that is capable of Darwinian evolution.

The system is made of the four molecules that are the basic building blocks of our DNA along with eight synthetic modifications of them, said biochemist Steven A. Benner of the Foundation for Applied Molecular Evolution in Gainesville.

The building blocks of DNA are four chemicals called nucleotides that are referred to as A, C, T and G, for short. The nucleotides pair up and bond in predictable ways to form the double helix structure of DNA. Benner's new nucleotides, which he and his colleagues have named Z, P, V, J, Iso-C, Iso-G, X and K, are reshufflings of the constituents of those molecules found in our DNA.

The molecules are "fed" and grow via a process called the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) that allows the molecules to make copies of themselves. Once the replication of the molecules in Benner's system is self-catalyzed, without PCR, the process is self-sustaining. Benner claims, "then it's artificial life."

[Live Science](#)

So life is a mathematical property of the universe. Not the exception, the rule. It arises at certain levels of complexity. It has no guarantees; in fact, most life forms die out. Only those that can organize themselves as well under their own rule as nature organized them with natural selection will prevail.

How the next human population bottleneck may occur:

Researchers at the University of Birmingham found that 630 million years ago the earth had a warm atmosphere full of carbon dioxide but was completely covered with ice.

The scientists studied limestone rocks and found evidence that large amounts of greenhouse gas coincided with a prolonged period of freezing temperatures.

While pollution in the air is thought to trap the sun's heat in the atmosphere, causing the planet

to heat up, this new research suggests it could also have the opposite effect reflecting rays back into space.

[The Telegraph](#)

In that strange way nature inverts direction when passing over boundaries, the effects of sky on earth are opposite of what they seem. Pollution at first traps heat, then starts reflecting sunlight, so over time heat levels drop radically.

We can't claim we're not warned. Nor that it's an unreasonable response: if so many people in your species are so delusional that they put their own interests before that of *the environment that created and sustains them*, they're delusional, like people defecating where they eat, and need to be removed. It's just natural selection.

Natural selection also works on whole species. Much as our technology eliminated other species, it could eliminate us — all because we cannot control ourselves.

Or can we?

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [natural selection](#) · [social darwinism](#)

Lack of fear of judgment

Feb 15th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

I spent last night (Saturday night) reading and I feel 100% loser-free.

People who fear being called "losers" because they're not doing something "hip and cool" *as defined by other people* are slaves to the social, herd, crowd hive-mind.

Instead, I choose to define my values. What is a good weekend? Doing things I enjoy with people I enjoy. But that's not an absolute. Sometimes it's just me. Sometimes it's others, and not always the same group. Not always a different group, either. It's what fits. Use your own head. Define your own values.

I see so many people out there who feel they've lost their way and become losers if they don't have a date on a Saturday night, don't have drugs or drink, don't have a PS3, or whatever.

Loser is a mentality. The term loser is judged by the crowd. The exception is when you really fail at life: then you're a loser. But what makes that sting is that you know it, inside. The opposite force is doing what you know to be correct (adaptation to reality) and what is rewarding to you, and not caring what the sheep think.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Egalitarianism destroys worth of college degrees

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The more people you let through any conduit to success, the less each will be worth.

When women started working, doubling the work force, salaries effectively declined with the value of currency.

Now that we're handing just about anyone a college degree, having a college degree isn't a big deal anymore — and so it doesn't translate to salary.

There is no magic point at which a genuine college-level education becomes an option, but anything below an IQ of 110 is problematic. If you want to do well, you should have an IQ of 115 or higher. Put another way, it makes sense for only about 15% of the population, 25% if one stretches it, to get a college education. And yet more than 45% of recent high school graduates enroll in four-year colleges. Adjust that percentage to account for high-school dropouts, and more than 40% of all persons in their late teens are trying to go to a four-year college—enough people to absorb everyone down through an IQ of 104.

[Opinion Journal](#)

There's no point going to a college that someone with an IQ of 104 can pass — it's high school II (if even that; more like High School 1.5).

Now that 40% of the population goes to college, instead of 15%, a college degree is that much less valuable, and employers are noting this.

But we all had to be egalitarian and cram everybody through college that we could, because it's the "right thing to do," even though it meant dumbing college work down and devaluing the college degree.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

How another Revolution will destroy Europe

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Crypto-leaders, or oligarchs, love the current riots spreading from Greece across Europe:

The unrest that has gripped Greece is spilling over into the rest of Europe, raising concerns the clashes could be a trigger for opponents of globalization, disaffected youth and others outraged by the continent's economic turmoil and soaring unemployment.

"What's happening in Greece tends to prove that the extreme left exists, contrary to doubts of some over these past few weeks," French Interior Ministry spokesman Gerard Gachet told The Associated Press.

As Europe plunges into recession, unemployment is rising, particularly among the young. Even before the crisis, European youths complained about difficulty finding well-paid jobs — even with a college degree — and many said they felt left out as the continent grew in prosperity.

In Greece, demonstrators handed out fliers Thursday listing their demands, which include the reversal of public spending cuts that have brought more layoffs, and said they were hopeful their movement would spread.

[AP](#)

Oligarchs cannot find better advocates than these uninformed protestors.

The far-left will demand more public spending; because there's no money coming in, that will create debt spending, devalue the economy and in turn the currency, and force more drastic measures.

And forced drastic measures is what oligarchs enjoy. Bring in another 10 million immigrants — we make money off the cheap labor and the new housing. Or, let's have a war. Maybe even provoke things further, and then sell private security so you're "safe from Anarchists and Nazis."

And people fall for it, every time. So much for the idea that democracy would save us.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [democracy](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [self-deception](#)

Wholesome communities flourish as cities degenerate

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The Amish population has nearly doubled in the U.S. over the last 15 years, growing to 227,000 this year, according to estimates from Elizabethtown College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies.

The Amish emigrated from central Europe to Pennsylvania in the early 1700s. Also known as the "Plain People," the Amish believe they must live a simple, nonviolent life. Many reject electricity, indoor plumbing and cars.

Amish advocates – the Amish religion precludes them from defending themselves physically or legally – argue the Amish belief that they must live apart from the world trumps local regulations.

"The permit itself might not be so bad, but to change your lifestyle to have to get one, that's against our convictions," Borntrager said as he sat in his kitchen with his wife, Ruth.

[AP](#)

More people and groups should secede from our multicultural, monocultural, capitalist, socialist, democratic, totalitarian, confused and dying civilization.

Stick to a few principles that make sense — because they're direct responses to reality, not responses to "responses" to reality — and live well. Ignore the theatrical illusion that is modern society.

It will burn itself out, and leave behind a confused grey race of third world people who you can hire to chop wood, but nothing more complicated. They will however be genetically able to cite the Deerhoof discography, make their hair flip, and wear little pointy shoes to make themselves look svelte and metrosexual.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Barack Obama is a corrupt system player

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

[President-elect Barack Obama's chief of staff Rahm] Emanuel gave the governor's office a list of "candidates that would be acceptable to President-elect Barack Obama" but no "quid pro quo" or "dealmaking" is suspected.

Citing "a source familiar with the investigation," Fox says that Emanuel had "multiple conversations" with Blagojevich and his chief of staff John Harris, who was also arrested Tuesday on federal corruption charges, about the seat and that they we're "likely recorded and in FBI possession."

[HuffingtonPost](#)

Now he's the boss of the FBI... so they do what he says to do. This includes suppressing evidence that will emerge fifty years from now and make the back page of some newspapers.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#) · [corruption](#)

Ecocide aided by rich-poor political guilt

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

To stop ecocide, we need to: stop human growth, reduce population, reduce unnecessary use of power — this requires telling Joe Sixpack he can't have a giant pickup truck, Martha Upperclassurbanwife that she can't fly to Rio, and your average dumb liberal cubicle dwelling apartment voter that social welfare programs must cease so we stop breeding parasites.

That's socially unacceptable. What is socially acceptable is telling people that they can be anything they want to be, and they're all included (egalitarianism).

Instead, we get the faux solutions:

At the heart of much of the disagreement is that perennial struggle between rich and poor. Developing countries want industrialized countries — whose populations are responsible the lion's share of greenhouse emissions — to lead the way by making the steepest reductions in emissions. They also want money and technology to help them make their own emissions cuts and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

According to the Guardian, in Britain, European Union officials have proposed making an 80 percent to 95 percent reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2050 in exchange for developing countries' reducing their emissions by 15 percent to 30 percent over the next decade. They have not yet heard a reaction, but Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said that the developed world is unlikely to be impressed by the offer, which does not mandate any short-term cuts for rich countries.

"Unless the developed world comes up with strong, clear targets for 2020 themselves," Dr. Pachauri told the Guardian, "I think it is unlikely the developing world will commit itself to reductions."

[CSM](#)

First, I think we'll find when more accurate figures are available that the developing world — a euphemism for third world countries with average IQs below 98 — is creating as much carbon and worse pollution than the developed — a euphemism for industrialized countries with average IQs near or above 100 — world, through slash and burn agriculture, the burning of waste, deforestation and general disorganization.

Third world people outnumber first world people nine to one.

Second, I think they ask the impossible: the rich have spent a long time building an infrastructure and cannot simply reverse it; that's like suicide. So they propose a gradual de-escalation, but that's not enough for the third world, which wants to be under the illusion that it will be just like London and Munich tomorrow if "just given a chance" — like every dishwasher who's an aspiring rapper, and every pasty white cubicle dwelling apartment voter who doesn't understand why CEOs get paid more than workers. It's just not fair, man!

Finally, let's look at this strategically. We're asking humanity's most productive people to slow down and let others catch up, but the others are politically unstable, greater in population, and much higher in dysfunction. Why stop? Let the best rise.

Environmentalists who hope a slowing global economy will mean big falls in greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be disappointed.

Because despite a gloomy economic forecast for 2009, the annual growth in emissions of 3% is

only likely to slow modestly, and may even rise over the long term because of the downturn's impact on global climate talks and the funding of renewable energy projects.

[The Guardian](#)

The solutions are simple. We're just not mentally mature enough to face them.

The system won't self-regulate. We'll actually have to fix it. And that requires we come out of our comfort zones, face our fear of being judged inferior, and decide to cut ourselves back — and accept the results as they fall.

But that's socially unacceptable, because society is filled with the underconfident, the socially retarded, the immature, the fearful, the withdrawn, the neurotic... a bumper crop of stupid. When will smarter people learn that dumber people ALWAYS oppress smarter people by blocking the path to necessary decisions?

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

All social elites are liberals

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Elites love liberalism because liberalism is the one ideology that won't get you torn apart by a mob. They're trying to keep their jobs, promote their businesses, and not get destroyed by idiots with a grudge.

It's just like in Bolshevik Russia during the revolution, or France during their revolution. Anyone who appeared to side with the *ancien regime* was a troublemaker, and that gave the crowd license to loot their homes, rape their daughters, etc.

So the elites made a big show of being liberal. It's no different in America today. If you want people to like you, convince them you're with the new and hip, the unique, the people-powered, "The People," the tolerant, the Progressive, the nice-to-everyone, the great granter of gifts to the dispossessed, etc. They don't honestly believe these views. They use their views as a justification for their status and wealth, and in an attempt to make the crowd not tear them apart.

Of course, that will never work — when a true revolution is in play, order is suspended, and those with the guns take whatever they want. And if you are with the struggle, comrade, you will not mind sharing your house|daughters|wealth for the cause, will you?

I identify myself as a liberal, in that I believe in justice, but I'm also a historical literate, and I view the results of history as scientific knowledge. So I am anti-liberal in that liberal methods will lead to tyranny by failing and creating third-world disorder.

I have lived in third world places and, while there are good people there, the society at large is dysfunctional and it penalizes and isolates smart people. If humanity wants to reach great heights, we need to nurture and support smart people, and beat down idiots and corrupt people. Simple truth, but it requires work, and getting off the couch — and risking being made a fool in the eyes of others, or failing, or not having the absolute "freedom" to be obligated and beholden to nothing except your whims and your slavish job — is the one taboo in this society.

[ANS](#)

This gives us a good view of those of us in any kind of "third way": we're not liberals or conservatives, but tend to be people who from liberal motivations adopt conservative ("proven by history") viewpoints.

We tend to go beyond what even paleoconservatives will do, and look toward types of societies that thrived in the past, and try to hybridize those with our technology.

It's about time to do this. We changed our society so it could create technology; now, we should look over our options, and pick the best way to live so that our society doesn't "wag the dog" and have us serving it.

Increasing conflict worldwide and a neurotic, divided, miserable state within our society shows us that not only would this be a good idea, but it would be fun, and could liberate us from obligation to dead and dying ideas that make no sense whatsoever but are supported because they "look good" to the masses, and we want to sell them stuff, yes we do.

However, the masses are inert, and if given a chance, will destroy society around them and end up living in third-world corruption, dysfunction and squalor all while loudly proclaiming their freedom. They're not the ones to make political decisions because just like brain surgeon is a role requiring a rare personality, so is "leader." Not everyone can do it. Not even by voting.

So as you see the bloviation of wealthy, wasteful Hollywood and East Coast elites, and see them loudly proclaim their Progressive dogma, keep in mind that they're just trying to sell products. If they believed what they said, they'd live in inner city neighborhoods and be activists first and actors/marketers/politicians second.

But they don't, and that's the proof positive that elite liberalism is a marketing ploy and not an honest, well-considered belief. Feel free to laugh at anyone who takes it seriously.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Progressive dogma is an illusion

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Popular myths live on because people love to feel witty for repeating them. "You don't like modern society? Well, go back to living under a turd near a sea of disease, then! The past was brutish, simplistic, filthy and horrible, but now we have technology — and we're morally enlightened so we don't live like filthy animals."

Peasants (those who worked in manual work) would have had fresh porridge and bread daily — with beer to drink. In addition, each day would have an assortment of dried or cured meats, cheeses, and fruits and vegetables from their area. Poultry, chicken, ducks, pigeons, and geese were not uncommon on the peasants dinner table. Some peasants also liked to keep bees, to provide honey for their tables. Given the choice between McDonalds and Medieval peasant food, I suspect the peasant food would be more nutritious and tasty. The rich of the time had a great choice of meats — such as cattle, and sheep. They would eat more courses for each meal than the poor, and would probably have had a number of spiced dishes — something the poor could not afford.

In the Middle Ages, most towns had bathhouses — in fact, cleanliness and hygiene was very highly regarded — so much so that bathing was incorporated into various ceremonies such as those surrounding knighthood. Some people bathed daily, others less regularly — but most people bathed. Furthermore, they used hot water — they just had to heat it up themselves, unlike us with our modern plumbed hot water. The French put it best in the following Latin statement: Venari, ludere, lavari, bibere; Hoc est vivere! (To hunt, to play, to wash, to drink, — This is to live!)

[Listverse](#)

Progressive dogma states that until we found this path of moral enlightenment, the past was awful and probably racist.

The real truth is that we have innovated, through our technology and advanced learning, a superior form of brattiness. No other society in history has had this degree of expectation of entitlement and unwillingness to follow through on any action requiring more than one step, or any steps which do not involve pushing buttons.

We've beaten filth, which is good because unlike people in the middle ages, our main role in life seems to be sitting around very cleanly complaining about everything and doing nothing.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Egalitarian education slights gifted students

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Though not often recognized as “special needs” students, gifted children require just as much attention and educational resources to thrive in school as do other students whose physical, behavioral, emotional or learning needs require special accommodations. So says a Florida State University professor who has studied gifted students for years.

“There is a view occasionally expressed by those outside of the gifted field that we don’t need programs devoted specifically to gifted students,” Pfeiffer said. “‘Oh, they’re smart, they’ll do fine on their own’ is what we often hear. And because of this anti-elitist attitude, it’s often difficult to get funding for programs and services that help us to develop some of our brightest, most advanced kids — America’s most valuable resource.

“However, as a generally agreed-upon definition, gifted children are those who are in the upper 3 percent to 5 percent compared to their peers in one or more of the following domains: general intellectual ability, specific academic competence, the visual or performing arts, leadership and creativity.”

[Science Daily](#)

Doesn't egalitarianism slight the intelligent in general?

If equality is granted, meaning that acceptance is given before a person earns it, there's no special value to being better than average -and- you still have to suffer through the same dumbed-down process that's designed for the average.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [crowdism](#) · [egalitarianism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Sexual selectivity means healthier breeding

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

A new study shows prolonging the mating courtship and refusing to sleep with a partner on the first date could be one of the keys to making a successful match.

Researchers used a mathematical model to show that more reliable men were willing to wait longer before having sex for the first time.

By contrast, less suitable men were not as likely to continue dating.

Professor Robert Seymour, from University College London (UCL), who created the model, said: "Longer courtship is a way for the female to acquire information about the male.

"By delaying mating, the female is able to reduce the chance that she will mate with a bad male.

"A male's willingness to court for a long time is a signal that he is likely to be a good male.

"Long courtship is a price paid for increasing the chance that mating, if it occurs, will be a harmonious match which benefits both sexes. This may help to explain the commonly held belief that a woman is best advised not to sleep with a man on a first date."

[The Telegraph](#)

Yet another way in which traditional wisdom makes sense: if you give sex away, men take the sex, and feel no obligation to hang around. This produces lonely, bitter haggy women after about age 30, and they then conspire to ruin everyone else's happiness with their resentment.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

People think they think what the majority thinks

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Decades of research show people tend to go along with the majority view, even if that view is objectively incorrect. Now, scientists are supporting those theories with brain images.

A new study in the journal *Neuron* shows when people hold an opinion differing from others in a group, their brains produce an error signal. A zone of the brain popularly called the “oops area” becomes extra active, while the “reward area” slows down, making us think we are too different.

“We show that a deviation from the group opinion is regarded by the brain as a punishment,” said Vasily Klucharev, postdoctoral fellow at the F.C. Donders Centre for Cognitive Neuroimaging at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands and lead author of the study.

[CNN](#)

A consequence of civilization: we seek the approval of others and, if we perceive a statistical tendency toward a view, we embrace it. That’s the safest path; if we need to change a majority view, it’s also the smartest path to first embrace it and then suggest modifications, much as nature takes simple species and then makes them more adaptive through many tiny changes, similar to the Japanese process of *kaizen* or many small positive modifications, constantly.

Being aware of this, we can see why our public opinion sways so much, and why it’s important than smart people are represented heavily in media and social events.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Using DNA, we can tell both your race and your ethnicity

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Check out the [genetic map of East Asia](#) and the [genetic map of Europe](#).

You can see in each of these that the DNA of these populations not only separates them by race, but by ethnicity, including showing clinal overlaps at the geographic edges of these populations.

Most people breed with people like them, and our genetic history bears this out. The next time someone tells you that race or ethnicity is a social construct and not solid biology, point them to this page.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [race](#)

Unrealistic ideas turn paradise into hell

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Sweden, when Andrew Brown arrived there in the 1970s, was as near as any country has ever come to a socialist paradise. Its people were, he found, bonded by a firm sense of civic duty and shared values. Everyone knew what it was acceptable to think. Society, it was agreed, would benefit more from co-operation than from selfishness. Affluence was bad for people. Failure to want social equality was regarded as a handicap to be pitied and, if possible, cured. Armed conflict was seen as wasteful and to be avoided. Sweden had avoided it for 150 years, remaining neutral in the second world war. Drunkenness was an obvious evil, so teetotalism was encouraged. Alcohol could be bought only at government stores, which were ringed with health warnings and made as unalluring as possible. It was assumed that, as time went on, the world would become more peaceful, more egalitarian and more like Sweden. That was what progress meant.

Much later he went back to Sweden and found it had changed beyond recognition. When the Social Democrats lost power their ideals had been speedily abandoned and their welfare system dismantled, to be replaced by a dogmatic distrust of state control. The railways and postal service had been privatised and private schooling encouraged. By the end of the 1990s, Sweden was no longer the safe, prosperous, tolerant country he had known. Violent crime had increased by 40%, rape by 80%. Obesity and drunkenness were common. Heroin smuggling and organised crime had created a new breed of super-rich gangsters. A large immigrant population, with a crime rate at least double that among native Swedes, was fomenting resentment and racial hatred.

[Times Online](#)

Socialists are good at making unrealistic ideas seem palatable. We call them socialists because they extend social logic — accept everyone, be nice to everyone, people are more important than reality so feelings aren't hurt — to social design.

The designs they make uniformly leave behind disaster, but people want to believe in them, mainly because they give us warm fuzzy feelings about being nice to others and therefore, having a reason to like and be nice to ourselves.

The other way we can like ourselves is achievement, but most people aren't geared toward that and lack it.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Another elephant in the room: where unwated pets go

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Out of sight, out of mind — most people live by this. They initiate causes and never see the effects, so they keep blithely doing what they're doing. Even more, most of them don't care because they're embittered, kind of dumb, and hate themselves/are depressed.

Your pet has 72 hours to find a new family from the moment you drop it off. Sometimes a little longer if the shelter isn't full and your dog manages to stay completely healthy. If it snuffles, it dies. Your pet will be confined to a small run/kennel in a room with about 25 other barking or crying animals. It will have to relieve itself where it eats and sleeps. It will be depressed and it will cry constantly for the family that abandoned it. If your pet is lucky, I will have enough volunteers in that day to take him/her for a walk. If I don't, your pet won't get any attention besides having a bowl of food slid under the kennel door and the waste sprayed out of its pen with a high-powered hose. If your dog is big, black or any of the "Bully" breeds (pit bull, rottie, mastiff, etc) it was pretty much dead when you walked it through the front door.

Those dogs just don't get adopted. It doesn't matter how 'sweet' or 'well behaved' they are.

If your dog doesn't get adopted within its 72 hours and the shelter is full, it will be destroyed. If the shelter isn't full and your dog is good enough, and of a desirable enough breed it may get a stay of execution, but not for long. Most dogs get very kennel protective after about a week and are destroyed for showing aggression. Even the sweetest dogs will turn in this environment. If your pet makes it over all of those hurdles chances are it will get kennel cough or an upper respiratory infection and will be destroyed because shelters just don't have the funds to pay for even a \$100 treatment.

[BOCL](#)

When all it takes is \$25 to buy a pet, and we're depending on people — most of whom would be peasants in a feudal society, since they lack the brains or self-discipline to plan beyond the next twenty minutes, or see the consequences of their actions — to regulate themselves and ask that difficult question, "Although I really want a puppy, do I have the money, time, patience and stability to be a good puppy owner?"

No surprise many end up abandoned, not adopted, and dead. There's many more animals than shelters can care for, but it's easy for us to say, "Just let it go at the mall and the gubmint will take care of it. That's Why We Pay Taxes, God Damn it!"

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Nature may be in our nature

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

One of the researchers, she says, was an epidemiologist who, in the process of trying to quantify his hunch, initiated a study in which social workers and police very, very intensively interviewed and background checked a long string of crib deaths that had been explained away as unexplained random respiratory failure. It turns out that his equation was able to predict, with high (but not absolute) reliability, which infants had actually been the victims of homicide or malign neglect. If the infant was a boy when the mother wanted a girl or vice versa, if the infant was born weighing less than 8 pounds, or if the mother was in any kind of economic or physical danger if this child survived, then the baby was doomed. His final estimate, from that initial study, was that seventy five percent of all SIDS cases are actually homicides. But, he admitted, just acknowledging this possibility puts us in an awful dilemma. To catch the 3 out of 4 women whose babies suddenly die that were actually murderers, we have to treat all SIDS cases as potential homicides, therefore piling yet more heartbreak and tragedy on the 1 out of 4 who just randomly went through the worst tragedy any family can know, the sudden and unexpected death of a beloved child.

[Brad Hicks](#)

Nature is inside of us.

Much like mice eat the babies that aren't going to fit with their survival plan, we kill ours.

There's a solid reason for this: we, the parents, need to be able to survive *before* we can take care of an infant.

So changing the plan — tail wagging dog, cart before horse — to accommodate a baby just because it's there endangers the family as a whole.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Pollution will kill you

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Reductions in particulate air pollution during the 1980s and 1990s led to an average five-month increase in life expectancy in 51 U.S. metropolitan areas, with some of the initially more polluted cities such as Buffalo, N.Y., and Pittsburgh showing a 10-month increase, researchers said Wednesday.

The reductions in pollution accounted for about 15% of a nearly three-year increase in life expectancy during the two decades, said epidemiologist C. Arden Pope III of Brigham Young University, lead author of the study appearing today in the New England Journal of Medicine.

It is well known that particulate air pollution reduces life expectancy, said environmental epidemiologist Joel Schwartz of the Harvard School of Public Health, who was not involved in the study. But public policy makers "are interested in the question of, 'If I spend the money to reduce pollution, what really happens?' " he said.

[L.A. Times](#)

Well, if common sense would have just told us... oh, it did.

If smoking cigarettes and secondhand smoke are bad — *durrrr* — maybe having smoke from things other than cigarettes is also bad?

Doesn't seem to occur to our dimwitted friends, because then they'd have to admit their apartments aren't *just perfect* after all.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Obama's web team erasing history

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Obama's team have removed a whole load of pages from whitehouse.gov without bothering to redirect them to newer versions of the pages. This is extremely bad practice, as those pages will just disappear from the search engines entirely, and the new versions will probably never get to the same position that they were under Bush. People with bookmarks or links to those old pages will now just be presented with an error page.

[JD](#)

Who controls the data, alters history.

This could be simply incompetence, but no other moves by this team suggest incompetence.

More likely, it's an attempt to control us by controlling data — as our media does, as our peers do when they tell us “the truth” and scorn us for believing otherwise, as foreign nations do when they try to misconstrue reality.

I take that term, the human beast, from my idol, Emile Zola, who published a novel entitled *The Human Beast* in 1888, just 29 years after Darwin's *The Origin of Species* broke the stunning news that *Homo sapiens*—or *Homo loquax*, as I call him—was not created by God in his own image but was precisely that, a beast, not different in any essential way from snakes with fangs or orangutangs . . . or kangaroos. . . or the fang-proof mongoose. Darwin's doctrine, Evolution, leapt from the pages of a scientific monograph into every level of society in Europe and America with sensational suddenness. It created a sheerly dividing line between the God-fearing bourgeoisie who were appalled, and those people of sweetness and light whose business it was to look down at the bourgeoisie from a great height. Today, of course, we call these superior people intellectuals, but intellectual didn't exist as a noun until Clemenceau applied it to Zola and Anatole France in 1896 during the Dreyfus Case.

Zola's intellect was as sweetly enlightened as they made them. He was in with the in-crowd. Evenings he spent where the in-crowd went, namely, the Café Guerbois, along with Manet, Cezanne, Whistler, Nadar, and le tout Paris bohème. He took his cues from the in-crowd's views, namely, Academic art was bad, Impressionism was good, and *Homo sapiens* had descended from the monkeys in the trees. Human beasts? I'll give you human beasts! Zola's aforementioned novel of that name, *La Bête Humaine* in French, is a story of four murderers, a woman and three men, who work down at track level on the Paris-Le Havre railroad line, each closing in on a different victim, each with a different motive, including the case of a handsome young passenger train engineer with a compulsion . . . to make love to women and then kill them. With that, Zola crowned himself as the first scientific novelist, a “naturalist,” to use his term, studying the human fauna.

Emile, but by the time you and Darwin got hold of it, evolution had been irrelevant for 11,000 years. Why couldn't you two see it? Evolution came to an end when the human beast developed speech! As soon as he became not *Homo sapiens*, “man reasoning,” but *Homo loquax*, “man talking”! Speech gave the human beast far more than an ingenious tool. Speech was a veritable nuclear weapon! It gave the human beast the powers of reason, complex memory, and long-term planning, eventually in the form of print and engineering plans.

Speech gave him the power to enlarge his food supply at will through an artifice called farming. Speech ended not only the evolution of man, by making it no longer necessary, but also the evolution of animals!...Today the so-called animal kingdom exists only at the human beast's

sufferance. The beast has dealt crippling blows even to the unseen empire of the microbes.

No evolutionist has come up with even an interesting guess as to when speech began, but it was at least 11,000 years ago, which is to say, 9000 B.C. It seems to be the consensus . . . in the notoriously capricious field of evolutionary chronology . . . that 9000 B.C. was about when the human beast began farming, and the beast couldn't have farmed without speech, without being able to say to his son, "Son, this here's seeds. You best be putting 'em in the ground in rows ov'ere like I tell you if you wanna git any ears a corn this summer."

One of Homo loquax's first creations after he learned to talk was religion. Since The Origin of Species in 1859 the doctrine of Evolution has done more than anything else to put an end to religious faith among educated people in Europe and America; for God is dead. But it was religion, more than any other weapon in Homo loquax's nuclear arsenal, that killed evolution itself 11,000 years ago. To say that evolution explains the nature of modern man is like saying that the Bessemer process of adding carbons to pig iron to make steel explains the nature of the modern skyscraper.

Now shall we begin? Shall we take a look at the actual nature of the human beast—an artificial selection, 100% man-made?

[NEH](#)

Humanity has controlled its own evolution since speech, but with speech comes memetics, or the ability to make others repeat something that sounds true, neat, cool, deck, etc. [Advertising](#) also falls under this banner.

That can override our instincts for truth, and find mobs repeating these [partial truths](#), which they then use to justify — "make appear rational to others who know little about the situation" — a Revolutionary impulse which is basically a power/profit grab by the masses from the elites, and leaves nations as ruined third-world hulks.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [Technology](#)

Secularism is another religion

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

There's always the risk of religious persecution, but the only truly dangerous people are the religious nuts who don't realize they are religious nuts.

But software development is, and has always been, a religion. We band together into groups of people who believe the same things, with very little basis for proving any of those beliefs. Java versus .NET. Microsoft versus Google. Static languages versus Dynamic languages. We may kid ourselves into believing we're "computer scientists", but when was the last time you used a hypothesis and a control to prove anything? We're too busy solving customer problems in the chosen tool, unbeliever!

There's nothing wrong with a religion that preaches solid engineering. If you're a true believer in the church of Google methodology, you'll become a better developer.

[Coding Horror](#)

I unpun this article so we could have a scientific look at religion.

Religion is any belief in that which is not directly provable. It tries to tie together abstractions so distance from tangible manifestations that we must keep them as abstractions in order to draw any conclusions about them.

To a scientist, a religion or philosophy or dogma gets analyzed the same way: as a structured argument for describing the world and how we ought to act in it.

Secularists can be religious too. They can be religious about their secular beliefs, meaning that they cannot prove them and that makes them even more inclined to defend them when attacked, to the point where they deny blatant scientific data to the contrary of their assumptions.

Even more, many secularists ape religions — notice how liberal/Progressive morality is identical to Biblical Christian morality or even Communism — but will refuse to see the similarity.

In our wise society, which can do nothing but deconstruct so that the individual feels empowered over the context and order around them, we like to think that calling something a "religion" makes it sound dumb and for uneducated, pickup-truck driving, redneck scum from the rural areas.

But yet:

Faith is blossoming, not just in Third World countries with poor levels of education and in Islamic theocracies, but also in industrialized nations. The US magazine American Spectator, writing about the "myth of the secular West," calls it a "complete mystery" that so many scholars and journalists believe the people of the West are, for the most part, adherents to Darwin's theory. Opinion polls have painted an unchanging picture for years — that religions have managed to fend off all assaults by natural science. Even now.

According to a survey completed by the European Commission in early 2005, 52 percent of the citizens in the European Union believe in God. About one in four Europeans stated that while not believing in a personal God, they did believe in "a sort of spirit or life force," and only 18 percent outed themselves as non-believers. Germany ranked in the middle of countries surveyed, with 47 percent of respondents declaring a belief in God. According to the 2005 study, 25 percent of Germans said they believed in a higher power other than God, while another 25 percent believed in neither.

In an international comparison, these numbers still place Germany and the EU among the world's most secular regions. In the United States, the Gallup Organization regularly polls people on questions of God and science. According to the most recent result only 14 percent believe Homo sapiens arrived in the world as a sole result of evolution. Thirty-six percent believe evolution did take place, but under the guidance of God. The largest group, comprising 44 percent, believes the Almighty himself created man in his current form — and that this occurred no more than 10,000 years ago.

[Der Spiegel](#)

“Science” has become corrupted by the word of the Crowd, and so can't explain enough.

People like the idea of a society united by a number of factors that are not political, like: Values. Religion. Culture. Language. Heritage.

That's how you get a stable community. And most of us aren't fascinated with the ideal of some revolutionary conflict that never ends. We want stability so we can do what interests us, which is constructive things... not political agitation.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

CO2 reduction treaties are useless

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

A new report says treaties aimed at reducing CO2 emissions are useless.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers report says we have to accept the world could change dramatically.

It also says we should start planning our major infrastructure now to accommodate more extreme weather events and sea level rises.

While not against attempts to reduce emissions, the report's authors say we should be realistic about what can be achieved with this approach.

[BBC](#)

I guess our leaders were right to avoid this one.

Treaties, laws, etc. don't do what needs be done:

- Restrict population.
- Limit destructive acts.
- Conserve open space for nature.

All of these are more important than even recycling and carbon emissions caps.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

The environment pushes back

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When you push a personality, it snaps back quickly with conflict. When you push a dumb, blind system brilliantly designed for maximum efficiency and adaptability to its limits, it takes a long time to correct but does so in ironclad ways.

Witness:

The world's fish stocks will soon suffer major upheaval due to climate change, scientists have warned.

Changing ocean temperatures and currents will force thousands of species to migrate polewards, including cod, herring, plaice and prawns.

By 2050, US fishermen may see a 50% reduction in Atlantic cod populations.

The predictions of "huge changes", published in the journal Fish and Fisheries, were presented at the AAAS annual meeting in Chicago.

[BBC](#)

As blogged about elsewhere, global warming is one of several changes brought about by human consumption of earth's resources in lieu of stewardship of them. One is the [wholesale displacement of species](#), another is that we're [outpacing our resource renewal rate](#) and yet another is [that we're making driving fish populations below replacement levels](#).

Now that it hits us where it hurts, in our food supply, it should be interesting to see how many of the numbly nodding heads suddenly shoot up. They'll have excuses, of course. "I never knew that could happen!" — yes, because you never even tried to think through action from cause to effect to ancillary consequences.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Learning to distrust the Crowd

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

I was, for years, an enthusiastic advocate of the egalitarian, free-for-all, let's-level-the-playing field aspect of the Web. More voices! More feedback! More participation! Bring it on!

Not anymore. As I've mentioned before, I now tend to agree with "West Wing" creator Aaron Sorkin, who said, "Nothing has done more to make us dumber or meaner than the anonymity of the Internet." Hyperbole? Not by much.

...

For the first time in more than a century, a fundamental shift occurred in the sacred — but formerly quite cold and detached — writer/reader relationship. Suddenly, readers could respond instantly to a newspaper piece, to the journalist in question, and authors could instantly know the effect and accuracy of their words. No more hand-written, snail-mailed Letters to the Editor that might (but probably won't) get published two or three weeks later. The feedback loop was made instant, and enormously compelling. It was lauded as a new era, one that would change the newspaper biz forever.

...

Anonymity tends to bring out the absolute worst in people, the meanest and nastiest and least considerate. Something about not having to reveal who you really are caters to the basest, most unkind instincts of the human animal.

Thoughtful discourse? Humorous insight? Sometimes. But mostly it's a tactless spectator sport. It's about being seen, about out-snarking the previous poster, about trying to top one another in the quest for... I'm not sure what. A tiny shot of notoriety?

...

But the coherent voices are, by and large, increasingly drowned out by the nasty, the puerile, the inane, to the point where, unless you're in the mood to have your positive mood ruined and your belief in the inherent goodness of humanity stomped like a rainbow flag in the Mormon church, there's almost no point in trying to sift through it anymore.

[Death by moron](#)

Anonymity means that people feel free to express their inner stupidity because they know there are no consequences. It's like a moron encountering a genius: he wants to walk up to that genius, tell him to go do rude things to himself, and to die in pain, because the moron — not being born a genius — hates all things above him, including and especially, geniuses.

But the problem is not anonymity.

It's that society reverses natural selection. In nature, we all act alone, and those who do stupid things tend to not prosper. In society, because we want to motivate everyone toward a civic consciousness, we make the mistake of including everyone before assessing whether we want them — this is anti-evolutionary at its core. "Of course, we take care of everyone, come one, come all!" is marketing and not science; however, it's an effective way to *appear* successful by having a big group of nodding heads around you.

What our friend above is seeing is not anonymity at work, but what happens after a society tolerates everyone for many generations: the morons reproduce and become accepted by the norm. Next stop,

tyranny, and then the third world, as Plato told us.

The democratising possibilities of the internet are in the process of speeding the degeneration of the public sphere into a proliferation of insular nodes, each fighting a war that can never be won. Battles cannot be won on the net nor can they be lost. What remains is a solipsistic politics of ME, ME, ME: my views, my truths, my facts, my pain, my anger. Convincing others and changing the world is forgotten in favour of the perpetuation of one's own perspective.

It would be a mistake to look back at politics before the internet age as a prelapsarian idyll. But new realities create new problems as well as solving old ones. What is needed is a political model that can begin to redress the rise of solipsistic micropolitics; one that emphasises connection, self-critique and cool, considered analysis. What is needed is a different kind of technology that retains the internet's openness to participation but without the tendency to push activists and driven individuals towards self-righteous isolation.

[OpenDemocracy](#)

He ends up calling for new tools, which is where I leave off from his thesis: what we need are not external tools, but internal self-discipline and possibly, a level of edited discourse where only sane comments are allowed.

Demanding control — or the idea of an order enforced on people — is in the long term less successful than enforcing some kind of natural selection, so you're left with people of the intelligence and character to automatically behave in sensible ways.

On one side are those who think the Internet will liberate humanity, in a virtuous cycle of e-volving creativity that may culminate in new and higher forms of citizenship. Meanwhile, their diametrically gloomy critics see a kind of devolution taking hold, as millions are sucked into spirals of distraction, shallowness and homogeneity, gradually surrendering what little claim we had to the term "civilization."

But the very freedom that makes the Internet so attractive also undermines the influence of gatekeepers who used to sift and extol some things over others, helping people to pick gold from dross.

Carr and others worry how 6 billion ships will navigate when they can no longer even agree upon a north star.

Beyond imagination and creativity and opinion, we also need a dance of Shiva, destroying the insipid, vicious and untrue.

What we need to remember is that there is nothing unique about today's quandary. Ever since the arrival of glass lenses and movable type, the amount that each person can see and know has multiplied, with new tools ranging from newspapers and lithographs to steamships and telegraphs, to radio and so on. And every time, conservative nostalgists claimed that normal people could not adapt, that such godlike powers should be reserved to an elite, or perhaps renounced.

[Salon](#)

The information we're processing — opinions, viral videos, computer games, Wikipedia editorial drama — has very little to do with reality. Our technology is building on the shoulders of giants but breakthroughs are not as dramatic. There is more bulk to process, and less of those rare and insightful moments when a change at the center of a structure alters its fundamental character.

Some of this is science. After you discover the digital computer, you must build a whole bunch of them to evolve the process. After you discover DNA, you begin the long process of documenting each part of it. But

even that is hampered by our drama. Scientists must get funding for research that generates money; computers are products and so the fancy ones sell more than new technologies.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#)

Adaptation and reproductive nurturing trump conflict in evolutionary fitness

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

First, this stuffy gem:

Adaptation is one of the driving forces behind evolution, along with selection and the appearance of new species, say a group of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München researchers, but they say that the interpretation familiar since Darwin – these processes increase the “fitness” of the species overall, since, of two competing species, only the fittest would survive – is actually a case of the fittest being the ‘weakest’ most often.

The extinction of species is a consequence of their inability to adapt to new environmental conditions, and also of their competition with other species, say LMU researchers who simulated the progression of a cyclic competition of three species, meaning that each participant is superior to one other species, but will be beaten by a third interaction partner.

“In this kind of cyclical concurrence, the weakest species proves the winner almost without exception,” reports Professor Erwin Frey, who headed the study. “The two stronger species, on the other hand, die out, as experiments with bacteria have already shown. Our results are not only a big surprise, they are important to our understanding of evolution of ecosystems and the development of new strategies for the protection of species.”

[Scientific Blogging](#)

I say “stuffy” because these guys treat life as a laboratory condition when the greater conditions of life are in fact a boon to less simplistic results.

However, they have a point, and it relates to the Asiatic concept of *ki*, which I’ll translate as decisiveness (*vir*) in preserving balance with nature: sometimes the dude who walks away before a fight begins has the most *ki*, because he has avoided a fight for no purpose. Some fights have purpose; others will decide nothing important, and so are purposeless. (In other words, someone who says all wars are bad is as dumb as someone who says war is the solution to every situation.)

In nature, the name of the game is **survival** of the fittest, which most people think means that two animals square off in the bush, and “two men enter, one man leaves!” More likely, it’s a question of which group over time is able to survive well and raise its children through nurturing and [first world](#) post-natal reproductive tactics.

So this means that sometimes the species that is ostensibly weakest externally, but puts its power and wealth (ability to produce food from its environment) into reproductive nurturing, will prevail.

And here’s a case in point:

The simple, everyday act of cooking could have given humans an evolutionary edge over apes, researchers proposed at a scientific meeting this week.

“The hallmark of dietary evolution is our flexibility and plasticity. What made humans humans is the ability to find or make a meal in the environment,” said William Leonard, an anthropologist at Northwestern University who was not involved in the new research.

Cooking makes starchy things gelatinous, breaks up proteins, and softens rock-hard edibles,

Wrangham said. Such textural and chemical changes make foods easier to eat and digest.

[National Geographic](#)

It also allowed us to decrease jaw size and muscles, giving us more room for brains.

The bigger principle is this: in a fistfight, the ape always wins over the human. They're bigger, stronger and faster.

But a human might walk away from the fistfight, and live off foods that are harder to get but easier to eat, and so prosper where the apes remained doing the same thing they'd done for the last forty million years.

And that's why humans rule the planet over apes, and why nerds rule over the burly and stupid within human societies — or did, at least, until government came along to equalize things.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [reproduction](#)

Are we big chemical reactions?

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

The unpoetic explanation is that love mostly can be understood through brain images, hormones and genetics.

In humans, there are four tiny areas of the brain that some researchers think form a circuit of love. Acevedo, who works at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, is part of a team that has isolated those regions with the unromantic names of ventral tegmental area (VTA), the nucleus accumbens, the ventral pallidum and raphe nucleus.

So the scientists studied the brains of the recently heartbroken and found additional activity in the nucleus accumbens, which is even more strongly associated with addiction. "The brokenhearted show more evidence of what I'll call craving," said Lucy Brown, a neuroscientist also at Einstein medical college. "Similar to craving the drug cocaine."

The team's most recent brain scans were aimed at people married about 20 years who said they are still holding hands, lovey-dovey as newlyweds, a group that is a minority of married people. In these men and women, two more areas of the brain lit up, along with the VTA: the ventral pallidum and raphe nucleus.

[Seattle Times](#)

I think they have romance misunderstood and much as they have the human brain misunderstood.

First, the human brain is a computing machine. It will have mechanisms. Some of those will be designed to produce an override signal to all other signals, so that we don't lose track of the big picture. It's like signs on the wall of a factory to remind you, no matter how hung over or panicked you are, not to smoke around the napalm. These are retention methods for something decided elsewhere.

Second, people do not fully understand the brain — so our conjectures now are limited to "yep, when we let the boar rape him, this part of the brain lights up." We don't know how the decision to be in love is created, and that could be what sets up the reward process. For example, you decide that every time you ride your exercise bike for 30 minutes, you can beat senseless one (1) multi-level marketer. Reward follows good behavior, even internally to ourselves.

A long-married couple's claim that they are still as much in love as they day they wed is usually met with more than a pinch of disbelief.

Couples who are still deeply in love after more than two decades of marriage experience the same sense of euphoria as those in the first flush of love, brain scans showed.

Those newly in love also showed activity in a part of the brain associated with obsession and anxiety, whereas the long-timers were using parts linked to calmness and the suppression of pain.

Dr Fisher said: 'The difference is that in long-term love, the obsession, the mania, the anxiety, has been replaced with calm.

Other work by the same researchers has shown that the brain can differentiate between sex and love.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Finally, people don't understand romance. Romance is not the idea that you fall madly in love without control, and that there's no biological basis to it. Romance is that, knowing all of what's gross and ickily biological about life, two people are able to find transcendence in the *decision* to love one another. Love is a form of friendship. Friendship is a hybrid between trust and respect. It has nothing to do with blousy passion, and everything to do with two computing machines — minds — coming together in agreement that the other is awesome.

Chiasmatic patterns of this nature baffle people under a certain level of *g*, so they remain esoteric. But still it's advisable to un-spin this "shocking, ironic, unique" news from the blathermouth mainstream media.

Love exists.

Something in this universe loves enough to create love, and to leave sweet delight there for those who can discipline themselves enough to see it.

Sex, sweat, money, symbols and tokens are NOT the things they seem to be effects of.

Love, and love for life, alone are immortal.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [g](#) · [mind/body dualism](#) · [self-deception](#)

"Information wants to be free"

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

That word, *free*. It means nothing, but everything. You're "free," politically, but if your fellow citizens do something stupid, you'll die in a mushroom cloud with them. TV is "free" if you like watching commercials a third of the time. Air is "free" but it may be toxic.

And then along comes some glib hacker-type to say "information wants to be 'free'."

I think we can parse this statement in several ways:

1. Truth wants to escape confinement
2. Knowledge wants to spread
3. You cannot control what individuals do with technology

The latter one really scares us — supposing that smart kid down the block does, indeed, figure out a way to make an atom bomb by carving up 10,000 old smoke detectors and scraping the glow-goo off an equal number of luminous dial watches?

Watch the sky for the flash, because it could happen. Science is like a train where one thought leads to the next. Learn enough physics and... well, making a nuke isn't that complex of a task, is it? Guess you could do it.

The same thing goes for computers. A person motivated to learn enough about programming and operating systems can easily hack most operating systems. To know a system well is to know how to circumvent it.

All of these get filed under point #1 above: it's hard to keep a secret. It's difficult to conceal knowledge (except in [places](#) full of stupid people — they will destroy its manifestation but not exploit it). Truth — that which successfully describes reality — wants to escape.

So when I see a company that should know better wailing about how its products are no longer proprietary, I have to grin:

Apple's copyright infringement claim starts with the observation that jailbroken iPhones depend on modified versions of Apple's bootloader and operating system software. True enough — we said as much in our technical white paper describing the jailbreak process. But the courts have long recognized that copying software while reverse engineering is a fair use when done for purposes of fostering interoperability with independently created software, a body of law that Apple conveniently fails to mention.

As for the DMCA violation, Apple casts its lot with the likes of laser printer makers and garage door opener companies who argue that the DMCA entitles them to block interoperability with anything that hasn't been approved in advance. Apple justifies this by claiming that opening the iPhone to independently created applications will compromise safety, security, reliability, and swing the doors wide for those who want to run pirated software.

If this sounds like FUD, that's because it is. One need only transpose Apple's arguments to the world of automobiles to recognize their absurdity. Sure, GM might tell us that, for our own safety, all servicing should be done by an authorized GM dealer using only genuine GM parts. Toyota might say that swapping your engine could reduce the reliability of your car. And Mazda could say that those who throw a supercharger on their Miatas frequently exceed the legal speed limit.

[EFF](#)

What Apple is trying to do is preserve *brand image* by disallowing questionable practices. From a business standpoint, it's smart logic: you want people to believe that if they buy an iPhone it cannot be hacked, no matter what they do with it.

Of course, that's also denying the hackers — and by this, I mean the [old school definition of "hacker"](#) — who want to use Apple products. Hell, hackers basically built Apple in the 1980s, when people wanted home computers they could just fire up and start screwing around with. Or push past their limits.

If I were Apple, I'd make a simple distinction: there would be a hobbyist license for the iPhone, and probably, the iPhone a hobbyist uses should be a different color or have a big white stripe on it. That way the customers know that people with those are free to get themselves destroyed by playing with "dangerous" information, and everyone else can have an iSheep which will do what they want it to without them having to think much about it — which is how most people want to use technology.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Tagged: [Technology](#)

Potato chips are toxic like smoking

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Acrylamide has been linked previously to nervous system disorders and possibly to cancer. After ingesting large amounts of potato chips providing about 157 micrograms of acrylamide daily for four weeks, the participants had adverse changes in oxidized LDL, inflammatory markers and antioxidants that help the body eliminate acrylamide—all of which may increase the risk of heart disease.

FDA reports that acrylamide is particularly high in potato chips and French fries (<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/acrydata.html>). According to American Society for Nutrition Spokesperson Mary Ann Johnson, PhD: "Consumers can reduce their exposure to acrylamide by limiting their intake of potato chips and French fries, choosing a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat meat and dairy products, and quitting smoking, which is a major source of acrylamide."

[The Examiner](#)

It's good to know that industry, at the behest of our fellow clueless citizens and their buying habits, have surrounded us with toxic products.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Ecstasy long term effects, unspun

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Here's the gist of what They want you to think:

Enough time has finally elapsed to start asking if ecstasy damages health in the long term. According to the biggest review ever undertaken, it causes slight memory difficulties and mild depression, but these rarely translate into problems in the real world. While smaller studies show that some individuals have bigger problems, including weakened immunity and larger memory deficits, so far, for most people, ecstasy seems to be nowhere near as harmful over time as you may have been led to believe.

Why do they say this? They want to pander to the Crowd. The Crowd likes fun. Drugs, alcohol, sex are fun. War, obligation, work are not. So make fun of the boss and endorse sex, drugs and drink! It's so easy to please self-pleased apes.

But there's more:

MDMA is toxic, though not powerfully so – an average person would need to take around 20 or 30 tablets to reach a lethal dose. And for a small fraction of people, even small amounts of ecstasy can kill.

In animal studies the drug has been shown to inflict lasting damage to the brain's serotonin system, which is involved in mood and cognition. Imaging studies have found signs of similar damage in human users, but there are debates over whether this is caused by ecstasy use and whether the damage has any real-life consequences.

They found that compared with non-users, people who took even a small amount of ecstasy at some point consistently performed worse on psychometric tests, which measure mental performance, especially memory, attention, and executive function, which includes decision-making and planning.

The most pronounced effects are on memory, mainly verbal and working memory. While the ability to plan is somewhat affected, other aspects of executive function are not. Focused attention – the ability to zoom in quickly on a new task – suffers too, though sustained attention does not.

These effects appear not just in current users but also in ex-users who haven't touched the drug for at least six months, suggesting that the problems are long-lasting.

[New Scientist](#)

So in lab tests, they have not detected any "sizable" consequences of these effects. I guess "sizable" is relative to whatever you plan to do with your life. If you want to be homeless, a cube slave, a hipster, or work at a non-profit, there's probably not much risk of having impaired mental function.

But if you have higher ambitions — well, taking Ecstasy and other drugs will provide you with an excuse (a type of *justification*) for non-performance.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [spin](#)

Draw attention to yourself with a hoax for pity points

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Oliviera, a 26-year-old lawyer, told Zurich police she was attacked by three skinheads, one with a Nazi symbol tattooed on the back of his head, outside a Zurich train station on Monday. Pictures have shown her stomach and legs scarred with the initials of the rightwing Swiss People's party (SVP).

The woman's family told the Brazilian media she had been speaking Portuguese outside Stettbach train station shortly before the attack.

All week, Oliveira has been interviewed from her hospital bed by police and forensic experts. Her fiance said she was suffering from nightmares. "She woke up sweating and screaming," said Marco Trepp.

The SVP won 29% of the vote in the last election and is known for its anti-immigration stance

We've seen this before: a defenseless person, whether a young woman or a minority or both, is set upon by those perceived to be the violent, primitive, dumb majority, in contrast to the enlightened state of all defenseless victims since Christ.

Yet, it's all lies:

Swiss authorities said she was not pregnant when the attack was alleged to have happened. And according to medical experts, she may well have cut herself. The head of Zurich University's forensic medicine department, Walter Baer, said that "any experienced forensic doctor would not hesitate to assume that this was a case of self-infliction".

Chastened by the sudden twist to the episode, Brazilian officials were silent.

[The Guardian](#)

Can the SVP sue to have her removed from the country or jailed for slander? That'd be nice.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

Clown car octuplet mom is bag of crazy

Feb 14th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

Putting in a few words at the BBC, on their article about the typically appallingly detached-from-reality Nadya Suleman Gutierrez:

I think many Americans are waking up to the entitlement culture among us.

Many of us still believe that Natural Selection is a good idea, and that those who cannot accomplish the very minimal tasks required for survival in this society — graduate high school, get some kind of job, establish housing, save some money — are probably idiots we'd be better off without.

Against this culture, which was what built this country from a banana republic colony into a superpower, there's the entitlement culture. They want what they want, just because they're here and they're human, and anyone who would deny anything to them or anyone like them is "teh debbil fascists," which is how you say "an evil fascist" in their pidgin internet-speak.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Luckily, the original article pretty much makes this clear:

'There's no such thing as a supermum – but I'm trying!' this one-woman baby machine trills, as she attempts to justify her decision to undergo the fertility treatment which produced the world's first all-surviving octuplets, even though she already has six young children – but no husband, job or money.

You suspect that Suleman, 33 – who appears to have conveniently forgotten the material price of her self-confessed obsession with procreation (it will cost the Californian taxpayers up to £2.1million in medical fees and welfare handouts) – would blithely gabble on in this vein for ever if no one interrupted her.

With jawdropping naivety, she describes the three-bedroom bungalow, which belongs to her mother Angela, as 'one big play den'.

She has stripped away all but the most basic furniture to accommodate what she regards as the true essentials of family life: trampolines, swings, wooden horses, toy tractors and a huge playhouse.

Inside, the ambience is little short of bedlam. The walls are smeared with food and scribbled writing; the windows are not covered with curtains but old bed sheets; clothes are scattered everywhere; and the six children run Nadya ragged.

She has, for example, changed her first and second names several times during her 33 years. She also insists that she has never had plastic surgery, even though those who see her regularly say otherwise, and she looks radically different than she did in photographs taken a few years ago.

During her formative years, she says her Palestine-born father and Lithuanian mother slept in separate rooms, staying together only for her sake and splitting up when she left home, aged 20.

The story the grandmother tells this weekend in a mass-selling U.S. magazine contains significant differences.

More damagingly, Angela claims that the sperm donor is really her daughter's besotted Mexican-American former boyfriend, who wanted to marry her, but was rejected because she was determined to have the children on her own.

The donor was duped into providing sperm in the belief that it would lead to a lasting relationship, she allegedly told the magazine. She added that her daughter was not capable of caring for six children, let alone 14.

O, joyous disaster!

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Individualism denies civilization

Feb 14th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Some ingenue asks:

How could anything be relevant to the way an individual is treated but the character of the individual itself?

[Talking Philosophy](#)

He's probably waving his hands in the same impotent gesture all people do when, out of logical arguments, they want to appeal to the emotions of a crowd.

He forgot that when humans invented fire, we took over from natural selection.

He forgot that when we formed civilizations, we undertook the burden of thinking collectively.

Although "character" is a vague term (and not defined — at all — in the original text) there are numerous instances where it does not apply, or could be extended to include inherent traits.

A Neanderthal, for example, would not belong in a population of sapiens.

Similarly, you wouldn't take the brightest and nerdiest kid from your high school and put him in a pit with surly, violent individuals of low intelligence.

People forget that most of "character" is defined by our biological status, and most of the rest is inherited.

We are not kings who create ourselves, and control ourselves; we are servants to our nature.

And this is why his original statement is insane: "individual" means we are small pieces of this world that operate within the world, not small worlds that self-define and self-regulate independently of one another and their environment.

The individualistic thinking that places the individual before all else is another manifestation of rationalism, or linear logic, by which we consider one factor out of many and ignore all other factors as "background noise", "details" and "irrelevant context."

We forget that nature forms herself from the intersection of chaotic, dumb and blind natural forces, not from personality, as we like to think we form ourselves.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Are gender differences innate or learned?

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Throughout the world, boys and girls prefer to play with different types of toys. Boys typically like to play with cars and trucks, while girls typically choose to play with dolls. Why is this? A traditional sociological explanation is that boys and girls are socialized and encouraged to play with different types of toys by their parents, peers, and the "society." Growing scientific evidence suggests, however, that boys' and girls' toy preferences may have a biological origin.

In 2002, Gerianne M. Alexander of Texas A&M University and Melissa Hines of City University in London stunned the scientific world by showing that vervet monkeys showed the same sex-typical toy preferences as humans. In an incredibly ingenious study, published in *Evolution and Human Behavior*, Alexander and Hines gave two stereotypically masculine toys (a ball and a police car), two stereotypically feminine toys (a soft doll and a cooking pot), and two neutral toys (a picture book and a stuffed dog) to 44 male and 44 female vervet monkeys. They then assessed the monkeys' preference for each toy by measuring how much time they spent with each. Their data demonstrated that male vervet monkeys showed significantly greater interest in the masculine toys, and the female vervet monkeys showed significantly greater interest in the feminine toys. The two sexes did not differ in their preference for the neutral toys.

In a forthcoming article in *Hormones and Behavior*, Janice M. Hassett, Erin R. Siebert, and Kim Wallen, of Emory University, replicate the sex preferences in toys among members of another primate species (rhesus monkeys). Their study shows that, when given a choice between stereotypically male "wheeled toys" (such as a wagon, a truck, and a car) and stereotypically female "plush toys" (such as Winnie the Pooh, Raggedy Ann, and a koala bear hand puppet), male rhesus monkeys show strong and significant preference for the masculine toys. Female rhesus monkeys show preference for the feminine toys, but the difference in their preference is not statistically significant.

However, it is becoming less and less likely that "gender socialization" is the reason why boys and girls prefer different toys, and more and more likely that there are some genetic, hormonal, and other biological reasons for the observed sex differences in toy preference.

[Psychology Today](#)

We can't say why, they mean.

Men and women are shaped by different levels of hormones. Men are designed to be more aggressive, and also, more focused on abstract and infrastructure-type issues; women are designed to be more emotional, more nurturing, and focused more on paying attention to the whole well-being of the individual.

These are complementary tendencies that work really well together. But, it's politically unpopular to say ANY differences exist, so we must dance around the issue, like slaves in a dogmatic empire.

More from the gender misconceptions files:

Feminist theory of intimate violence is critically reviewed in the light of data from numerous incidence studies reporting levels of violence by female perpetrators higher than those reported for males, particularly in younger age samples. A critical analysis of the methodology of these studies is made with particular reference to the Conflict Tactics Scale developed and utilised by Straus and his colleagues. Results show that the gender disparity in injuries from domestic violence is less than originally portrayed by feminist theory. Studies are also reviewed indicating high levels of unilateral intimate violence by females to both males and females. Males appear

to report their own victimization less than females do and to not view female violence against them as a crime. Hence, they differentially under-report being victimized by partners on crime victim surveys. It is concluded that feminist theory is contradicted by these findings and that the call for “qualitative” studies by feminists is really a means of avoiding this conclusion. A case is made for a paradigm having developed amongst family violence activists and researchers that precludes the notion of female violence, trivializes injuries to males and maintains a monolithic view of a complex social problem.

[Science Direct](#)

People can't admit there are different responses to violence, which seems to be caused not by testosterone but by a diminished faith that negotiation can work out.

Maybe our biology is a response to our world — our context — and like scientific responses to nature, if the logic's good, it always replicates itself, experiment after experiment. Those experiments are our lives.

Witness:

When little boys and girls reach a certain age, they start accusing each other of having “cooties.” They regard each other as yucky and dirty because they have cooties, and avoid any contact with them for fear of contracting cooties themselves. That is, until they suddenly “discover” each other when they hit puberty, then they become crazy about each other and no longer fear cooties.

Westermarck is best known for discovering a phenomenon which is named after him: the Westermarck effect. It refers to the fact that when little boys and girls spend a lot of time together as they are growing up, they will later as adolescents find each other sexually repulsive. It is a mechanism designed for incest avoidance. Since individuals with whom small children come in regular and frequent contact as they grow up are almost always their genetic kin (their parents, siblings and other close family members), it will not be in the genetic interest of the children to be sexually attracted to them.

Evolution is always backward-looking and can only respond to situations that reliably and consistently existed in the past. Evolution can never anticipate the future, especially in a fast-moving environment like ours in the last 10,000 years.

From the perspective of the Westermarck effect, cooties (and their equivalents throughout the world) are a culturally specific device that reflects the operation of an underlying universal evolved psychological mechanism. Boys and girls in every society are evolutionarily designed to employ such a device (unconsciously) to make sure that they will not spend too much time with each other. Children's play groups in all human societies are sex-segregated; boys play with boys, and girls play with girls. This will guarantee that boys and girls will later find each other sexually attractive when the time is right, which in the context of the ancestral environment was right at puberty.

Nevertheless, if cooties are a device for children to avoid spending too much time with each other so that they could later select them as sexual mates, then they should not employ the device against their own brothers and sisters, whom they will not be selecting as mates anyway and with whom they should be spending a lot of time. In other words, little girls should allege that little boys have cooties, but not their brothers, and little boys should allege that little girls have cooties, but not their sisters. Brothers and sisters may resent, fight, and even hate each other, but they should not allege cooties against each other.

[Psychology Today](#)

That's good research there, and an interesting revelation of how the same mechanisms show up in different cultures to keep the system working.

The findings, reported in Psychological Science, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, reveal that males are more tolerant than females of unrelated same-sex individuals. The males in this study rated their roommates as being more satisfactory and less bothersome than females did. In addition, the researchers found at three different collegiate institutions that females were more likely to switch to a new roommate than males were. The results of the final experiment, in which participants judged one negative behavior of a formerly reliable hypothetical friend, showed that women downgraded the best friend's reliability significantly more than men did.

They add, "Females may simply weight negative information more heavily than males do, because negative information disrupts the establishment of intimacy, which serves a more important function in same-sex relationships for females than for males." The authors go on to explain that the effort that we put into relationships with unrelated same-sex individuals may also depend on our short- and long- term needs during that specific time in our lives.

[PhysOrg](#)

More innate hormonal differences. Neat.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [reproduction](#)

Europe collapsing

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

When you create a bad design, it can only fail, regardless of how good the implementation is. While these people are upset over financial problems in Europe, those financial problems are symptoms of a lack of a plan: we'll liberalize society, lose all consensus that gives us a sense of social reward, and then sell these decentered people products and services until they crap out, at which point we'll import new people to sell junk to — the wisdom of peasants, not kings or scholars.

The financial turmoil that began in the summer of 2007 in the U.S. is spreading around the globe with frightening speed and devastating consequences for working people.

Now, the economic disaster is sparking mass protest and revolt on a scale not seen in two decades.

ALL THIS is spelling the definitive end of the neoliberal era ushered in some 30 years ago by political and business leaders who pushed through financial deregulation, cutbacks in social spending programs from health care to higher education, and attacks on labor—all in the name of efficiency, prosperity and other supposed virtues of the free market.

As they have in the past, Europe's far-right parties will seek to pin blame for the economic crisis on immigrants, trade unions and the left, but so far, the first response has gone in a leftward direction in most places.

[Intel Daily](#)

Of course, they are making the oldest mistake in the book: when your attempts fail, do not change your assumptions.

Their assumption is leftism.

Neoliberalism is leftism; Regan and Thatcher were popular because they adapted the pre-WWII rightist agenda to the leftist post-WWII reality, and so were *electable*.

Leftism creates diversity by deconstruction consensus and replacing it with individual liberty which, when handed to the wrong people, results in a chaotic and self-consumptive society.

This society then cannot earn enough money to offset its parasites, and also, because it lacks consensus, has no way of fending off those who want to use it as fodder for crass commercialization. There's no culture and universal agreement that anything is more important than money!

All societies die this way. Leftism seems like a good solution but if it were really that revolutionary, it would probably be more controversial, don't you think?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The war on drugs fails

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The Home Office has admitted that the street price of both cocaine and heroin has fallen by nearly half in the last ten years, making the most dangerous illegal drugs cheaper than they have ever been.

That means a line of cocaine can cost as little as £1, with an average price per line of between £2 and £4.

The average price of a pint of lager is around £2.75, although some pub chains have reacted to the credit crunch by cutting the price of a pint as low as 99p. A glass of wine typically costs £3.50.

[The Telegraph](#)

That illegal drugs are now cheaper than legal drugs suggests we have a big problem.

A synthetic drug that is up to five times as powerful as cannabis is being sold legally in Britain, as incense.

It has already been made illegal in Germany and is also banned in the Netherlands.

The drug is based on the chemical JWH018 which mimics the effects of tetra hydro cannabinol or THC, the main active ingredient of cannabis.

[BBC](#)

What we don't have is a solution, at least not in the way these idiots suggest:

The war against drugs is failing and the U.S. government should break with "prohibition" policies that have achieved little more than cram its prisons and stoke violence, three former Latin American presidents said on Wednesday.

The respected former presidents urged the United States and Latin American governments to move away from jailing drug users to debate the legalization of marijuana and place more emphasis on the treatment of addicts.

"The problem today in the U.S. is that narco-trafficking is a crime and so any politician is fearful of talking about narco-trafficking or talking about policies because they will be called soft," he said.

[SOSD](#)

They're right in that US politicians cannot even approach the issue. And they'd love it for us to legalize pot and spend out time on addicts. That would strengthen their nations and weaken ours, and that's how the game of international politics is played.

I'd suggest a radical new plan:

Districting.

Those who want to take drugs want to live in micro-societies that support this idea. So I think we should designate some local cities and possibly states where drugs are not only legal, but sold openly with no age

restrictions and indeed, no restrictions of any kind. And no mercy. Give them medical quality drugs and if they die, pick up the bodies. If they thrive, the gods wanted them to use drugs.

This way, however, they get to live around others who want to take drugs and they both don't screw up places where people want to be away from drugs, and also get to see what a drug-friendly community looks like. Everyone was too stoned to stop that forest fire? Well, it'll be a hot night tonight, but at least you don't need to remember your lighter.

I have seen the exact manner in which the junk virus operates through fifteen years of addiction. The pyramid of junk, one level eating the level below (it is no accident that junk higher-ups are always fat and the addict in the street is always thin) right up to the top or tops since there are many junk pyramids feeding on peoples of the world and all built on basic principles of monopoly:

- 1—Never give anything away for nothing.
- 2—Never give more than you have to give
(always catch the buyer hungry and always make him wait).
- 3—Always take everything back if you possibly can.

The Pusher always gets it all back. The addict needs more and more junk to maintain a human form . . . buy off the Monkey.

Junk is the mold of monopoly and possession. The addict stands by while his junk legs carry him straight in on the junk beam to relapse. Junk is quantitative and accurately measurable. The more junk you use the less you have and the more you have the more you use.

....

Junk is the ideal product . . . the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy. . . . The junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client. He pays his staff in junk.

Junk yields a basic formula of "evil" virus: The Algebra of Need. The face of "evil" is always the face of total need. A dope fiend is a man in total need of dope. Beyond a certain frequency need knows absolutely no limit or control. In the words of total need: "Wouldn't you?" Yes you would. You would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do anything to satisfy total need. Because you would be in a state of total sickness, total possession, and not in a position to act in any other way. Dope fiends are sick people who cannot act other than they do. A rabid dog cannot choose but bite. Assuming a self- righteous position is nothing to the purpose unless your purpose be to keep the junk virus in operation. And junk in a big industry.

If you wish to alter or annihilate a pyramid of numbers in a serial relation, you alter or remove the bottom number. If we wish to annihilate the junk pyramid, we must start with the bottom of the pyramid: the Addict in the Street, and stop tilting quixotically for the "higher ups" so called, all of whom are immediately replaceable. The addict in the street who must have junk to live is the one irreplaceable factor in the junk equation. When there are no more addicts to buy junk there will be no junk traffic. As long as junk need exists, someone will service it.

...

The smallpox vaccine was opposed by a vociferous lunatic group of anti-vaccinationists. No doubt a scream of protest will go up from interested or unbalanced individuals as the junk virus is shot out from under them. Junk is big business; there are always cranks and operators. They must not be allowed to interfere with the essential work of inoculation treatment and quarantine. The junk virus is public health problem number one of the world today.

Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness, by William S. Burroughs

The problem with drugs is the secondary effects. Let natural selection take over: if everyone has a farm, those on drugs will either survive or not, but the rest of us don't deal with the crisis impact of drugs.

Unfortunately, in an organized society, the virus of abuse spreads very quickly and causes massive socialized problems.

Having drug-legal zones, and possibly putting all criminals on drugs in those zones, would enable the rest of us to get on with life without having to waste our time on people who have failed it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Toward the overman

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

The prime characteristic of cosmic consciousness is, as its name implies, a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe . . .

Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment or illumination which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence – would make him almost a member of a new species.

To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation, and joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important both to the individual and to the race than is the enhanced intellectual power.

With these come, what may be called, a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have this, but the consciousness that he has it already.

Only a personal experience of it, or a prolonged study of men who have passed into the new life, will enable us to realize what this actually is . . .

The view [that the philosopher] takes is that our descendants will sooner or later reach, as a race, the condition of cosmic consciousness, just as, long ago, our ancestors passed from simple to self-consciousness. . . .

He believes that this step in evolution is even now being made, since it is clear to him both that men with the faculty in question are becoming more and more common and also that as a race we are approaching nearer and nearer to that stage of the self conscious mind from which the transition to the cosmic conscious is effected.

He realizes that, granted the necessary heredity, any individual not already beyond the age may enter cosmic consciousness.

He knows that intelligent contact with cosmic conscious minds assists self conscious individuals in the ascent to the higher plane.

He therefore hopes, by bringing about, or at least facilitating this contact, to aid men and women in making the almost infinitely important step in question.

[PA](#)

We've seen this before:

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man? What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment...

[Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* \(1885\)](#)

Since we invented fire, evolution has been in our hands.

It starts with us behaving as more evolved beings.

Then, we move forward...

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [overman](#)

Inverting the hipster

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

There was some bloviation about Microsoft's decision to open retail stores, just like Apple (and before them Gateway, and before them, Tandy) had:

MSFT will never be as hip and cool as Apple.

Of course, since they aren't thinking of outside appearance, they'll also be more stable and realistic than Apple.

This is why they're still #1 despite Apple's thirty years of trying to unseat them.

The hipster thinks from outside appearance. "How will this look to the group?" The hipster evolved under conditions in which finding the biggest cross-section of a group the quickest determined success; the mob rules.

The scientist, philosopher or historian thinks from the inside out, because they recognize the importance of context. "What parts of this interact with the world around it to be produce a sustaining, cyclic process?" They think in terms of how patterns re-appear because they generate their own sustenance from their environment.

Guess which one wins in the short term, always? The hipster. He or she talks a good game, always seems to have some new innovative way of approaching the problem, and socializes easily. If you need to get 500 people to dance to techno or burn a witch, the hipster's your man.

Guess which one wins in the long term, always?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [hipsters](#)

Our third-world garbage problem

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

(Remember, America is going to become *more like* Mexico and *more like* Africa as our demographic changes — so we'll face this sooner than you think.)

Mexico City is facing a crisis over where to put its trash — enough to fill four sports stadiums a year — with its sprawling dump already crammed to bursting and under a closure order.

One of the world's biggest landfills, the Nezahualcoyotl dump site is a fifth the size of Manhattan and sits inside the urban sprawl of the fast-growing Mexican capital.

Now, mountains of refuse piled several stories high are pressing against a major drainage canal that runs along the dump's edge. That risks a rupture that could flood residential areas and the airport with stinking effluent and grime, says the federal government which ordered the dump closed in January.

[Reuters](#)

What defines a third world state?

You might mention poverty, disorder, corruption, filth, etc. but those are symptoms not causes — and causes are what define it.

My answer: *disorder*.

A nation becomes third world when there's not enough social consensus to build infrastructure, beat back corruption, clean things up, invent, etc. That's both personal disorder, political disorder, and genetic disorder — most third world nations show us what happens with "diversity" several generations later, which is selection for a lowest common denominator. See: [IQ and the wealth of nations](#) for a more complete explanation.

So in third world states you have rampant disorganization, a shaky culture because there's no specific ethnic-cultural link, and massive corruption because you have huge masses of mobilized idiots and whoever fools them first, wins power and prestige.

No one's thinking about the garbage, or the environment. They burn old equipment and plastics. They throw away anything that cannot immediately be turned into pocket money. There is no sense of collectivism. (There is also no sense of hope.)

Mexico's garbage problem is a global problem. A giant raft of garbage that will decay, and leach chemicals into the soil and air and water, soon becomes all of our problem as those chemicals get distributed worldwide.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).
Tagged: [pollution](#)

IQ and the Wealth of Nations

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This terrifying book by Richard Lynn and Tatu Vanhanen, shows us the elephant in the room of politics: the difference between have and have-not nations is intelligence.

The more intelligent nations not only invent more things, but they're aware of a longer-term time-scale to their goals, so they value things like civic morality, collective awareness, intelligence and self-discipline.

The dumber nations have none of this, and so whoever's got the mango right now is the hippest kid on the block, and anyone who invents a new way of doing things is a witch doctor and should be burned. Before you get jubilant over how much better you are than these people, you should remember that most third-world nations are decayed forms of once-prosperous and intelligent places.

Those intelligent places got run over by hipsterism, drama, and social reality, and so declined as their population devolved and became diverse, leaving them with an undifferentiated mass of useless people.

The book includes the authors' calculation of average IQ scores for 81 countries, based on their analysis of published reports. It reports their observation that national IQ correlates with gross domestic product per capita at 0.82, and with the rate of economic growth from 1950-1990 at 0.64.

The authors believe that average IQ differences between nations are due to both genetic and economic factors. They also believe that low GDP can cause low IQ, just as low IQ can cause low GDP.

Erich Weede and Sebastian Kampf wrote that "there is one clear and robust result: average IQ does promote growth." [17] Edward Miller wrote that "the theory helps significantly to explain why some countries are rich and some poor." [18] Michael Palairret wrote that "Lynn and Vanhanen have launched a powerful challenge to economic historians and development economists who prefer not to use IQ as an analytical input." [19] In a reanalysis of the Lynn and Vanhanen's hypothesis, Dickerson (2006) finds that IQ and GDP data is best fitted by an exponential function, with IQ explaining approximately 70% of the variation in GDP. [20] Dickerson concludes that as a rough approximation "an increase of 10 points in mean IQ results in a doubling of the per capita GDP."

Whetzel and McDaniel (2006) conclude that the book's "results regarding the relationship between IQ, democracy and economic freedom are robust". [21] Moreover, they address "criticisms concerning the measurement of IQ in purportedly low IQ countries", finding that by setting "all IQ scores below 90 to equal 90, the relationship between IQ and wealth of nations remained strong and actually increased in magnitude." On this question they conclude that their findings "argue against claims made by some that inaccuracies in IQ estimation of low IQ countries invalidate conclusions about the relationship between IQ and national wealth."

Both Lynn and Rushton have suggested that high IQ is associated with colder climates. To test this hypothesis, Templer and Arikawa (2006) compare the national IQ data from Lynn and Vanhanen with data sets that describe national average skin color and average winter and summer temperatures. [24] They find that the strongest correlations to national IQ were -0.92 for skin color and -0.76 for average high winter temperature. They interpret this finding as strong support for IQ-climate association.

Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* instead argues that historical differences in economic and technological development for different areas can be explained by differences in geography

(which affects factors like population density and spread of new technology) and differences in available crops and domesticatable animals.

[Wikipedia](#)

As we can see, an interesting book. I've clipped all of the dumb and obvious comments people made about it and saved instead the only reliable counter-thesis, which is Jared Diamond's idea that geography defines innovation. There are many problems with it as well, but it's here for context.

Wikipedia also gives us something lovely — and this is probably the most compelling maker of Lynn/Vanhanen's argument:

Rank	Country	IQ estimate	Rank	Country	IQ estimate	Rank	Country	IQ estimate
1	 Hong Kong	107	28	 Russia	96	55	 Fiji	84
2	 South Korea	106	29	 Slovakia	96	56	 Iran	84
3	 Japan	105	30	 Uruguay	96	57	 Marshall Islands	84
4	 Taiwan	104	31	 Portugal	95	58	 Puerto Rico	84
5	 Singapore	103	32	 Slovenia	95	59	 Egypt	83
6	 Austria	102	33	 Israel	94	60	 India	81
7	 Germany	102	34	 Romania	94	61	 Ecuador	80
8	 Italy	102	35	 Bulgaria	93	62	 Guatemala	79
9	 Netherlands	102	36	 Ireland	93	63	 Barbados	78
10	 Sweden	101	37	 Greece	92	64	 Nepal	78
11	 Switzerland	101	38	 Malaysia	92	65	 Qatar	78
12	 Belgium	100	39	 Thailand	91	66	 Zambia	77
13	 China	100	40	 Croatia	90	67	 Congo	73
14	 New Zealand	100	41	 Peru	90	68	 Uganda	73
15	 United Kingdom	100	42	 Turkey	90	69	 Jamaica	72
16	 Hungary	99	43	 Colombia	89	70	 Kenya	72
17	 Poland	99	44	 Indonesia	89	71	 South Africa	72
18	 Australia	98	45	 Suriname	89	72	 Sudan	72
19	 Denmark	98	46	 Brazil	87	73	 Tanzania	72
20	 France	98	47	 Iraq	87	74	 Ghana	71
21	 Mongolia	98	48	 Mexico	87	75	 Nigeria	67
22	 United States	98	49	 Samoa	87	76	 Guinea	66
23	 Canada	97	50	 Tonga	87	77	 Zimbabwe	66
24	 Czech Republic	97	51	 Lebanon	86	78	 Democratic Republic of the Congo	65
25	 Finland	97	52	 Philippines	86	79	 Sierra Leone	64
26	 Spain	97	53	 Cuba	85	80	 Ethiopia	63
27	 Argentina	96	54	 Morocco	85	81	 Equatorial Guinea	59

When people allude to [IQ and the wealth of nations](#), just like [The Bell Curve](#), they're suggesting a powerful truth:

Natural selection is real and exists among us to this day.

Those who prosper are the smarter; this also favors ethnic groups and races (these two come into play with nationality) as well as classes within each ethnic group.

Those who are rich are most likely, statistically, to be rich because they have intellectual powers; those who are poor are most likely, statistically, to be poor because they have less intellectual ability.

So... I've known some smart poor people. However, they were a tiny minority, and almost always had middle class or upper middle-class ancestors, even if some generations removed. Same with the few dumb rich people I knew — usually the sons of millionaires who married strippers, cocktail waitresses, models, actresses and people from other nitwit professions.

Anecdotally, I'd estimate there's a 2% at most deviation from the model, and those people sink or swim according to how much will they can summon toward change.

Historically speaking, their models are roughly accurate as well — and roughly accurate is about the best it gets. Look at the chart, and pick which nations you'd like to live in. Now pay attention to their history: which were spoiled rich kids who degenerated, and which never evolved? Both ways reach the same end result.

(There's a more complete version of that chart, but one that's less visually clear from a glance, at [Steve Sailer's website](#).)

For more reading material: if you're wondering whether IQ is genetically determined and how it affects the life of an individual, read [The Blank Slate](#). For an explanation of how races, clines, ethnicities and classes overlap, and how historically they spread and diversified, read [Genes, Culture and Human Evolution: A Synthesis](#).

Another interesting factor is the effect of revolutions: Russia and France both lag behind their neighbors, probably a consequence of the political murder of elites and aristocrats who would have raised the IQ curve. (The American Revolution is strictly put, not a revolution, but a colonial war of independence.)

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [eugenics](#) · [natural selection](#) · [social darwinism](#)

Neanderthals may have been parallel evolution

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Scientists studying the DNA of Neanderthals say they can find no evidence that this ancient species ever interbred with modern humans.

But our closest ancestors may well have been able to speak as well as us, said Prof Svante Paabo from Germany's Max Planck Institute.

A total of three billion "letters", covering 60% of the Neanderthal genome, have been sequenced by scientists from Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and 454 Life Sciences Corporation, in Branford, Connecticut.

They were the closest relatives of currently living humans, sharing between 99.5% to 99.9% of our DNA sequence.

They focused on a gene implicated in brain development – microcephalin-1 – which shows significant variation among present day humans.

It has been suggested that a particular variant of the gene, found commonly in Europeans, was contributed by Neanderthals.

But the Croatian Neanderthal fossils harboured an ancestral form of the microcephalin-1 gene, which today is also found among Africans.

Overall, it seems that Neanderthals have contributed, at most, a "very limited" fraction of the variation found in contemporary human populations, said Prof Paabo.

[BBC](#)

First, they should mention methodology: scientists looked for known genes from modern humans in Neanderthals to try to see if Neanderthals were the origins of these genes.

Second, it's interesting how an earlier version of a brain development gene that's quite important is shared between Neanderthals and Africans. If evolution follows the patterns elsewhere, we'll find that Africa is the most genetically diverse because it's the melting pot where new versions of humanity returned to interbreed. Kind of like version control.

Finally, it's fascinating that we're beginning to really see the Darwinian tree of life for humans — and how many, many variations have occurred to bring us to the modern time.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

How a surveillance society comes about — voluntarily

Feb 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

On Monday the Guardian carried a letter from Nick Gibson who told how he had taken over a pub in Islington, London, and had to apply for a new licence, which required the approval of a number of organisations, including the police.

"I was stunned," he wrote, "to find that the police were prepared to approve – ie not fight – our licence on condition that we installed CCTV capturing the head and shoulders of everyone coming into the pub, to be made available to them on request."

CCTV has its purposes but the idea that someone going for a pint must give up their privacy by having their image taken and stored is repellent to all notions of a free society.

[The Guardian](#)

I don't think you understand. Society is organic.

That means that if you and your urban liberal friends figure everyone else is like you, e.g. not committing crimes, you are denying the fact that there's a huge population of yobs, ghetto dwellers, chavs, defectives and *Homo Erectus* hybrids out there who commit crime whenever the opportunity arises.

Because you defended their rights just as strongly as your own, you've now got a society wracked by crime. Yet you still demand the cops solve these crimes. How are they going to keep herd on this huge population? Why, by creating a surveillance society, because otherwise they'd need one cop for every thirty people.

Your insistence on rights **for all** is what has caused this problem, and now you complain? Good luck, because everyone else is more afraid of the criminals than the government. You didn't read Plato, I take it. He points out how tyrants *always* are selected by The People, when The People's desire for "freedom" and "independence" causes them to do chaotic things and make society a hive harbor for parasites and criminals.

See, dude, you're the cause of the problems you whine about. How's that make you feel?

The People wanted freedom from any kind of laws regulating their behavior, outside of the obvious no murder, no rape, kind of thing.

To defend this, they demanded equal and stringent rights for all — for all! — and forced governments to acquiesce.

Governments backed off, and now we have an emboldened criminal element who commit crimes whenever the opportunity arises.

And when that happens, regular citizens complain.

There cannot be enough cops when 1/5 of a population decides it's time to steal something every other Saturday night.

So they turn to surveillance. Crimes are on the rise, cops stay the same, so we get CCTV.

Who made this happen? As always, The People are the cause of the problems of which they

complain.

[Comment on this article](#)

And now in the USA, we have another story of interest:

Before Austin police officers click on the handcuffs, they may make a request that could save certain suspects a trip to jail: provide a roadside fingerprint sample.

Around March 1 about 100 officers will begin using mobile fingerprint scanners to help identify suspects in crimes, from felonies down to traffic offenses when motorists don't have their licenses.

Austin police plan to use the devices when investigating a range of crimes, particularly cases in which suspects could be cited and released but do not have valid IDs. Such offenses include running stoplights and possessing small amounts of marijuana.

In those cases, Eells said, officers would seek voluntary fingerprint samples and then generally issue citations if a person's identity is confirmed. Officers, who will receive special training on how to explain the devices to suspects and to seek their consent, probably will warn that a refusal could lead to an arrest, Eells said.

[The Statesman](#)

This story is probably baffling to anyone from outside Austin or who is not cynical about Austin.

Austin is the Texas oasis of liberalism and tolerance. Almost everyone here votes democratic; people are notoriously tolerant of every type of action.

Problem: that leads to parasites, like a large homeless population, a large population of "moneyless" crusties who get relief checks from Dad, and a huge number of itinerant workers who drift through for the easy scores and easy crimes.

Did I mention that since the University of Texas, most of the Texas government, and most of the USA government's presence in Texas is there? Yes: most people are working government jobs, or indirectly supporting those government jobs.

In other words, it's a socialist paradise, except for the fact that crimes keep increasing. That's because the city is now home to almost one million people, and at that point, anonymity becomes a fact of life — and so crimes skyrocket.

Specifically, crimes of vandalism and petty theft or mugging by homeless, violent, drug/alcohol-addicted people.

So... tolerance (of dysfunction) leads to dysfunction which leads to the opposite and equal reaction from the citizens, which is demanding fingerprint readers to get the bums off the street.

A judge in Canada has ruled that Internet users have no expectation of privacy and police can use track people through Internet protocols without warrants.

Ruling in a child pornography possession case, Leitch found that the Canadian Charter does not provide a "reasonable expectation of privacy" regarding subscriber information retained by Internet service providers.

Police asked Bell Canada in 2007 for subscriber information on an IP address used by someone who had allegedly accessed child pornography. Bell provided the requested information without inquiring whether police had a search warrant.

"There is no confidentiality left on the Internet if this ruling stands," James Stribopoulos, a law professor at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, said.

[UPI](#)

When there was confidentiality on the internet, [pedophiles proliferated](#). Tolerate a bad behavior, and you get more of it. This is why liberty leads to tyranny and a third approach (instead of pro-government/pro-liberty) is needed: aim for a goal, and reward those who strive for that goal.

From the The Road to Hell is Paved With Good Intentions department:

Game wardens had put a hidden camera in a tree, pointed at VanKesteren's soybean fields, after receiving a complaint about protected birds getting caught in predator traps. The wardens had to walk or drive off a road, past a hedgerow, and travel about a quarter mile through one field and past a second hedgerow. VanKesteren said it appears they cut a swath through some brush to get to the tree.

In late 2006, someone – VanKesteren doesn't know who – called the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to report seeing a protected bird caught in a trap on VanKesteren's farmland.

The officers had to walk at least 400 yards across one field to get to a hedgerow where VanKesteren had set some traps. The area where the traps were set isn't visible from the road.

[The Virginian](#)

None of us wants protected birds to die.

But we also don't want agents of the state looking for a way to bust us, especially when the real danger to protected birds is the expansion of cities and suburbs, not rural farmers.

However, those housing projects make us money so... let's bust the farmer.

People act like the surveillance society comes about because big evil government decides, at the whim of Satan, to do it.

The truth is that it comes about when we're so careless as a society that we allow destructive acts to become the norm.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#)

Sulfur dioxide not carbon dioxide global warming initiator

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Sulfur dioxide emitted from volcanoes and from burning fossil fuel is the primary initiator of global climate change, according to Dr. Peter L. Ward, a retired U.S. Geological Survey scientist who continues to study the earth and its environment through his own company, Teton Tectonics. "Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas compounding global warming, but it is not the initiator of climate change," according to Ward.

In a paper to be published this week, Ward concludes that sulfur dioxide emissions regulate the ability of the atmosphere to clean itself by oxidizing greenhouse gases. Sulfur dioxide reacts quickly with available oxidants, leaving few to react with other greenhouse gases. The primary oxidants, created by the effects of ultraviolet sunlight on ozone, are, like ozone, in limited supply.

[MSN](#)

Let me translate:

It was a bad time for us to deploy exponentially larger numbers of internal combustion engines.

It's not cigarettes, it's not electric motors, and it's not cow methane causing global warming: it's gasoline-fueled motors.

This clarity will help us deal with the problem much more quickly.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Eugenics for dollars

Feb 13th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

You could have simply recognized the obvious, and kept ethnic groups together and implemented a gentle eugenics program, leaving only the hyper-evolved.

Instead, you the people decided that was Evil.

Now, you're going to get a greater evil — the ability to purchase genetic modifications for your baby:

A Los Angeles clinic says it will soon help couples select both gender and physical traits in a baby when they undergo a form of fertility treatment. The clinic, Fertility Institutes, says it has received "half a dozen" requests for the service, which is based on a procedure called pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD.

While PGD has long been used for the medical purpose of averting life-threatening diseases in children, the science behind it has quietly progressed to the point that it could potentially be used to create designer babies. It isn't clear that Fertility Institutes can yet deliver on its claims of trait selection. But the growth of PGD, unfettered by any state or federal regulations in the U.S., has accelerated genetic knowledge swiftly enough that pre-selecting cosmetic traits in a baby is no longer the stuff of science fiction.

"If we're going to produce children who are claimed to be superior because of their particular genes, we risk introducing new sources of discrimination" in society, says Marcy Darnovsky, associate executive director of the Center for Genetics and Society, a nonprofit public interest group in Oakland, Calif. If people use the method to select babies who are more likely to be tall, the thinking goes, then people could effectively be enacting their biases against short people.

[WSJ](#)

Well, no kidding there, Mr. Darnovsky. It's too bad you and the other stupid sheep were so busy fighting the idea of eugenics that you forced its uglier, nastier cousin to surge through the back door.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Censorship preserves social consensus

Feb 13th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

Another scientific/historical truth that upsets us:

During World War II, a federal Office of Censorship was created to review and if necessary censor any criticism of the morale of U.S. forces, or any communication that might bring aid or comfort to the enemy. Censorship applied not only to news and commentary, but also popular entertainment. Anti-war films were all but unheard of, since the government simply would not allow them.

At the beginning of World War II, around twenty-six news stories were censored in the American press every day; by the end of 1942, the Post Office had completely outlawed seventy newspapers.

There is no reason why newspapers should remain free to publish direct appeals to the American public from members of designated terrorist organizations. Most important, the media should not enjoy the unfettered right to publish national security, intelligence, and military secrets. These revelations can be so damaging to national security that sanctions should be enforced not just against government officials who leak secrets, but also against the journalists and media outlets that disclose them.

[Washington Times](#)

It's a dirty little secret of humanity: we respond to the opinions of others.

So if you want your nation to succeed, which requires roughly everyone be on the same page, you censor.

Successful censorship removes damaging information without requiring that all information toe a party line; for example, removing articles that attack our war policy without demanding all articles praise our war policy.

This is one truth ancient philosophers never shied away from. If you want your people healthy, you need to make a healthy infrastructure. That requires consensus. That itself is in conflict with the idea of letting any idiot with a printing press mentally reprogram your citizens.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [censorship](#) · [consensus](#)

Brains look for falsehoods

Feb 12th, 2009

by [Brett Stevens](#).

An ERP is an electrical brain response, as measured at the scalp with electrodes, that is directly related to something that is seen or heard. ERP studies have been used to provide us with information about how language is initially processed in the brain before any noticeable behavior occurs.

In this study, participants read statements that were either pragmatically licensed or pragmatically unlicensed. Pragmatically licensed statements are informative and sound natural. For example, "In moderation, drinking red wine isn't bad for your health" is a pragmatically licensed statement. Pragmatically unlicensed statements, on the other hand, are unnatural and not helpful. An example of this type of statement would be, "Vitamins and proteins aren't very bad for your health." This statement is unlicensed because including the negative word "aren't" implies that vitamins and proteins may be bad for your health, which we know is not true. In this case, the negative word makes the statement trivial and not very useful.

Just as in true statements, false words elicited larger ERPs than true words in pragmatically-licensed, negative sentences. That is, there was greater brain activity when the participants came across a word which rendered the statement false. However, in the pragmatically unlicensed sentences, true and false words elicited similar ERPs.

[Lab Spaces](#)

In other words, our brains assess the truth of each part of a sentence until they come to a stop point, then a flurry of activity occurs, followed by rejection of the sentence determined false.

This is why you never manipulate people by lying to them. You tell them true statements that don't tell the whole truth, and string them along with multiple ones, so their brain never hits a stop point and they're inclined to say "yes, that's true," at the end.

For example, you know that government looks out for criminals. And that not all people convicted of crimes are guilty. You also know that some people are convicted because they pissed off a judge or had the wrong political beliefs. So you know that government is looking out for those of us who have the wrong political beliefs.

Amirite?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [memetics](#)

Pesticides cause Parkinson's

Feb 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – A combination of two commonly used agricultural pesticides, when injected into mice, causes the same pattern of brain damage as seen in Parkinson's disease, researchers said on Thursday.

Mice given the herbicide paraquat and the fungicide maneb showed clear signs of Parkinson's, a progressive and incurable brain illness, Deborah Cory-Slechta and colleagues at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry said.

The findings add to a growing body of evidence that exposure to chemicals such as pesticides may at least contribute to the brain damage seen in Parkinson's.

[Reuters](#) and [original press release](#)

And more from six years later:

Mayo Clinic researchers have found that using pesticides for farming or other purposes increases the risk of developing Parkinson's disease for men. Pesticide exposure did not increase the risk of Parkinson's in women, and no other household or industrial chemicals were significantly linked to the disease in either men or women.

"This confirms what has been found in previous studies: that occupational or other exposure to herbicides, insecticides and other pesticides increases risk for Parkinson's," says Jim Maraganore, M.D., Mayo Clinic neurologist and study investigator. "What we think may be happening is that pesticide use combines with other risk factors in men's environment or genetic makeup, causing them to cross over the threshold into developing the disease. By contrast, estrogen may protect women from the toxic effects of pesticides."

[Mayo Clinic](#)

Keep up the healthy living in the name of profit, modern society. It wouldn't be bad if you had profit AND other goals in mind, but you seem to drop those other goals and ONLY justify yourselves with profit... which is weak.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).
Tagged: [logical-AND](#)

What is passive aggression?

Feb 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

This definition has fallen out of favor because the behavior is so common now, but recognizing it helps you not take it seriously:

Passive-aggressives are literally aggressive in a passive way. They aren't hostile one moment and then kind the next. Instead, they perform the maddening trick of being both at the same time.

Essentially, passive-aggression is kid stuff. When you tell kids to go clean up their room, they grudgingly say okay, then the "forget" or find other flimsy excuses. Most of us outgrow this behavior. But for some people, this techniques works so well that they carry it into adulthood. "It's an avoidance pattern, and that's the essence of the passive-aggressive person," explains Dr. Sapadin.

Using passive-aggression is a way to control situations and people without seeming to be in control. "Passive-aggressive behavior is a tremendous way to manipulate people," says Hall.

The passive-aggressive person usually lacks the self-confidence to ask for, do, or say what he really wants. He's so uncomfortable with self-assertion that he tries to get his way by doing nothing. After, of course, telling you whatever you want to hear. By allowing others to take charge, he leaves himself only one option for getting what he wants: sabotage.

Passive-aggressive hostility is so subtle, the skilled practitioner is often in a good position to deny it's even there – blaming you for the inevitable confrontation that results. You blow up; he remains calm. Suddenly you seem like the aggressor. Maybe even to yourself. The incredible final straw, Dr. Wetzler says, is when you apologize to him. Because your inner voice is telling you that he's not being open with you, you experience conflict and stress.

[From "Oh, that Hurts" by Ed Pavelka in *Prevention Magazine*, June 1998](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [passive aggression](#) · [self-deception](#)

Why Wikipedia will fail

Feb 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

For instance, to keep the site freely editable, Wikipedia will need to replace its stock of hardcore admins and editors as they retire or quit. But Goldman thinks this will be a problem, since many of these editors first started their work when Wikipedia was a quite different place. Now, the editors themselves discourage the contributions of others through “xenophobia” toward outsiders; Goldman believes that they see “threats” everywhere and points out that the greater part of all edits made to the site are actually reverted by these editors.

In addition, plenty of political jockeying takes place among editors. And editors have few incentives for their work—no way to make money, no real way even to earn attribution. Together, these problems mean that as editors get burned out by patrolling for spam and vandalism, fewer new people will be interested in stepping up to plug the gap.

The result: a death spiral among the editorial community.

[Ars Technica](#)

Wikipedia has always been a core group of a few thousand graduate students plagiarizing their coursework and restating it as a free encyclopedia.

The result is that quality varies, and there’s a lot of pretense among the editors.

Who wins? Google does, because since Wikipedians summarize the contents of the top ten resources on any topic, Google can always spit out a Wikipedia page and be roughly correct.

Posted in: [Science](#).

The realities of genetic improvement

Feb 12th, 2009
by [Brett Stevens](#).

People like to think of objects as themselves having purpose and intent, irrelevant of context. Another view is that context itself defines the object.

When we look at genes, people seem to be looking for singular, simple mechanisms to suggest a single actor in every situation — the purpose or intent to objects discussed above. More likely, multiple mechanisms exist at any one time, and together a context, these provide a force of evolution.

Researchers led by Evan Eichler, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator at the University of Washington in Seattle, compared the genomes of macaques, orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and humans. The scientists found that chunks of the genomes had been copied and rearranged, sometimes multiple times, within each of the lineages.

After orangutans branched off the primate family tree, duplication rates accelerated dramatically in the common ancestor of gorillas, chimpanzees and humans. The burst continued in the common ancestor of humans and chimps, but then slowed again. At the same time that duplication rates were heating up, other types of mutation — such as single letters changes in the genetic sequence — slowed down.

All the duplication activity resulted in structural differences in the architecture of the genome among the species on a scale not previously appreciated. Because earlier studies had only looked at single genes or small parts of the genome, these larger-scale changes were not apparent.

"This paper suggests that the real variation leading to the human lineage is structural," says Mark Gerstein, a bioinformatician at Yale University. "I think it's plausible that copy number or structural variation can affect things even more than mutation – single base changes – can."

[Science News](#)

Brilliantly obvious.

Our previous DNA comparison was like looking at the computer code for a word processor and a video game and saying, "Hey, these are similar! They both use this 'printf' statement!"

Our new comparison is looking at the structures — like a for-next loop advancing by fours and escaping odd numbers — and the types of data the application handles. In this, we can see the word processor as a manipulator of text data, and video games, of rapidly-changing graphical content.

Similarly, we learned that lateral transfer occurs instead of purely linear transfer:

The idea of a tree came under scrutiny. A web of life that allows for lateral gene transfer was instead proposed.

Though staunch supporters of the tree of life dismissed this observation as some kind of an aberration, the result of a study published last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences showed that 80 per cent of bacteria and archaea showed lateral gene transfer.

Evolutionary biologists had the axe ready to cut down the tree of life further. They showed that lateral gene transfer was seen in eukaryotes as well. Eukaryotes — amoeba and algae — are themselves a product of fusion of bacteria and archaea.

[The Hindu](#)

And there are other taboos we shatter — or re-shatter:

The idea that a person's character can be glimpsed in their face dates back to the ancient Greeks. It was most famously popularised in the late 18th century by the Swiss poet Johann Lavater, whose ideas became a talking point in intellectual circles. In Darwin's day, they were more or less taken as given. It was only after the subject became associated with phrenology, which fell into disrepute in the late 19th century, that physiognomy was written off as pseudoscience.

Researchers around the world are re-evaluating what we see in a face, investigating whether it can give us a glimpse of someone's personality or even help to shape their destiny. What is emerging is a "new physiognomy" which is more subtle but no less fascinating than its old incarnation.

More recently, researchers have re-examined the link between appearance and personality, notably Anthony Little of the University of Stirling and David Perrett of the University of St Andrews, both in the UK. They pointed out that the Michigan studies were not tightly controlled for confounding factors: the participants could have been swayed by posture, movement, clothing and so on. But when Little and Perrett re-ran the experiment using mugshots rather than live subjects, they also found a link between facial appearance and personality – though only for extroversion and conscientiousness (Social Cognition, vol 24, p 607).

[New Scientist](#)

What they're going to realize is that grouped traits reflect structures.

We shouldn't be looking for single genes — but groups of genes, that like different printf and for-next statements, define the structures in the computer code of our genes.

Appearance will reflect genetics which will reflect abilities, and any trait will come grouped with others.

This will, of course, be highly controversial.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Exponential rise versus arithmetic refinement of fixed capacity

Feb 12th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

In 1972, the seminal book *Limits to Growth* by a group called the Club of Rome claimed that exponential growth would eventually lead to economic and environmental collapse.

The group used computer models that assessed the interaction of rising populations, pollution, industrial production, resource consumption and food production.

Most economists rubbished the book and its recommendations have been ignored by governments, although a growing band of experts today continues to argue that we need to reshape our economy to become more sustainable.

[New Scientist](#)

Exponential growth, but arithmetically rising capacity extracted from a resource of finite size, e.g. Earth, always means at some point demand will outpace supply. In the case of economies, that's the demand for value to correspond to our money, which can't be kept up with by the arithmetic rise.

Sounds like someone else –

“In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic inquiry, I happened to read for amusement Malthus on Population, and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long- continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The results of this would be the formation of a new species. Here, then I had at last got a theory by which to work”. – Charles Darwin, from his autobiography. (1876)

Malthus was a political economist who was concerned about, what he saw as, the decline of living conditions in nineteenth century England. He blamed this decline on three elements: The overproduction of young; the inability of resources to keep up with the rising human population; and the irresponsibility of the lower classes. To combat this, Malthus suggested the family size of the lower class ought to be regulated such that poor families do not produce more children than they can support.

[UCMP](#)

The basic statement of Malthus, summarized: population rises exponentially, resources rise arithmetically, causing a deficit that engenders internal chaos in the overgrown civilization.

The economic bubble we're hitting now is the Baby Boomer false wealth imploding, much as the last hitch was the Clinton-years internet “wealth” collapsing on its overvalued self. I'm not sure it's the crisis we speak of — like most things, it's most likely the worst will take years to manifest in many small instances.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Nature-nurture in Australia

Feb 12th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A YEAR after Parliament apologised for removing indigenous children to integrate them into white society, new research has shown what many suspected – the policy had the opposite effect.

Many members of the stolen generations have reconnected with their indigenous culture but it has not saved them from suffering higher rates of arrest, poor health, risky alcohol consumption or unemployment, Curtin University Business School has found

The statistics showed that culture and wellbeing were connected in most cases, leading to the conclusion that employment programs should not be pursued at the expense of culture.

[SMH](#)

Read those magic words: culture and wellbeing are connected in most cases.

People want to live among people like them.

This doesn't mean different cultures — branches of evolution both longitudinal and lateral — can exist healthily in the same society.

But it does mean that culture and ethnicity should go together.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [nationalism](#) · [race](#)

Global warming displaces air, sea and earth

Feb 12th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

North American birds are moving north and inland to escape climes that have heated up with global warming, according to a report released today that warns that some species risk being wiped out if climate change makes their natural habitats unlivable.

One-hundred-seventy-seven of the continent's 305 most common birds shifted their range farther north over the past four decades than in previous years, according to the Audobon Society's Christmas Bird Count. The annual survey is based on reports from 50,000 "citizen scientists" on birds they spot at more than 2,000 locations in the Americas over the last two weeks in December. It's been conducted for the past 109 years.

"It's sending us a very disturbing message," John Flicker, Audobon's president and CEO, said during a press teleconference today. "The impacts of global warming are being felt right now, here in North America, and have been taking a huge toll on ecological systems."

[Scientific American](#)

Dear John,

Please stop talking about nature as a conscious entity. This perpetuates the myth that it will somehow respond quickly to our equally quick damage.

Nature is a dumb process that ends up with brilliant results. It works this way in order to avoid entropy. Because all of its results occur from the interrelation of small processes, it's hard for it to wholly fail or reach a lock-up state.

But it's easy for it, when faced with quickly-destructive talking monkeys with car keys, to not adapt in time and for us to lose billions of years of ecological diversity and refinement.

Sincerely,
The unpopular thinkers

Climate-driven environmental changes could drastically affect the distribution of more than 1,000 species of commercial fish and shellfish around the world, scientists say.

A new study predicts that by 2050, large numbers of marine species will migrate from tropical seas toward cooler waters — specifically the Arctic and Southern Ocean — at an average rate of 40 to 45 kilometers (about 25 to 28 miles) per decade.

These migrations could lead to "numerous extinctions" of marine species outside the Arctic and Antarctic, especially in tropical waters, according to the study's projections.

[CNN](#)

Dear Humanity,

It seems like just yesterday you were a new species, freshly minted from some monkeys that got smart.

Today, I fear, you're still just a monkey that got smart — but not smart enough. It's as if you can see one factor at a time, but you lack topographic and prismatic logical abilities as you'll need to make the decisions before you.

There are some among you who can do this, but apparently they're unpopular, and that means they don't win at the monkey power games.

That's too bad, since I like the rest of the universe act predictably and without consciousness, just like a machine or chemical reaction. So I must do what I'm gonna do which is what I must do because it's how I'm built.

I guess you've gotta ask yourself: did you need to find a garden of Eden, or did you live in it until now?

Sincerely,
Earth

In a paper appearing this month in the journal *Forest Ecology and Management*, the study authors documented the northward march of 40 major tree species over 30 eastern states based on the distribution of seedlings versus mature trees.

Previous studies of plant migrations had been done using only computer simulations, or they focused on how some species are climbing up hills and mountains, said co-author Chris Oswalt, of the Forest Service's Southern Research Station in Knoxville, Tennessee.

By contrast, the new study looked at movement based on latitude, using a sampling of the forest service's most recent ground-based data.

The finding confirms a link between global warming and forest migration, said lead study author Chris Woodall, of the Forest Service's Northern Research Station in St. Paul, Minnesota.

[National Geographic](#)

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

George W. Bush conserves oceans

Feb 12th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The “conservation conservative” comes out:

Nine sites in the central Pacific will be set as sanctuaries for marine life and bases of research for scientists, President Bush said Tuesday.

The sites, designated in three regions of the central Pacific, will make up the largest expanse of ocean set aside for marine conservation in the world: 195,280 square miles.

For the designation, Bush used the 1906 Antiquities Act, which President Theodore Roosevelt first used to set aside public lands such as the Grand Canyon as national monuments. Many areas created under the act later became national parks.

[CNN](#)

Conservatives oppose many silly things like the Kyoto protocol that don't actually solve problems, but seem like good surrogates, at the expense of our defense or prosperity.

However, they can be induced to set aside huge swathes of land and sea for natural species, because conservatives don't understand saving bunnies — but they understand saving the forest “as a whole” so that bunnies can use it, which is the long-term solution to the endangered bunny problem.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Immigration means more pollution

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Tohono O'Odham officials estimate each undocumented immigrant leaves behind more than 8 pounds of litter. With nearly 1,500 crossing tribal lands every day, that amounts to 13,000 thousand pounds a day, and almost 5 million pounds a year.

Some sacred areas on the Tohono O'Odham Indian reservation larger than the size of a football field are littered with thousands of pounds of trash left behind by illegal border crossers.

[KOLD](#)

Even legal immigrants mean more people in a society producing waste, and their previous society has an escape valve so it breeds more people — who produce more waste.

Immigration is ecocide.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Psychology of the Crowd: a sticky interdependency

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Because of technology, we never have to be alone anymore. And that's the problem.

The late British pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott popularized the phrase "the capacity to be alone" in the 1950s, to describe a pivotal stage of emotional development. Winnicott argued that an adult's capacity to be alone had its roots in his experience as a baby, learning to function independently while still in the presence of his mother. Yet today we're seeing this capacity weakened, whether we're in public places known for contemplation, like churches and libraries, or whether we're just sitting by ourselves at home, losing the fight to resist answering our BlackBerries (just ask our new president) or checking our laptops for Facebook updates.

"We've gone from an American ethic that championed the lone guy on a horseback to an ethic of managing multiple data streams," says Dalton Conley, a sociology professor at New York University and author of the new book *Elsewhere, U.S.A.: How We Got From the Company Man, Family Dinners, and the Affluent Society to the Home Office, BlackBerry Moms, and Economic Anxiety*. "It's very hard for people to unplug and be alone — and be with the one data stream of their mind."

[Boston Times](#)

It started with cities: people are never alone in those.

Soon people felt lonely if there wasn't freeway noise around them.

But are they really connecting with these others? No: they're distracting themselves from emptiness.

Better to face the emptiness, see reality, and do something realistic, sensible and inspiring with it... instead of being depressed from denial of emptiness, and consequently, needing narcissistic "uplifting" treats and compensations to stave off the darkness.

Narcissism =
Liberalism =
Self-pity =
Cognitive dissonance =
Compensatory behaviors.

So it's not surprising that most liberals are neurotic and hover on the edge of criminality.

[Fark](#)

It's not liberalism, per se — it's the sticky dependency relationship of the [Crowd](#), which is the undifferentiated group formed by appealing to the lowest common denominator (fear of exclusion) in order to make a political bloc that keeps the individual feeling "in control" by separating them from external obligation.

Including obligation to pay attention to reality, or unpleasant truths.

Oddly, even the people who were submitting their own "25 Random Things About Me" lists seemed confused by their own participation. In addition to an inordinate number of posts about

bacon, nearly every list I encountered included a disclaimer. Amber writes, "I have been tagged multiple times and resisted doing this meme." My friend Pete asserts at the top of his list, "I never respond to these types of things" — which was my sentiment exactly, when I began to type up my snarky, one-item response to the trend.

That's when I noticed a new Facebook update on my wall. It was another list, submitted by a woman I'd worked with at a handful of different jobs. I'd known her for years, but somehow never really gotten to know much about her personally. I read her list, and "25 Things About Me" fatigue be damned, I was intrigued. Somehow moved. No. 18 even managed to break my heart. I immediately deleted my own cynical entry with a click of the mouse.

But even the most mundane entries tended to contain a few gems, minimalist narratives I could attach to the blur of faces I'd accumulated in this often paradoxically antisocial networking world we call Facebook.

That's the thing about "25 Random Things About Me": Once you stop being annoyed you realize that, at its best, it's one of the more compelling — and, yes, even oddly inspiring — wastes of time to hit the Web in years.

[Salon](#)

Liberals — Salon is the head cheerleader for the liberal hipster — love the idea of finding diamonds in the rough, or uplift among life's ordinary boring stupid stuff.

They do this because they are in the grips of a fundamental negativity that says the basic mechanism of life, conflict and the best rising, is unsociable and should be ignored. As a result, all they have to cheer them up is finding reasons why life isn't so bad after all.

I prefer to view life as good and wholesome, liberals as neurotic hipsters, and ignore things like "25 Things About Me" which are basically ego-fests for the disillusioned, underachieving, bitter and failed in life.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [self-deception](#)

The normal state is failure, so we must exceed it

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The normal state of the world is failure. The appearance of civilization, culture, intelligence, quality, and organization is a rare and fragile exception, usually noticed only when waning. Anything valuable is easily destroyed, and sure to be targeted by the jealous who do not possess it, but to assert protection even from innocent vandals requires a consuming defensive posture — a psychological casualty often worse than what it attempts to defend against.

If scavengers remove something of value, this is just the erasing of an exception. One sees this comedy in former colonies that inherited the gifts of previous organizers but lack people who can uphold them. A normal state of civilization returns despite the temporary aberration.

Successes are typically effortless applications of vision and will upon the blank slated world, but you can learn more from disasters than successes, especially great disasters where much value is lost. This is why breakups, financial collapses, and unnecessary deaths are so interesting, especially when they result from phantasmagoria, instability, or speculative gambits. After destruction appears, the cause no longer matters, but the type of wreck often gestures at a larger repeating idea of which the event was only a single instance.

[Jesus Christ](#)

Most people live in a dream.

They take for granted what they have, because they don't see the work required to build a civilization, or raise grain and make it into bread.

They don't realize that in life, most things fail, and only by acting realistically do we succeed — and that very few humans can do this.

As a result, they envision unrealistic solutions and make themselves feel better about how well-intentioned they are — without realizing they've joined the failure brigade.

We succeed by working against the grain, and fighting back dysfunction:

Researchers, working with police, identified 34 crime hot spots. In half of them, authorities set to work — clearing trash from the sidewalks, fixing street lights, and sending loiterers scurrying. Abandoned buildings were secured, businesses forced to meet code, and more arrests made for misdemeanors. Mental health services and homeless aid referrals expanded.

In the remaining hot spots, normal policing and services continued.

Then researchers from Harvard and Suffolk University sat back and watched, meticulously recording criminal incidents in each of the hot spots.

The results, just now circulating in law enforcement circles, are striking: A 20 percent plunge in calls to police from the parts of town that received extra attention. It is seen as strong scientific evidence that the long-debated "broken windows" theory really works — that disorderly conditions breed bad behavior, and that fixing them can help prevent crime.

[Boston Times](#)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [devolution](#) · [passive aggression](#)

Black racists claim blacks incompetent

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Seven black firefighters are suing the city, contending that the Houston Fire Department's test for officer promotions adversely affects blacks.

Firefighters trying to attain the rank of captain and above in the Houston Fire Department must take a 100-question multiple-choice test. Numerous studies show that blacks as a group do less well on high-stakes tests, Thompson said. He said fire departments should use cognitive tests only as a pass-fail benchmark and also should focus on performance exercises and other criteria.

Kevin Michael Foster, an education anthropologist at the University of Texas at Austin's College of Education, agreed that research has demonstrated a test score gap between blacks and whites. There are several theories about why, but a primary explanation has to do with minority students disproportionately receiving inferior educations compared to whites, he said.

"If you are African-American, there is a greater likelihood that throughout your academic career you have been taught by teachers of less experience, you have been taught in settings of low-performing schools," Foster said.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

Liberal duality on race is seen here:

- (a) Minorities are equal to us in abilities.
- (b) They need our help, so we should dumb things down for them.

Why are liberals fond of minorities?

- (c) It makes us feel good about ourselves to help people we consider dumber than us, and it makes us look better to a Crowd than others who aren't doing the same.

Why not encourage the black community to become more adept at the linear word, in print, and move away from oral tradition, a bit, instead of waving a crutch at everything they can't comprehend?

Because evolution is cruel.

Some whites, like the Irish or Russians, have average IQs around 96 per population.

Others, like the Northwestern Europeans who founded the USA rank at an average of 103-107 IQ points.

African-Americans have an average IQ of 89.

They can't. Society will always discriminate against them because intelligence is genetic, and they did not form the types of societies required in Northwestern Europe that encouraged evolution.

Neither did the Irish, who lived as independent subsistence farmers, nor the Eurasians, who had different types of social units.

Let's all be mature and look at the science behind our problems instead of resorting to the

Religion of Equality, which is just as much a fundamentalist religion as radical Christianity.

Here's some helpful links:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IQ_and_the_wealth_of_nations

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Jensen#IQ_and_academic_achievement

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blank_Slate

Even more, let's acknowledge history, which shows us that no "diverse" (translation: racially mixed) nation has ever prospered; they've just gone downhill.

This even applies to mixed white ethnicities. I don't think it's "racist" to look honestly at our heritage as groups and see our differences, any more than it's "classist" to notice that I don't look like Brad Pitt nor am as fast in the water as Michael Phelps.

Biology is destiny. If you're mature and rational, you accept this detail of science and do the best with it.

If you're delusional and have low self-esteem, you whine about diversity and classism and other issues which have nothing to do with reality.

Diversity destroys nations by forcing the highest to conform to a standard of those who are less optimized for that society, which produces a lowest common denominator effect. Those nations then collapse into third world status.

We don't want that, do we?

Then face the science and stop whining. It doesn't help blacks, whites or other groups (note that "black" and "white" are scientifically imprecise terms; it makes more sense to use ethnicity descriptions like Nordic, Bantu, Zulu, Finnish, etc.).

[Fark](#)

We should pay attention to the science:

Evolution splits us by race, ethnicity, class, caste, family and individual abilities — all of these splits, at once.

Equality is a myth. So is diversity. They are perpetuated by neurotic people who want to one-up others by claiming to be more altruistic, because they support minorities they secretly think are much dumber than themselves.

How condescending.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

We are our abilities

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Author Elizabeth Gilbert, famous for her bestseller *Eat, Pray, Love*, suggested Thursday that we kill geniuses by demanding super-human powers from them.

The problem, she says, lies in how we attribute the qualities of geniusness.

Instead of seeing the individual as a genius, we should view the brilliance as a gift from an unknowable outside source — some might call it a muse, others a fairy or god force — that visits us on occasion to participate in an act of creation, and then leaves to help someone else. Gilbert was referring primarily to those in the arts, but her talk applied to anyone who creates something sublime, whether it's a painting in the Sistine Chapel or a quantum equation.

[Wired](#)

We are our abilities. However, when we try to claim those abilities arise from us, we get neurotic. Better to see them as just abilities.

For this incognito performance, Bell had only one condition for participating. The event had been described to him as a test of whether, in an incongruous context, ordinary people would recognize genius. His condition: "I'm not comfortable if you call this genius." "Genius" is an overused word, he said: It can be applied to some of the composers whose work he plays, but not to him. His skills are largely interpretive, he said, and to imply otherwise would be unseemly and inaccurate.

[WAPO](#)

People throw the g-word around too much, but what they don't want to face is that very few are geniuses, while most of us are just highly trained monkeys working in the steps of masters. But that doesn't promote equality, justice, tolerance and the notion that we can be whatever we wish or describe ourselves to be.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [genius](#)

Diversity is oppressive dogmatism

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Over the last thirty years, liberalism, or shall we say neoliberalism, increasingly distinguished itself from the right primarily by its support for a kind of watered-down, nonthreatening multiculturalism, since it has succumbed to the right's economic convictions, except for marginal differences. So when we critique multiculturalism, we are addressing the distinguishing substance of American liberalism itself. Here we see holes in the wall so gaping that fascism can stride right through—as indeed it has. Even among those who consider themselves leftists and not liberals, many have accepted unquestioningly the vacuous affirmations of multiculturalism, without really asking if this commitment involves sacrificing the radical alternative to capitalism.

It can be argued that in the sixties there was need for historically oppressed groups to realize that there was nothing inherently inferior about them that relegated them to second-class status compared to the privileged white male. But thirty years later this valid assertion has become emptied of meaning, since it is not backed up and broadened by a range of ideas to give it content beyond the silly, self-referential declaration of identity. Today, it is the brainless cult of self-esteem which reigns supreme (even if it has to be accomplished via medication), at the cost of intellectual claims for recognition.

The therapy fad bears uncanny resemblance to the lexicon of popular elitism described by Umberto Eco as one of the characteristics of ur-fascism: everyone has something worth being proud of, even if it is only one's identity.

Pushed underground, unpopular ideas might assume a momentum of their own, unseen, unscrutinized, but deadly and shockingly relevant when they do make an appearance. The best remedy for reactionism is to let it be exposed to the light of day, and trust in the ordinary person's intelligence to make the distinction between truth and falsehood. This presumes that the media or the academy will be balanced enough to present both sides of the argument, rather than weigh the discussion toward the desired outcome. But leaving that aside, the fact that fascist ideology has so quickly caught on with so many in the last few years means that legitimate frustrations were being pushed underground. It simply was not possible to articulate certain things in certain ways, and that's always bad.

But even this level of acceptance is only superficial. Among the younger generation, multiculturalism is supposed to have made such deep inroads that racism is a thing of the past: young white Americans have no hang-ups interacting with blacks or Hispanics or Asians. Does this tolerance extend to diversity of views, or does it only hold as far as young Americans having no difficulty accepting the other as long as he looks and acts and talks and works like anybody else?

[LibCom](#)

Good to hear this from a liberal voice: diversity is monoculture that revenges itself upon any culture that hasn't been made into cosmopolitan monoculture already.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [multiculturalism](#)

Poisson distributions define reality, not our choices

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

There are many people of average height in the world, and a smaller number of very tall and very short people. The more extreme the height, the rarer the people with that height.

Everything from the frequencies of photons emitted by a laser to the velocity components of a gas molecule do the same thing. That same smooth bell curve happens all throughout the sciences. It's inescapable.

The answer is a mathematical fact called the central limit theorem. In slightly imprecise nonmathematical language it says the following: any time you have a quantity which is bumped around by a large number of random processes, you end up with a bell curve distribution for that quantity. And it really doesn't matter what those random processes are. They themselves don't have to follow the Gaussian distribution. So long as there's lots of them and they're small, the overall effect is Gaussian.

[Science Blogs](#)

Thomas Pynchon used the standard distribution as an insightful metaphor in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

We don't control our actions; we are actors expressing patterns much larger than ourselves.

Thus our pretense of being individuals, equal, etc. is just that — pretense and a denial of obvious scientific reality.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Where did all these pedophiles come from?

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

While authorities say tough laws are already in place to deal with child pornographers, rapidly evolving technologies and a lack of consensus among experts about why people abuse children makes it nearly impossible to “arrest our way out of this.”

Officials estimate there are at least 65,000 people in Canada — and up to 600,000 in the United States — trading pictures and videos of the sexual abuse of children.

Police estimate child pornography is a \$2- to \$3-billion industry, with over 20,000 new images posted on the Internet every week.

[Edmonton Sun](#)

We have 600,000 pedophiles?

For a country that loves its freedom to have sex, and to have sex in advertising, and considers itself “enlightened” for having many sexual partners and talking obsessively about sex, we seem to be gaining sexually frustrated people.

I wonder how that could be. Ponder, ponder.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [reproduction](#)

Having politically correct opinions is more important than being right

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The "Evolution Academic Freedom Act" (HF 183; "A bill for an act relating to the teaching of chemical and biological evolution in school districts and public postsecondary institutions and providing an effective date") has been sent to the House Education Committee and is startlingly familiar:

Students at all levels "shall be evaluated based upon their understanding of course materials through standard testing procedures. However, students shall not be penalized for subscribing to a particular position or view regarding biological or chemical evolution.

In other words, if the student holds the scientifically incorrect view and uses it as an answer., you as a teacher cannot penalize them.

[Science Blogs](#)

Idiots are spinning this as a rightist platform, but this is really a response to the politically correct binges of the 1990s — when claiming the answer was related to "oppression" was more important than any kind of logic. The right's just trying to keep up.

Eventually this means dogma will further replace reality, producing people who — like those in the Soviet Union or Revolutionary France — know the political answer but are incompetent at their jobs.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Intelligent outer space life may be common

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

To estimate a distribution of values instead, he created a computer model of the Milky Way's stars, generated planets around them, and assigned life to some planets in the habitable zones of their stars. Then he used equations that take into account the random nature of evolution to determine if that life went on to develop intelligence. By running the model again and again, he came up with a range of values, and put errors on the various estimates.

The first scenario assumes that it is difficult for life to be formed but easy for it to evolve, and suggests there are 361 intelligent civilisations in the galaxy.

A second scenario assumes that life is easily formed, but it struggles to develop intelligence, and suggests that as many as 31,513 other forms of life are estimated to exist.

Finally, he examined the possibility that microbial life could be passed from one planet to another during asteroid collisions, which gave a result of 37,964 intelligent civilisations in existence.

[New Scientist](#)

Nature never makes one of anything.

Other civilizations are out there, and while we can't see them, we're competing with them.

Those who get control of themselves first, make stable but upward bound societies, and so create the technology to explore the stars, win.

The others serve as their slaves, or their food, or simply extinguish themselves on overpopulated, warming, polluted, violent, ghetto-laced planets.

Like Earth, at this point.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [social darwinism](#)

As chaos spreads, government gets more powerful

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Suspects arrested in cases as minor as shoplifting would have to give a DNA sample before they are even charged with a crime if a controversial proposal is approved by the Legislature.

State criminal defense groups and the American Civil Liberties Union say the House bill is unconstitutional. It would mandate that police or jail staff collect DNA from all adults and juveniles arrested on suspicion of a felony or gross misdemeanor.

More than a dozen states already allow law enforcement to collect DNA from suspects before they are convicted. Three more states, including Washington, are considering such proposals this year.

[Seattle Times](#)

Anarchists and other dummies tell you that government exists to prey on you.

More realistically, it exists because of the decisions made by you and your fellow citizens.

Electronic surveillance and collection of personal data are "pervasive" in British society and threaten to undermine democracy, peers have warned.

The proliferation of CCTV cameras and the growth of the DNA database were two examples of threats to privacy, the Lords constitution committee said.

Those subject to unlawful surveillance should be compensated while the policy of DNA retention should be rethought.

[BBC](#)

When you demand society tolerate parasites, those parasites go and commit tons of crime, causing your fellow citizens to scream for enforcement.

That's what empowers government to control you.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Advertising controls your brain

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The Dismantlers, as a nationwide group of anti-ad crusaders call themselves, aren't violent or loud or clandestine. In fact, they invite the police to protest rallies where they deface signs. With a copywriter's flair, one of their slogans warns: "Attention! Avert your eyes from ads: You risk being very strongly manipulated."

"We challenge the mercantile society that destroys all human relationships, professional relationships, health, the environment," said Alexandre Baret, 35, a founder of the group. "It's a message that proposes to attack advertising as the fuel of this not very healthy society."

"I think that when you get down to it, they are right," said Marina, 33, a restaurant worker who stopped to see what the fuss was about in the Place Malesherbes. "Between TV, Internet and advertising billboards, we are told about consumption all the time."

[L.A. Times](#)

They've got a point. If we could just agree on values other than commerce, we could save ourselves participating in the giant open-air shopping mall of liberal democratic consumer societies — interestingly, all democracies become consumer societies because people given the choice will opt for consumerism. It's easier.

But in order to agree on values, we have to see truths that not all can see, and that breaks up the Crowd — the mob of undifferentiated people who are united by self-interest so they can be manipulated, and defend each individual against obligation outside of the self.

So instead our world is covered in advertising. Good thinking, monkeys.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Are we hardwired to need gods?

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Religion is part of human nature and our brains are hard wired to believe in God, scientists believe.

The evidence includes studies of babies and children which have shown the brain is programmed to think of the mind as being separate from the body.

As we grow older, we concentrate more on the moral dimensions of faith and less on its supernatural side, studies show.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Mind/body dualism causes us to think we are more than meat with brains.

We like to think about this other world, thoughts, where things are pure and we are immortal... where everything we do is deliberate... where death and horror do not exist.

That's massively illusory.

Only idiots think that eliminating religion cures us of this failing. In fact, the only thing that eliminates it is mental discipline — and that only in the ten percent or so with the brains to do it.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Politeness or competence, pick one

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Researchers said those born into privilege may feel less of a need to make a good impression and so are more inclined to fidget when talking to other people.

In contrast, their poorer counterparts are anxious to make a good impression and so are more attentive.

[The Daily Mail](#)

I don't care how someone tries to ingratiate themselves to me; I want them to be competent.

Incompetent people have no recourse except to try to make themselves popular by any means *other* than competence.

The result is a proliferation of polite incompetents.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

If results are bad, change the data about them

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Police in Houston, Texas put pressure on a Rice University professor to alter negative data compiled while studying Houston's red light camera program, according to documents released in a lawsuit against the city. Houston Mayor Bill White had selected Urban Politics Professor Robert Stein to create a report on the engineering safety performance of the first fifty automated ticketing machines installed (view study released in December). Stein represented an ideal choice because his wife, Marty, is employed by the city of Houston as a top aide to the mayor. In a November 2007 email, White emphasized his personal interest in the subject at the beginning of the project.

Realizing that an early copy of Stein's work would be critical in understanding the truth about Houston's red light camera program, a pair of attorneys made a request for a copy of the report's first draft. When the city rejected the request, Randall L. Kallinen and Paul Kubosh filed a lawsuit forcing disclosure of the correspondence between Stein and the city. After reviewing the documents, Kallinen gave Professor Stein partial credit for his work.

"While Stein at first seemed to have leaned toward the police he rejected most of their attempts to change his report," Kallinen told TheNewspaper. "He did however mislead the public through the report and to the press when he said accidents were increasing citywide when he knew for a fact they were decreasing citywide."

[The Newspaper](#)

"Sir, results we're what we expected."

"OK, redefine success to be failure and vice-versa."

"That makes no sense... why?"

"That way I can go on TV, claim we 'succeeded,' and we both get rich and famous."

"But that would be destructive to society at large..."

"You think these assholes care about you? Get your pile of cash and get out of the game, m'boy."

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Can't castrate the screwups

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The Czech Republic's practice of surgically castrating convicted sex offenders is "invasive, irreversible and mutilating" and should stop immediately, the Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee said in a report made public Thursday.

"Some patients claimed that the treating sexologist had explicitly told them that surgical castration was the only available option to them and that refusal would mean lifelong detention."

And it warned that some "significantly" mentally retarded people had been castrated.

"In at least five cases, legally incapacitated offenders were surgically castrated," the report said. "In all of these instances, the court-appointed guardian had signed the consent form; in two cases, the guardians were mayors."

[CNN](#)

Seems to me that if someone makes a big mistake in life, like being a sex offender, it's fair to demand they don't breed more little sex offenders.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Inclusiveness

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

"Inclusiveness", like "access" and "equity", is a way of talking about equality. Liberals believe as a matter of principle that the benefits of society should be equally available to all and that a basic task of government is to help make them so. As liberalism has developed so have the specific demands of that principle. Today it requires that persons of every race, ethnicity, religious background, sex, disability status and sexual orientation be able to participate equally in major social activities, with roughly equal receipt of status and rewards the test for equal ability to participate. This requirement of equal participation is referred to as "inclusiveness".

[ATH](#)

Actually, I think you've got it backward: equality exists so that inclusiveness, which motivates people who share no values or wisdom in common, can be used to motivate mobs to support ideas.

It's a control method, like giving out free beer. Everyone is welcome. Now you're against those who don't think everyone should be welcome, right... we all don't want to rock the boat.

How academic mafia.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

How slutty are people?

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A new nationwide survey, using high-tech methods to solicit candid answers on sexual activity and illegal drug use, finds that 29 percent of American men report having 15 or more female sexual partners in a lifetime, while only 9 percent of women report having sex with 15 or more men.

The median number of lifetime female sexual partners for men was seven; the median number of male partners for women was four.

This time, data was gathered from 6,237 adults, aged 20 to 59, in what are called computer-assisted self-interviews — a method designed to provide complete privacy and produce more honest answers.

[MSN](#)

For every person you see in the news who is behaving like an idiot, there's a Silent Majority who are living sensibly.

Some call this conservatism, because it involves following traditional values, but smart people know these traditional values are time-tested responses to the conditions of nature itself — conditions we cannot change.

While idiots and hipsters try to convince you that everyone is a blown-out slut, taking drugs and drinking like mad, or living like talking monkeys with car keys, remember: most people aren't doing that, and they're quietly succeeding while these idiots dig themselves deeper into misery.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [reproduction](#)

Social Darwinism in college admissions

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

White, well-off middle class families still exert a stranglehold over places at the top universities, despite the millions of pounds spent encouraging the poor and moderately well-off to apply, new research reveals.

Children from the richest 2% of all households, are more than four and a half times more likely to study at high-ranking universities such as Bristol and Warwick than children from average neighbourhoods. They are twice as likely as the average child in Britain to go to university at all, according to data exclusive to the Guardian.

Children from the most affluent quarter of families – characterised by researchers as owning two cars and a home with four bedrooms – account for 55% of students at prestigious universities.

[The Guardian](#)

There's a reason why their parents made it to the upper middle class.

There's a reason why people are impoverished.

It's not acceptable to say it in polite company, because it makes us all realize how non-autonomous we are.

But truth is the only thing that can save us from ourselves.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#) · [social darwinism](#)

Actions speak louder than words

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

About two in three Americans say they prefer to live around people belonging to different races, religions and income groups. In reality, however, survey research shows that people are increasingly clustering together among those who are just like themselves, especially on the one attribute that ties the others together — political affiliation.

Nearly half of all Americans live in “landslide counties” where Democrats or Republicans regularly win in a rout. In the 2008 election, 48 percent of the votes for president were cast in counties where President-elect Barack Obama or Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) won by more than 20 percentage points, according to the Pew Research Center.

The clustering of Democrats in Democratic areas and Republicans in Republican areas has been intensifying for at least three decades: In 1976, only about a quarter of all Americans lived in landslide counties. In 1992, a little more than a third of America was landslide country.

“Americans tell survey researchers they prefer to live in diverse communities, but this country’s residential patterns suggest otherwise,” said Paul Taylor, who directs the Pew Research Center’s Social and Demographic Trends Project.

[WAPO](#)

People want to live around people like them.

That way, you always know what behaviors will be rewarded, because you share values with others.

You also know you’re a target, because others have roughly the same abilities, so if they want what you have it’s easier for them to earn it just as you did.

They also like the idea of communities which organize themselves according to values, so children don’t get exposed to things their parents don’t want them to see.

Everyone is like this.

But our public fiction of wanting “diversity” — I’m speaking of the ideological kind here, first and foremost — makes us deny that when we speak out loud.

But in private, our actions speak louder than words. How many liberals live in truly mixed-race communities, or choose to live near Republicans?

I thought so: very, very, very few.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Television is a civil right

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A civil rights group says that unless Congress delays this month's scheduled death of traditional television broadcasts, millions of people — many of them poor, disabled or elderly — will see only static on their sets.

Those who will be cut off from free TV after February 17 — barring a delay — include “often communities of color, people who speak a language other than English, people with disabilities, low-income families and the elderly,” a Leadership Conference on Civil Rights statement said.

[CNN](#)

It's not just the USA:

A Brazilian judge awarded \$2,600 in damages to a man who sued a store for not replacing his faulty television set, ruling that it was an “essential good” needed to watch soccer and a popular reality TV show.

[Yahoo](#)

TV makes the herd easy to control. It both tells them what to think, and makes them feel smart and liberated for “enjoying” the TV and then “knowing” things that it told them to be true, so they can use these things to appear wittier than other monkeys.

Included for an example of how oblivious people are to any real issues.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

James Lovelock on biochar, overpopulation

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

One of the most important green-related interviews went unnoticed by most:

There is one way we could save ourselves and that is through the massive burial of charcoal. It would mean farmers turning all their agricultural waste – which contains carbon that the plants have spent the summer sequestering – into non-biodegradable charcoal, and burying it in the soil. Then you can start shifting really hefty quantities of carbon out of the system and pull the CO₂ down quite fast.

The biosphere pumps out 550 gigatonnes of carbon yearly; we put in only 30 gigatonnes. Ninety-nine per cent of the carbon that is fixed by plants is released back into the atmosphere within a year or so by consumers like bacteria, nematodes and worms. What we can do is cheat those consumers by getting farmers to burn their crop waste at very low oxygen levels to turn it into charcoal, which the farmer then ploughs into the field. A little CO₂ is released but the bulk of it gets converted to carbon. You get a few per cent of biofuel as a by-product of the combustion process, which the farmer can sell. This scheme would need no subsidy: the farmer would make a profit. This is the one thing we can do that will make a difference, but I bet they won't do it.

I think it's wrong to assume we'll survive 2 °C of warming: there are already too many people on Earth. At 4 °C we could not survive with even one-tenth of our current population. The reason is we would not find enough food, unless we synthesised it. Because of this, the cull during this century is going to be huge, up to 90 per cent. The number of people remaining at the end of the century will probably be a billion or less. It has happened before: between the ice ages there were bottlenecks when there were only 2000 people left. It's happening again.

I don't think humans react fast enough or are clever enough to handle what's coming up.

[New Scientist](#)

A 90% cull might leave us with an environment.

[Biochar](#), as a distributed solution, could stop climate change — but what about land overuse, pollution, and the simple insanity factor of too many people crammed into too small of a place?

Humanity needs to make these decisions, but we can't for a single reason: doing what's right is unpopular, and we're all so divided on values that we need to curry favor with the mob by offering it things it already likes.

And as always with a mob, no one is to blame!

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [biochar](#) · [overpopulation](#)

City noise is bad for your health

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

People living in residential areas with high levels of noise from road traffic appear to suffer more heart attacks than people living in quieter neighborhoods, according to a new study by researchers at the Swedish medical university Karolinska Institute in Stockholm.

Goran Pershagen, who led the study, said 1571 people from the Stockholm area who had suffered heart attacks between 1992 and 1994 were compared with a control group from the same area. The addresses of all the individuals were identified and the level of noise estimated.

Exposure to air pollution and other heart attack risk factors were also gathered using questionnaires and interviews, the researchers said. Once people with impaired hearing or exposure to other sources of noise had been eliminated from the study, the researchers found that there was a 40 percent higher risk of a heart attack in people exposed to traffic noise exceeding 50 decibels — a relatively quiet level of noise; heavy traffic is usually measured at between 80 and 90 decibels.

[LiveScience](#)

Our environment is chosen for convenience — all the workers and consumers there, crammed into a place, and convinced it's good for them because of social factors — not health.

All these things we ignore in our quest for well-valued dwellings come back to visit us, and we stumble on, drunk men in a bleary morning.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Environmentalists are afraid to mention the real problem

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

It's the great taboo of environmentalism: the size and growth of the human population.

It has a profound impact on all life on Earth, yet for decades it has been conspicuously absent from public debate.

Most natural scientists agree our growing numbers and our unchecked impact on the natural environment move us inexorably toward global calamities of unthinkable severity.

[BBC](#)

Malthus was right.

If x is the number of people, and r is the resources each requires, xr is our formula for our environmental impact.

Thus if r decreases, but x increases, not only are no gains made — but more resources could be needed. And when the others see everyone else breeding out of control, they're going to feel zero compulsion to limit themselves.

Our problem isn't first world people driving SUVs. It's global population exploding. A half-billion people is a good carrying capacity that lets us avoid ecocide; seven billion is reckless and our next stop is nine billion human beings.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [overpopulation](#)

The EU now becomes an oppressor

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The peoples of Europe have finally discovered what they signed up to. I do mean “peoples” (plural) because however much political elites may deceive themselves, the populations of the member states of the EU are culturally, historically and economically separate and distinct. And a significant proportion of them are getting very, very angry.

What the strikers at the Lindsey oil refinery (and their brother supporters in Nottinghamshire and Kent) have discovered is the real meaning of the fine print in those treaties, and the significance of those European court judgments whose interpretation they left to EU obsessives: it is now illegal – illegal – for the government of an EU country to put the needs and concerns of its own population first. It would, for example, be against European law to do what Frank Field has sensibly suggested and reintroduce a system of “work permits” for EU nationals who wished to apply for jobs here.

Meanwhile, demonstrators in Paris and the recalcitrant electorate in Germany are waking up to the consequences of what two generations of European ideologues have thrust upon them: the burden not just of their own economic problems but also the obligation to accept the consequences of their neighbours’ debts and failures. Each country is true to its own history in the way it expresses its rage: in France, they take to the streets and throw things at the police, in Germany they threaten the stability of the coalition government, and here, we revive the tradition of wildcat strikes.

[The Telegraph](#)

You guys just don't read history, do you?

The wailing of the people for more independence destroys culture and values. What's left? Commerce and the soulless pursuit of personal pleasures.

That in turn makes a selfish, criminal, divided society, which requires increasingly powerful leaders. Since there's no way to get lowest common denominator agreement on values, they turn to commerce instead.

By the will of the people — by their Revolutionary, Progressive spirit — the tyrants of consumerism and dogmatic centralization are formed.

Makes you want to rethink liberalism: it creates the problems it bemoans. Do any of us have time for such self-defeating, self-destructive behaviors?

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [civilization life cycle](#) · [democracy](#) · [egalitarianism](#)

Personality types determined by brain chemical

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

There was a great deal of data that people vary in terms of their expression of dopamine and norepinephrine, serotonin, estrogen and oxytocin and testosterone. I culled from the academic literature all of those data points that show that these particular brain-chemical systems are related to certain aspects of personality. And I saw constellations of temperament traits that seemed to be associated with these chemicals.

People who express dopamine — I call them Explorers — tend to be risk-taking, curious, creative, impulsive, optimistic and energetic. The traits associated with the serotonin system express themselves in what I call Builders. They're cautious but not fearful, calm, traditional, community-oriented, persistent and loyal. Directors have traits associated with activity in the testosterone system. These people tend to be very analytical, decisive, tough-minded; they like to debate and can be aggressive. The fourth type is the Negotiator. Men or women who express activity in the estrogen system tend to be broadminded imaginative, compassionate, intuitive, verbal, nurturing, altruistic and idealistic.

[Time](#)

Neat to see this in the mainstream press: affirmation of nature, not nurture. Like articles on how our political outlook is determined by our genes, this is further evidence of how our outlook on life — and thus our values, politics and the tasks we'd be good at — are determined before birth.

Posted in: [Science](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#)

Aristocrats are the soul of a nation

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

My belief as to why Sweden keeps the royals around is that Their Majesties provide a direct link to Sweden's past. If one were to take into account that when you listen to the King speak about the goodness of the Swedish people, you sense that your father, grandfather, great grandfather and so on also listened to that kind of reinforcement.

It's the idea that this King is related to your descendant's King that is the comfort. He is a Swede as you are, and that generates the pride in being Swedish. The King (or Queen) is the living touchstone to your nation's past.

As an American, with the disposable leaders we have, one gives deference to the Office of The President, not to the guy who warms the chair.

[The Local](#)

Group identity is destructive unless it works according to organic traits, or things we have naturally in common without having to be indoctrinated in them.

This is why one nation, one culture, one language, one set of values and one heritage is always a workable form of government, and our modern conception is so offended by it — we fear it because it's what will replace our cosmopolitan, consumerist, mass control societies.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#) · [race](#)

Anti-social behavior is inherited not mis-nurtured

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

The researchers studied 533 children who were genetically related to the mother that carried them and 195 who resulted from egg donations and thus were not genetically related to the mother.

“What we have been able to confirm is that cigarette smoke in pregnancy does lower birth weight regardless of whether the mother and child are genetically related or not,” Thapar said.

However, that was not the case with anti-social behavior in children, such as temper tantrums, fighting, bullying and disobedience.

They found that smoking during pregnancy was associated with higher levels of anti-social behavior in children who were genetically related to their mothers, but not in children of unrelated mothers.

“It is now clear that offspring anti-social behavior is more dependent on inherited factors passed from mother to child, as our group of children with mothers who smoked during pregnancy with no direct genetic link showed no increased signs of anti-social behavior,” Thapar said.

[AP](#)

The nature or nurture debate comes up again, and as all the credible evidence shows, nature wins out over nurture. But that was Charles Darwin's point, wasn't it — that traits we have existed because they were passed on by successful breeders, and that all traits succumb to this, and this is how evolution happens.

But that doesn't fit with our human pretense, where we like to assume we created ourselves and everything we do is intentional. We like that idea because otherwise, we have to admit how frail and un-independent we are, and that opens the door to thinking about mortality, possibilities of failure and deep inner misery.

Better to be truthful from the outset instead of wasting time in pretense, which just creates taboo territory from which we try to discipline our thoughts.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#)

Anti-Islamic politician barred from UK

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Freedom Party MP Geert Wilders was invited to show his controversial film – which links the Islamic holy book to terrorism – in the UK's House of Lords.

The Home Office said there was a blanket ban on Mr Wilders entering the UK under EU laws enabling member states to exclude someone whose presence could threaten public security.

"The government opposes extremism in all forms," it said in a statement, adding that it had tightened up rules on excluding those engaging in "unacceptable behaviour" in October.

[BBC](#)

Popularity trumps sanity again.

What's popular? Us all just getting along. Keeping the peace. Not rocking the boat.

But the truth will always offend someone, and if we don't speak it, we die.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [egalitarianism](#) · [race](#)

Letting parasites breed

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A big share of the financial burden of raising Nadya Suleman's 14 children could fall on the shoulders of California's taxpayers, compounding the public furor in a state already billions of dollars in the red.

Even before the 33-year-old single, unemployed mother gave birth to octuplets last month, she had been caring for her six other children with the help of \$490 a month in food stamps, plus Social Security disability payments for three of the youngsters.

"It's my opinion that a woman's right to reproduce should be limited to a number which the parents can pay for," Charles Murray wrote in a letter to the Los Angeles Daily News. "Why should my wife and I, as taxpayers, pay child support for 14 Suleman kids?"

[AP](#)

Indeed.

Why are we all obligated to support those who cannot support themselves, yet keep making bad decisions?

Answer: for that togetherness feeling that makes us easy to manipulate. If we view every human as important, we get the largest mob behind us.

Unfortunately, that also leads us to become a cancer on ourselves. Nadya Suleman clearly has mental problems and we are the ones who take up the slack.

Of course, we can change that.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [egalitarianism](#) · [eugenics](#) · [neurosis](#) · [self-deception](#)

Race in America

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Any time an issue gets politicized, the first thing that happens is that science is destroyed or ignored. If there's enough money involved, scientists — who are human beings like us without necessarily much better judgment — are bought and told what to say.

This applies to Big Pharma testing pills as much as it applies to Big Liberal enforcing racial equality dogma as part of its enforcement of equality dogma as part of its goal of achieving mass domination. (It's about power, not justice, peace, equality, freedom, liberty, etc. All things want power, especially if they claim they don't.)

Soooo... what is race? We did the obvious: consult **The Race FAQ**.

In response to questionable interpretations of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and to help ensure the evolutionary significance of populations deemed 'subspecies,' a set of criteria was outlined in the early 1990s by John C. Avise, R. Martin Ball, Jr.[10], Stephen J. O'Brien and Ernst Mayr [11] which is as follows: "members of a subspecies would share a unique, geographic locale, a set of phylogenetically concordant phenotypic characters, and a unique natural history relative to other subdivisions of the species. Although subspecies are not reproductively isolated, they will normally be allopatric and exhibit recognizable phylogenetic partitioning." Furthermore, "evidence for phylogenetic distinction must normally come from the concordant distributions of multiple, independent genetically based traits." [12] This is known as the phylogeographic subspecies definition, and a review of recent conservation literature will show that these principles have gained wide acceptance.

A number of studies have employed this subspecies definition, and these can be helpful in inferring how the definition is applied in practice. A good example is a paper entitled "Phylogeographic subspecies recognition in leopards (*Panthera pardus*): Molecular Genetic Variation," [13] co-authored by Stephen J. O'Brien (one of the definition's co-authors). From the ranges of the revised leopard subspecies (Fig. 1) we can infer that a 'unique geographic locale' does not require that a range be an island, or share no environmental characteristics with another. Rather, it merely requires a subspecies to have a geographical association as opposed to a subset of individuals sharing a trait but drawn from different geographical populations. Conversely, two subspecies will not remain distinct if they occupy the same locale over evolutionary time. Hypothetical human races have been proposed in which members would share a single trait (e.g., lactose tolerance or fingerprint pattern)[14] but not a common geographic locale. These 'races,' therefore, would not be valid under the phylogeographic definition.

Whether a population has had a unique natural history can be inferred from its degree of differentiation with respect to other such populations. The arbitrary division of an interbreeding, genetically unstructured group will result in subgroups that are genetically indistinguishable, whereas populations that evolve more or less independently for some length of time will accumulate genetic differences (divergent gene frequencies, private alleles, etc.) such that they "exhibit recognizable phylogenetic partitioning."

A set of "phylogenetically concordant phenotypic characters" is taken to mean several morphological, behavioral or other expressed traits that tend to co-vary within, but differ among, putative subspecies. This indicates that members of the group have evolved together relative to other groups, and may reflect shared demography, local adaptation, sexual selection or other evolutionary effects.

The need for "concordant distributions of multiple, independent genetically based traits" requires us to recognize that too much inference from a single trait or single genetic locus is unwarranted. For instance, rather than indicating recent co-ancestry, a trait shared by two populations might have evolved independently in response to some environmental variable, while the potential idiosyncrasies of any single gene can limit its reliability to paint an accurate phylogenetic picture. Most population genetics theory relies on loci that have evolved neutrally (i.e., in the absence of natural selection) so a non-neutral locus may give misleading results. The best way to avoid this potential source of error is to examine a large number of independently-evolving loci.

[The Race FAQ](#)

Don't let the media or the mob of people around you define what something is. Mobs take power by getting holier than thou, which is the essence of the liberal position on race in Amerika.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Anti-racism

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A dose of reality:

We all want to be with people like us.

That includes race, ethnicity, class and values.

Ric Romero should cover that obvious truth denied by 99% of humanity.

They deny it so they sound “more educated” and “more Progressive” — it’s a way of being holier-than-thou.

Globalism causes racism because it stops an honest desire to associate with people who share our culture, values, language and heritage.

I prefer realistic thinking.

[FARK](#)

I define racism as: the desire to make others serve in a certain role because of their race and ethnicity.

I define anti-racism as: the recognition that every person wants to be with people like them, and that it’s oppression to force us to “mix it up” so that some people can feel morally superior.

Nationalism creates no racism. Making nationalism seem taboo, and fearing it, forces those who see it as natural to act against other races.

Globalism is basically internationalism, or the replacement of each population with a generic, racially-mixed, culturally-deprived, religionless group of workers.

You’re against globalism? Then be against racism, and for nationalism instead.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [race](#)

Social studies taught in Spanish

Feb 11th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Being taught about famous people and events in Wisconsin history in Spanish is not how some Waunakee parents want their fourth-graders learning social studies at school.

"We as parents have been in such an uproar over this," said Keith Wilke about the district's elementary language program in which students learn Spanish by having the language integrated into social studies lessons for 30 minutes three days a week in first through fourth grades. "They're force-fed Spanish."

[WSJ](#)

Hint: if you create the rare thing that is not a failure, don't invite everyone else in to make it like their own failed states of origin.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [multiculturalism](#) · [race](#)

Teenagers in UK have lower intelligence than last generation

Feb 10th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Tests carried out in 1980 and again in 2008 show that the IQ score of an average 14-year-old dropped by more than two points over the period.

Among those in the upper half of the intelligence scale, a group that is typically dominated by children from middle class families, performance was even worse, with an average IQ score six points below what it was 28 years ago.

The trend marks an abrupt reversal of the so-called "Flynn effect" which has seen IQ scores rise year on year, among all age groups, in most industrialised countries throughout the past century.

Professor Flynn's study was conducted using a respected IQ test known as Raven's Progressive Matrices. Questions involve matching a series of patterns and sequences, so that even people with no education can take the test.

[The Telegraph](#)

Here we go into nature versus nurture land again. The nurture people are going to claim that television, video games, social instability etc are causing the drop; the nature people are going to claim that disorganized breeding and immigration from countries of lower intelligence averages has created the problem.

My suggestion: both, with an emphasis of 80% on nature and 20% on nurture. For one thing, [the British are breeding like mutts](#). For another, their culture seems to have dumbbed itself down and failed to reward the smart — which in itself means that idiots take positions of power, and idiots outbreed the rest.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [brokeback island](#) · [eugenics](#) · [nature-versus-nurture](#)

Tail wagging the dog

Feb 10th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

A special panel of federal judges tentatively ruled Monday that California must release tens of thousands of inmates to relieve overcrowding.

The three judges suggested a target prison population of between 100,800 and 121,000 inmates — down from the current level of about 158,000.

[SFG](#)

Problem: too many crimes, leading to too many prisoners.

“Solution”: in effect, redefine what is a crime, so that you can have fewer prisoners.

This is the tail wagging the dog: the means, prisons, have become the ends, where the ends normally should be things like “public safety.”

It's one way civilizations decline, this reversal of means and ends, which also brings reversal of cause and effect.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cause-effect reversal](#) · [cognitive dissonance](#) · [tail wagging dog](#)

Maturity about sex — and reproduction — is essential

Feb 10th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Our species has not recovered from what I call sexual rationalism, or the idea that we can separate sex from reproduction and reproduction from its traditional context in family, social role and the gentle kind of eugenics all societies practice when they encourage their productive members to spout out the kids and say nothing to the dropouts.

Sex is important — but we need to be mature about it. I don't consider blatant promiscuity, sexually aggressive advertising, and encouragement of sexual weirdness to be mature. If anything, it's immature, because it puts heavy focus on sex without realizing the role it plays, like kids *tee hee* stealing candy and getting away with it.

Similarly, it's immature to deny sex and to make it evil and taboo, which simply drives all knowledge underground and makes the situation even more of a mindfield. Unfortunately, we're caught between these extremes — sluts and deniers — and need to use science and our wits to find a truth of the situation.

We need to grow up about sex and stop [using it as a measure of self-worth](#). After all, the people [having the most sex](#) aren't doing it because they're desirable, but on the contrary... because they're not and they need to sweeten the deal a little bit. Supply and demand: if you're not in demand, you're going to have to lower your prices, and for most humans, that means free. Oh, it's crass to compare mating to commerce? Well — go ahead, buy that dinner, movie, drinks and cigars, then go back to her place for a roll in the hay. You didn't pay for sex, I'm sure.

Sex determines the health of your nation. While [some rise because they're conservative](#), others [fall through promiscuity](#); evidence repeatedly shows that [sexual selectivity is a sign of being healthier](#) and conversely, that [bad health kills off breeding potential](#) but in contrast [intelligent men have healthier sperm](#). So in short, the sanity of our sexual behavior determines the sanity of our reproduction, which determines the health of our nations. Nations aren't buildings, paperwork, armies or money — they're groups of people.

When a nation goes downhill, sexuality becomes like everything else commerce — when you cannot agree on anything, you can probably agree on two things: (a) leave me alone and I'll leave you alone and (b) we need commerce to continue so we survive. As sexuality decays, reproduction declines, and we can see [whole races can exterminate themselves through ire at bad breeding practices](#) but [if only smart people had sex, people would get radically smarter](#). We can go up or down, thanks to our sexual selection.

In the West, we're in the midst of an ongoing 2,000 year old popular revolt, by which the people who have nothing special to their name are trying to wrest control from those who do, reversing natural selection and imposing equality, a state which these newcomers view as Progressive and an improvement on nature. All revolutions, whether French or Russian, are the same in this regard: the masses want control from the biological elites, but then the masses produce their own elites, and in having deposed the biological elites and supplanted them with dogmatic elites, they are dismayed to find their average IQ plummets as does their productivity. Check out where France and Russia stand relative to their neighbors on this chart of [the IQs of different nations](#).

As part of our Western revolt, we're throwing aside traditional values and emarking on quests like [feminism, which in the name of liberation, booted women from the one role in which they were supreme](#). The result is that we decrease the dynamic difference between sexual roles, so women get more manlike and men get more emo, which makes sense given that [those with misplaced sexual identity are more promiscuous](#). At the same time, those who are centered around religion and tradition find that [having an idealistic goal helps](#) one keep sex in a context where it's non-destructive: as an expression of love and family that is sacred.

For today's comedy, we'll show you how breeding goes terribly wrong and destroys nations, featuring yet again Third World Britain:

Ralph Surman said the parents of today's pupils were themselves the children of the 'first big generation of single mothers' from the 1980s.

He claimed they – and in turn their children – have been left with no social skills or work ethic and may be impossible to educate.

'It is very difficult, almost impossible, to take these people now and provide basic social and work ethic skills.

'The offspring of the first big generation of single mothers were children in the 1980s.

'Now they are adults with their own children and the problems are leading to higher crime rates and low participation in the labour force.'

[The Daily Mail](#)

This knowledge goes against every hypocrisy we have in the modern time, namely that each person can be whatever they want to be and tradition — which included love, family, and breeding designed to eugenically produce better people in each generation — needs to be thrown out the window. Yet again, we see the masses are too hasty, and they're producing vast seas of displaced and purposeless people where a coherent nation once stood.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [cognitive dissonance](#) · [eugenics](#) · [feminism](#) · [liberalism](#) · [passive aggression](#)

We are slaves to guilt when it comes to the homeless

Feb 10th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

Someone finally spit out some truth:

If you think chronic homelessness isn't a dire problem in Santa Barbara, think again. Not only are the chronically homeless – most of whom are mentally ill and drug-addicted – an eyesore, they are a hazard to the public health.

And they are proliferating. No longer just a downtown problem, the chronically homeless can now be found uptown, on the Mesa, and on the Riviera. They sleep in our parks and neighborhoods and line our city streets. You cannot go anywhere in Santa Barbara without having to dodge one or more.

As a taxpaying resident, I would like to be able to stroll Santa Barbara's beautiful streets, enjoy her stunning parks, rest on public benches, visit the public library, and use public facilities without having to fear a homeless encounter.

[The Daily Sound](#)

Crowd™ reality: these people are victims, we have an obligation to anyone who is suffering, and this rich bitch just doesn't want to be inconvenienced, so let's just print up some more money and spend it on the homeless.

Natural selection reality: as she mentions, the homeless are generally insane and as a result not only have diseases but smear their fluids everywhere. We should spend our money on people and places that are heading toward health instead, and let nature cull the ones that came misshapen from the mould instead.

Homeless people work by guilt and passive aggression. They seem to enjoy being underfoot, as that way, people feel a sense of guilt and hand them things — cash, alcohol, etc. But if we work hard to provide stable communities for our families, it's not insane to say we want the insane and dangerous and feces-covered to go away and stay away.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [passive aggression](#)

In praise of Death

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

Time and again this happens, and it can happen without changing a single person's mind. To put it bluntly, people die. Indeed, death is arguably the single most important driver for all human progress. Even in a community as reason-based as science, it's often necessary to wait for one generation of scientists to die off before a new theory gains mainstream acceptance.

[Ars Technica](#)

We like to think we are in control, the decision-makers.

Really, we are adrift on the waves of time, and often it is our drowning that lets someone else come in and serve their role.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Another abused teacher

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

Just like [Richard Mullens](#), we have another genius who objects to attempts to stop him from preaching chaos into the minds of youth — and someone who wouldn't hesitate to execute the rest of us for preaching "dangerous ideas" that conflict with his own:

According to the Globe and Mail, Rancourt's sin was to have informed his students on the first day of class that "he had already decided their marks : Everybody was getting an A+."

Grading, he says, "is a tool of coercion in order to make obedient people" (rabble.ca., Jan. 12, 2009).

Rancourt first practiced squatting when he decided that he "had to do something more than give a 'better' physics course." Accordingly, he took the Physics and Environment course that had been assigned to him and transformed it into a course on political activism, not a course about political activism, but a course in which political activism is urged — "an activism course about confronting authority and hierarchical structures directly or through defiant or non-subordinate assertion in order to democratize power in the workplace, at school, and in society."

[NYT](#)

He claims he was fired because of discrimination, because he's an anarchist.

He's an anarchist WHO ALSO did not fulfill his contract.

Yes, we may not like the system, but we all know what happens when we don't do the job.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [anarchy](#) · [logical-AND](#)

Europe's far-right rotation

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Raul Singh](#).

I passed through Stoke-on-Trent, where the BNP has won 29 council seats out of sixty, and the Labour Party is down to sixteen. A senior member of the party in the Potteries told me the party mechanisms have "collapsed"; "If you want your drains fixed you go to the BNP," they said.

[BBC](#)

As our society gets further from reality, the elites find new ways to appease us with symbols of their goodwill: aid to Africa, equality for all, tolerance for gays, protests against Israel and for Palestine, and so on. But even the average person — disinterested in politics, unacquainted with logical analysis or argument, only dimly aware of only recent history, focused on their local area specifically the dinner table — is noticing the decay, and becoming ready for more radical solutions.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#) · [tradition](#)

Rules for being a soulless modern person

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Rules for Being a Modern Person

1. Something else is always to blame. Good targets: gods, systems of government, other demographics that oppress you.
2. It's all about you.
3. You must have something to contribute on every topic, and it must be ironic, unusual or a unique combination or you're not really that interesting.
4. Anything that requires actual commitment is bad and people who do it are tools.
5. The best state of the world is you in command of your kingdom, errr apartment or house, entertaining yourself with no obligations.
6. If something might challenge you, and you might end up looking stupid if you fail at it, make fun of it.
7. If something brings pleasure, that is a brilliant argument for it regardless of the consequences.
8. Anything that requires more than two steps should be either ignored, or you can hire Mexicans to do it.
9. If things don't go your way, throw a tantrum.
10. If everyone does the above, everything will become chaotic and moribund, and then you'll have zero accountability. Be an anarchist, support chaos, etc.

[Some Dumb Board](#)

If we're all dramatic, none of us will have to face reality. Let's make that deal, because none of us is the devil. Maybe all of us is.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [crowdism](#) · [individualism](#) · [neurosis](#) · [self-deception](#)

Vote for a symbol, find reality more complex

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

President-elect Barack Obama, who vowed during his campaign that lobbyists “won’t find a job in my White House,” said through a spokesman yesterday that he would allow lobbyists on his transition team as long as they work on issues unrelated to their earlier jobs.

Obama’s transition chief laid out ethics rules – which also bar transition staff from lobbying the administration for one year if they become lobbyists later – and portrayed them as the strictest ever for a transfer of presidential power.

But independent analysts said yesterday that the move is less than the wholesale removal of lobbyists that he suggested during the campaign – and shows how difficult it will be to lessen the pervasive influence of more than 40,000 registered lobbyists.

[Boston.com](#)

“Hope” and “Change” are advertising, not reality.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#) · [crowdism](#) · [neurosis](#) · [self-deception](#)

In key states, Latino vote fueled Obama's victory

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Latinos are hailed as a key voting bloc, even though they show their power at the polls only sporadically. When they turned out in record numbers to vote for Democrat Barack Obama, they not only erased recent gains by Republicans but shattered the myth of a black-Latino divide.

Amid worries about home foreclosures and economic recession and driven by an unprecedented get-out-the-vote effort and the acidic debate over illegal immigration, Latinos helped Democrats flip the battleground states of Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Florida.

"Without the Latino vote, we would not have won those states," said Federico Pena, Denver's first Hispanic mayor and a national co-chairman of the Obama campaign.

[Yahoo](#)

No surprises here.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#)

Universal Civil Service: is it that bad?

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, President-Elect Barack Obama's choice for chief of staff in his incoming administration, is co-author of a book, *The Plan: Big Ideas for America*, that calls for, among other things, compulsory service for all Americans ages 18 to 25.

Emanuel and co-author Bruce Reed insist "this is not a draft," but go on to write of young men and women, "the nation will enlist them for three months of civilian service." They also warn, "[s]ome Republicans will squeal about individual freedom," ruling out any likelihood that they would let people opt out of universal citizen service.

[Civil Rights Examiner](#)

Elect an unrealistic ideologue, and get the requirements of dogma: pay obeisance with your time.

However, it's not a terrible idea, in general, to force young people into civil and military service. It will wake many of them up to parts of reality and turn them conservative.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [barack obama](#)

More denial of reality chronicles

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

"It's like pulling teeth in this market," said Twyla Rist of Reece & Nichols Realtors in Kansas City, where prices are off between 7 percent and 15 percent. "Even with everything being said, you still have people that think my house is better than everybody else's."

A recent Coldwell Banker report showed that more than three-quarters of its real estate agents surveyed said most sellers have unrealistic initial listing prices for their homes.

Likewise, an unscientific study released last week by real-estate Web site Zillow.com found that half of homeowners polled think their home's price has increased or stayed the same in the past year.

{ snip }

In fact, the median sales price of an existing home dropped 9 percent to \$191,600 in September from a year ago, according to the National Association of Realtors.

[MSNBC](#)

More relative fallacy: a sale is relative to purchaser and seller.

A home is only worth what a purchaser will pay for it, and a seller will let it go for — and we're talking about specific, real, people.

The real estate assessment is also "unreal," but because it summarizes statistical data, is more real than what many people will think if left up to their own preferences.

This denial of reality, even among the affluent, is yet another of the infinite reasons why Democracy is a stupid idea.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [illusion](#) · [neurosis](#) · [self-deception](#)

Biochar: end global warming tomorrow

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

As James Lovelock noted, if we want to end the excess of carbon in our atmosphere, we have an easy way in biochar. Partially burn vegetation (and/or people) in a low-oxygen environment and you produce slow-decaying organic junk that you can bury and thus trap carbon.

Biochar is a fine-grained charcoal high in organic carbon and largely resistant to decomposition. It is produced from pyrolysis of plant and waste feedstocks. As a soil amendment, biochar creates a recalcitrant soil carbon pool that is carbon-negative, serving as a net withdrawal of atmospheric carbon dioxide stored in highly recalcitrant soil carbon stocks. The enhanced nutrient retention capacity of biochar-amended soil not only reduces the total fertilizer requirements but also the climate and environmental impact of croplands. Char-amended soils have shown 50 – 80 percent reductions in nitrous oxide emissions and reduced runoff of phosphorus into surface waters and leaching of nitrogen into groundwater. As a soil amendment, biochar significantly increases the efficiency of and reduces the need for traditional chemical fertilizers, while greatly enhancing crop yields. Renewable oils and gases co-produced in the pyrolysis process can be used as fuel or fuel feedstocks. Biochar thus offers promise for its soil productivity and climate benefits.

As a soil amendment, char can sequester or store the carbon in the soil for hundreds and even thousands of years in the stable char matrix. Equally important, the char improves soil fertility, thereby stimulating plant growth, which then consumes more CO₂ from the atmosphere. The bio-energy produced as part of the process can be turned into electricity, process heat, ethanol, methanol, or soon, an ultra-clean liquid diesel fuel. The net amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere from both these products is thus reduced, making the bio-char process carbon negative and also regenerating soil fertility in the process.

[IBI](#)

We love the char. It's a constructive, decentralized solution we could implement tomorrow.

Healthy soil is full of life, with entire communities living just below our feet. Healthy soil can retain and purify water, provide an abundance of food, and even act as way to sequester carbon dioxide. One key to getting there is amending soil with biochar. Biochar is what you get when biomass is heated in the absence of oxygen through a process called pyrolysis. When incorporated into soil, biochar provides the structural habitat needed for a rich community of micro-organisms to take hold. Incorporating biochar into soil can also act as a way to sequester carbon.

Carbon dioxide sequestration was not likely the original goal of biochar, or terra preta, developed thousands of years ago by the Native Americans in the Amazon region. But today, as we recognize the cost of emitting green house gases, we also recognize the wisdom of using biochar as micro-habitat to improve our soils. Biochar is a classic win-win scenario, a solution that can provide us with a valuable tool for fighting climate change, world hunger, poverty, and energy shortages all at the same time.

[TreeMugger](#)

But of course — as with all human things — we have political problems motivating each other, so we won't do it.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Tagged: [blochar](#) · [char](#)

Saved from the constructive terrorists

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

THEY are mysterious gardening bandits fixing some of Sydney's worst eyesores.

Using fake IDs, refusing to comply with development application processes and wearing clever disguises – including posing as Leichhardt Council workers complete with T-shirts sporting the council's logo – the six-person gardening gang was shut down during its 18th "hit" yesterday.

[Daily Telegraph](#)

Onoes! Some people found a creative outlet that made life better... but it doesn't fit within our rationalistic rules, because we need a single method to handle all things. So let's throw them in jail where they'll get anally raped in a race war.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [rationalism](#)

More on Celtic mummies in China

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Solid as a warrior of the Caledonii tribe, the man's hair is reddish brown flecked with grey, framing high cheekbones, a long nose, full lips and a ginger beard. When he lived three thousand years ago, he stood six feet tall, and was buried wearing a red twill tunic and tartan leggings. He looks like a Bronze Age European. In fact, he's every inch a Celt. Even his DNA says so.

But this is no early Celt from central Scotland. This is the mummified corpse of Cherchen Man, unearthed from the scorched sands of the Taklamakan Desert in the far-flung region of Xinjiang in western China, and now housed in a new museum in the provincial capital of Urumqi. In the language spoken by the local Uighur people in Xinjiang, "Taklamakan" means: "You come in and never come out."

The extraordinary thing is that Cherchen Man was found – with the mummies of three women and a baby – in a burial site thousands of miles to the east of where the Celts established their biggest settlements in France and the British Isles.

DNA testing confirms that he and hundreds of other mummies found in Xinjiang's Tarim Basin are of European origin.

[The Independent](#)

Neat to see how ancient peoples are always far more advanced than we thought they were.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [DNA](#) · [race](#) · [tocharian](#)

Between legal and illegal

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Researchers say they have located the world's oldest stash of marijuana, in a tomb in a remote part of China.

The cache of cannabis is about 2,700 years old and was clearly "cultivated for psychoactive purposes," rather than as fibre for clothing or as food, says a research paper in the Journal of Experimental Botany.

The 789 grams of dried cannabis was buried alongside a light-haired, blue-eyed Caucasian man, likely a shaman of the Gushi culture, near Turpan in northwestern China.

[The Star](#)

1.

I liked it better when cultural norms, not financial incentives or institutions, determined what was legal. Dope should probably be between legal and illegal; legal for those who need it, like shamans, and considered stupid for others to pursue.

The law shouldn't be enforcing this. Communities should, and exiling those who are just drug addicts while leaving those with legitimate uses alone.

2.

A blue-eyed Caucasian in China? 2700 years ago? WTF?

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).
Tagged: [marijuana](#) · [tocharian](#)

Economic non-advice is still sensible

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

From the bloviation files:

It's no accident that China and Japan, for example, have been both producer-driven economies and nations of savers. We have to slowly shift back to being a producer-driven economy. It will be difficult and painful, but we have to spend less and produce more goods and services that other economies around the world want to buy.

[Business Week](#)

He's not saying end the consumer economy.

He's saying export so that consumers elsewhere become our buyers.

While this is short-term sense, the long-term problem is that the consumer economy worldwide is destructive.

What we need instead is a cooperative economy that's self-sustaining and not growth-based, as his suggestion above is.

Unfortunately, that means we cannot support useless people; cooperation requires that most people be productive (a small allowance for the elderly, the injured, a few retarded kids here and there).

And that's politically unacceptable. Maybe in addition to consumerism, we need to throw out politics — the idea that what most people want is the best goal.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

"Everyone" can be wrong — and they usually are

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Everyone thought Reagan was going to be a horrible president. Everyone thought his military build up would lead to war. Everyone was wrong.

Everyone thinks Obama is going to be wonderful. I think everyone is wrong. I think we are doomed.

[Politics Forum](#)

Most people are always wrong. They react emotionally and impulsively.

They follow trends, not think through the issues — and the interaction between proposed plans and reality as we know it.

As a result, there's a small minority who have a clue and everyone else runs a dog and pony show while, behind the scenes, oligarchs steal everything they have.

Obama is an emotionally satisfying candidate. He runs on the idea of the people having more power — who doesn't like the sound of that? Of Spreading the Wealth — what's there not to like, on the surface? Of racial reconciliation, of being a nice guy, of being a righter of historical wrongs. All these things look good, sound good, etc. until you analyze their impact on reality.

Probably 5% of voters at most have that ability, and they aren't voting Democratic.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Some sanity on the election

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Some 95 per cent of black voters backed the black guy against McCain, the white Republican. In the Democratic primaries it had been much the same, with as many as 90 per cent backing Obama against Hillary Clinton, the white Democrat. (If you're looking for a racist vote, start here.)

Two-thirds of Latino and Asian voters chose Obama, too, but most whites stuck with McCain, 56 per cent giving the white guy their vote.

In fact, you could even blame that reluctance of whites to back Obama for making his win rather modest.

Consider: Obama had twice the cash of McCain, most of the celebrity endorsements, and coverage from the media that was rarely short of fawning.

[Herald Sun](#)

This election was about revenge.

All those who did not feel part of the majority — in ethnicity, in values/morality, in ability and in economic success — banded together to take their retribution.

This happens in every society. Civilization preserves all people with no natural selection, and so incompetence spreads and so does doubt. The result is a [a spreading wave of social reality](#), which justifies itself by claiming "liberal" and "Progressive" social objectives, but is actually motivated by a desire to protect its members from the consequences of reality.

And so the civilization destroys itself, as has happened many times before.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).
Tagged: [barack obama](#)

Pure Democracy is a lynch mob

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Want to know what "pure democracy is?" A lynch mob.

[Examiner](#)

Impure democracy is the same thing with lots of stuffy rules to make it impotent and paranoid.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Illegal alien criminals dumped back on street

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Federal immigration officials allowed scores of violent criminals — some ordered deported decades ago — to walk away from Harris County Jail despite the inmates' admission to local authorities that they were in the country illegally, a Houston Chronicle investigation found.

Although most of the inmates released from custody were accused of minor crimes, hundreds of convicted felons — including child molesters, rapists and drug dealers — also managed to avoid deportation after serving time in Harris County's jails, according to the Chronicle review, which was based on documents filed over a period of eight months starting in June 2007, the earliest immigration records available.

[Houston Chronicle](#)

So much for the idea that government is institutionally racist.

It would seem common sense to me that if you have a repeat criminal, you do everything you can to keep him or her away from society at large — and if deportation becomes a weapon in your arsenal, use it!

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

NATO not renewing contact with Russia

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

NATO is unlikely to follow the European Union in quickly re-establishing contacts with Russia that were suspended after the war in Georgia, senior U.S. officials said Friday.

{ snip }

But U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried told reporters in Brussels that "it is difficult for us to go back to business as usual."

{ snip }

NATO members must make decisions unanimously, so without U.S. support the proposal would be rejected.

[AP](#)

No surprise. NATO — or rather, the USA's analysts — now recognize that Russia will not be happy until it dominates Europe.

1917, revisited — the situation has not changed at all.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Schopenhauer on music as neural programming

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

"Music is thus by no means like the other arts, the copy of the Ideas, but the *copy of the will itself*, whose objectivity these Ideas are. This is why the effect of music is much more powerful and penetrating than that of the other arts, for they speak only of shadows, but it speaks of the thing itself."

Music does not express this or that particular and definite joy, this or that sorrow, or pain, or horror, or delight, or merriment, or peace of mind; but joy, sorrow, pain, horror, delight, merriment, peace of mind *themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without accessories, and therefore without their motives. Yet we completely understand them in this extracted quintessence. Hence it arises that our imagination is so easily excited by music, and now seeks to give form to that invisible yet actively moved spirit world which speaks to us directly, and to clothe it with flesh and blood, i. e. to embody it in an analogous example. This is the origin of the song with words, and finally of the opera, the text of which should therefore never forsake that subordinate position in order to make itself the chief thing and the music the mere means of expressing it, which is a great misconception and a piece of utter perversity; for music always expresses only the quintessence of life and its events, and never these themselves, and therefore their differences do not always affect it. It is precisely this universality, which belongs exclusively to it, together with the greatest determinateness, that gives music the high worth which it has as the panacea for all our woes. Thus if music is too closely united to words, and tries to form itself according to the events, it is striving to speak a language which is not its own."

[Wagner library](#)

Art programs our minds; art without words reflects our spirit. Although the complex derivation of Schopenhauerian "Will" is too much for this blog post, or probably any blog post, it's worth saying that our personality and fundamental outlook on life reflects our will more than what we express in nominal language.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Anti-natural-selection bias

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

From the “We’ll pretend we’re not biased so we can accuse you of being biased” department:

To be clear, by racism I mean – the belief that one race is more superior to another. This dangerous meme, unlike suicide for instance, does not directly lead to the annihilation of the host. Its destruction extends far beyond those who have been hijacked by the meme.

You may believe that some breeds of racism memes are harmless or benign if anything. I would argue that racism allows us to be comfortable ignoring an inconvenient **moral obligation we all have – to help another suffering human being**. Of course, some people’s suffering may be self-induced or even desired, but otherwise we have the moral duty of helping those whose suffering can be reasonably stopped.

Racist thoughts pardon us from feelings of sympathy for a race we believe to be less superior to our own. These thoughts may not completely destroy our sympathy for others, but it may eliminate enough sympathy to deter us from taking a moral initiative. In a sense, the racism memes can cause more damage than any terrorist meme. Many harmful memes like terrorism and genocide depend on racism in order to survive.

[PHP](#)

Let’s make it clear what this person wants us to do: they want to control our minds and keep us away from memes they consider dangerous. They also want to keep us away from science.

They would like us to believe we have a “moral obligation” to help *any* suffering human being, regardless of whether that person is suffering *and* incompetent.

Natural selection says instead: praise the good, ignore the rest. Nature sorts us out and removes those who cannot adapt. (At this point, I’m not speaking in a racial context, but a general one — race is the metaphor through which this person speaks, and is not the topic of my post).

When we instead feel an obligation to all people, we’re subsidizing the insane, incompetent, perverse, etc. along with the good. Why not make our species stronger, and simply support the good?

Here’s why: because it’s bad marketing, and marketing is basically socialization. If you want to be popular, include everyone. The truth is always unpopular, but it also saves us from destroying ourselves — yet that’s not socially, politically or dogmatically correct.

At least, until the cheap oil runs out.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Teacher fired for controversy, claims it was for liberalism

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

Idiots like this behave in a way that suggests they're fundamentally neurotic and unrealistic:

Richard Mullens, a teacher for more than 30 years, resigned his position as history teacher after being placed on paid administrative leave by the Brookeland Independent School District.

The conflict appears to stem from a Jan. 7 incident in one of his classes.

He said that a pregnant student had gotten into a discussion with her former boyfriend about "whether he believed in love or not."

Another student, who was not involved in the conversation, got up and left the class, saying she was uncomfortable with the conversation.

That student's mother later came to the school, spoke to the principal about the situation and verbally threatened Mullens.

[BME](#)

This is fairly typical: get caught doing something problematic, refuse to take care of the situation maturely, and then blame others when you fail. Passive aggression and cognitive dissonance are paired traits, it seems.

The real problem here is that, in a town where people spend effort raising kids according to their values, they don't want someone getting holier-than-thou and trying to re-educate those kids in a political idea they've avoided. They also don't want people forcing adulthood on kids too early.

People have the right to raise their kids well — and kids have a right to a childhood. Guys like this Mullens dude like to think they're Progressive for throwing a wrench in the works, but if you look too closely at people like Mullens, you see unhappy lives — and misery loves company.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Social Darwinism

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

These short definitions help enlighten those who apparently have no idea what it is, mainly because the literature on it is so confused:

Reddit isn't based on Social Darwinism, which is the idea that the best people prevail because they're more competent.

Reddit is based on the idea of what the masses like to think about themselves. One man, one vote = egalitarian liberalism.

[Reddit](#)

Social Darwinism is that idea that despite us being in a society, natural selection still applies — the best rise and breed more, and the lesser fail and breed less.

It is often used as a justification for capitalism, itself a justification for our comfy consumer culture, as the line of thought goes.

However, it's a good reminder that we need natural selection to be active in every societies. Societies try to be inclusive so they can motivate people together — “we're doing this for *all* of us and *everyone* is welcome” — and as a result, they're unwilling to let anyone fall prey to natural selection.

But that in turn leads to their calcification, as tolerant of the unrealistic leads them to place unrealistic people in positions of responsibility where they can distort the reality expectations of others. Lack of natural selection is ultimately what dooms every civilization that has yet existed.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#).

Ancient Syriac bible found

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

This is very exciting:

Authorities in northern Cyprus believe they have found an ancient version of the Bible written in Syriac, a dialect of the native language of Jesus.

The manuscript was found in a police raid on suspected antiquity smugglers. Turkish Cypriot police testified in a court hearing they believe the manuscript could be about 2,000 years old.

Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic – the native language of Jesus – once spoken across much of the Middle East and Central Asia. It is used wherever there are Syrian Christians and still survives in the Syrian Orthodox Church in India.

[Yahoo](#)

Fundamentalists should all try to understand Syriac grammar and Jewish culture at the time of the Biblical stories if they want to get accurate about what's in the Bible.

However, if they left this task up to philosophers, those philosophers would point out that the Bible is a distillation of borrowed Greek and Hindu knowledge, as filtered through the middle eastern focus on the individual — which is necessary for trade, in which you pander to the customer.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Obama plans for gerrymandering by bringing census under presidential control

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

Not much more to say here:

Republicans are fit to be tied over the Obama administration's Tom DeLay-style strategy of removing the U.S. Census Bureau from the jurisdiction of the Commerce Department and transferring it to the White House.

Their biggest fear, of course, is that with the 2010 census looming, Democrats will attempt to redraw congressional districts to their party's ultimate benefit.

"With all of its political implications, hijacking the Census from the Commerce Dept. and letting it be run out of Rahm's office is like putting PETA in charge of issuing hunting permits," a Senior Republican Senate Aide fumed to the Sleuth.

"All DeLay did was rearrange the deck chairs," said the irate GOP aide, adding, "this would allow Rahm to redesign the whole ship affecting everything from congressional districts to who and where eligible S-CHIP children, adults and 'poor' rich people live."

[WAPQ](#)

Tyrants never announce "Hi, I'm a total tyrant. Mind if I enslave your dumb ass?"

Instead, they talk about hope and change, and like Bill Clinton, they pander aggressively to what public opinion — that's the broadest numerical base, not the people who actually keep society afloat — suggests is the least offensive course.

In the background, they build up a powerful political machine, like the relentlessly corrupt Chicago machine at which Barack Obama excelled.

Two presidents who are going to rise in our estimation over time: Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush. Both were ideologues who did their best to do what was right, but were hampered by their own social awkwardness and the unpopularity of truth.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Jiddu Krishnamurti: a Nihilist?

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

The core of Krishnamurti's teaching is contained in the statement he made in 1929 when he said: 'Truth is a pathless land'. Man cannot come to it through any organization, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, not through any philosophic knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation and not through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection. Man has built in himself images as a fence of security – religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man's thinking, his relationships and his daily life. These images are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. This content is common to all humanity. The individuality is the name, the form and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all mankind. So he is not an individual.

Freedom is not a reaction; freedom is not a choice. It is man's pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment and reward. Freedom is without motive; freedom is not at the end of the evolution of man but lies in the first step of his existence. In observation one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless awareness of our daily existence and activity. Thought is time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge which are inseparable from time and the past. Time is the psychological enemy of man. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past. Thought is ever-limited and so we live in constant conflict and struggle. There is no psychological evolution.

When man becomes aware of the movement of his own thoughts he will see the division between the thinker and thought, the observer and the observed, the experiencer and the experience. He will discover that this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation which is insight without any shadow of the past or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind.

Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things that thought has brought about psychologically, only then is there love, which is compassion and intelligence.

[KKH](#)

While in the West we've been conditioned by decades of Aquarians, hippies, Wiccans and Evangelicals to open fire at the sound of the word "love," what he's speaking of here is a lot like Paul Woodruff's "reverence" — a transcendental appreciation of life itself.

Still, this talk of negation — of following truth and removing all thought of self and social conditioning — is a lot like nihilism:

While having a big brain is an asset, it is also a liability, in that if a big brain has to re-analyze its surroundings, it will move very slowly. Instead, big brained animals analyze once, create a mental "map" of their world, and update as needed.

In theory, we update our maps when new data comes about. But if this data is incorrect, our knowledge of the world gets corrupted. We act expecting certain outcomes and are stunned

when things do not go as planned.

What corrupts our minds is when we reverse the causal process of understanding. Instead of looking to the world, making conclusions and updating our maps, we update our maps based on what we wish were happening — or what others tell us.

If we withdraw into our own maps, and change those instead of reality, we can no longer predict reality. This is a problem because we are responsible for our fate. If we screw it up, no one else is going to bail us out.

[ANUS](#)

Truth exists in the intersection of all aspects of our world and ourselves, but not in ourselves or in the world alone.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Accidentally telling the truth about democracy

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

It is unreasonable to expect the general public will accept major reductions in living standards or comfort and convenience. Simply put, it won't happen – There is no point in debating the ethics of driving a big car and taking vacations versus making sacrifices to sustain the environment, because history shows that the public has a very limited tolerance for any measures which directly affect their comfort, convenience and other wants.

{ snip }

People will either skirt the regulations or they will put pressure on politicians to change them. In a democracy, the politicians will always be forced to bow to the will of the people on any matter which is universally disliked.

(They want their damn bread and circus and you'd be a fool to try to talk them into living without them.)

[Depleted Cranium](#)

Remember, democracy sets you free from leadership — and then enslaves you to the selfishness, stupidity, callowness and obliviousness of others. Enjoy your slavery.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Eugenics approved for limiting Down's Syndrome babies

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

A new pre-natal screening program in Denmark has halved the number of babies with Down's Syndrome. The success of the program, undeniably a form of eugenics, raises a number of questions about how far people should go with pre-natal screening – and what kinds of conditions merit termination of a pregnancy.

Many people, including the infamous bio-ethicist Peter Singer, would argue that there's a social benefit to knowing whether you're going to have a Down's Syndrome baby. The child will need lifelong care and supervision, which could be a drain on family (and the state). Presumably, having that information early in a pregnancy will allow the parents the option to terminate it and try for a child who will grow up to live autonomously. And indeed, researchers report in this week's British Medical Journal that the testing has clearly had this effect in Denmark, where the number of babies born with Down's Syndrome went down from 55 in 2000, to 31 in 2005, after the testing program was in place.

{ snip }

Let's say the idea of terminating a Down's pregnancy doesn't disturb you. But what about babies who will be born with holes in their hearts, a potential for cancer, or possible schizophrenia? Where does eugenics become genetic fascism?

[io9](#)

Nature is fascist and nature like eugenics. That Down's syndrome baby will live until people flee from fire or wolves, and the retarded child can't figure it out and is left behind and killed.

Net result? The people spend less of their time on a dead-end — a Down's syndrome kid who will never contribute — and more of their effort on building for the next generation, for the next step. It's putting your energy into growth, not morose preservation of the past. It failed — throw it out! — move on and move up.

People are, as overpopulation surges, becoming more aware of eugenics. In the industrialized west, bad breeding and indiscriminate admixture has created a horde of deformed, retarded, mentally unstable people. The world is also awash in people who have low intelligence and no moral character. The ancient kings would have killed these people, as would nature, if they weren't equipped with tools and weapons made by smarter people.

A new day is dawning. It's one in which we don't wail about the sanctity of human life because it is human life (quantity) but look toward the quality of human life. Do we want to live as slaves or independent spirits? Do we want to be encumbered by yesterday's failures, or work toward tomorrow's successes? And finally: do we want to commit ecocide by not limiting ourselves, or do we want functional nature around us?

This guy is from the old, dead, hidebound, delusional liberalism that has afflicted the west now for four centuries and consistently made everything worse:

If the professional community has lost its sense of moral outrage when one of their own openly calls for the slow and painful extermination of over 5 billion human beings, then it falls upon the amateur community to be the conscience of science.

People like this viewpoint because it is universalist, and inclusive. Everyone can play. Every life is sacred. Every viewpoint is important. When we say that, what we're really saying is: my right to play/live/opine is guaranteed by this CONTROL rule which applies equally to all, so none can complain. Clever monkey sleight of brain!

Here's what the emo doofus above was replying to:

Pianka then began laying out his concerns about how human overpopulation is ruining the Earth. He presented a doomsday scenario in which he claimed that the sharp increase in human population since the beginning of the industrial age is devastating the planet. He warned that quick steps must be taken to restore the planet before it's too late.

{ snip }

[H]e asserted that the only feasible solution to saving the Earth is to reduce the population to 10 percent of the present number.

He then showed solutions for reducing the world's population in the form of a slide depicting the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. War and famine would not do, he explained. Instead, disease offered the most efficient and fastest way to kill the billions that must soon die if the population crisis is to be solved.

{ snip }

AIDS is not an efficient killer, he explained, because it is too slow. His favorite candidate for eliminating 90 percent of the world's population is airborne Ebola (Ebola Reston), because it is both highly lethal and it kills in days, instead of years. However, Professor Pianka did not mention that Ebola victims die a slow and torturous death as the virus initiates a cascade of biological calamities inside the victim that eventually liquefy the internal organs.

[SAS](#)

If people would allow it, the sterilization of the dumb (under 120 IQ points) would reduce the world's population to 8-12% of its current total, depending on which source for population IQ numbers you believe. This would leave a population of smarter people who are more likely to be more considerate, and reduce our numbers to the level that we could (again) coexist with nature without being on a path to ecocide.

But it's people like this whining imbecile who oppose anything that hurts, kills, censors or arrests anyone anywhere, because they're equal, and so we should all not prevent them from being destructive because, hey, they're human too.

It's a philosophy for idiots. Possibly well-trained, even competent idiots, but idiots nonetheless, as they lack any ability for critical thinking. Not surprisingly, his philosophy would also breed more idiots and force us to tolerate them, until our overwhelming numbers force ecocide on the world and nature terminates us.

Either we apply natural selection to ourselves, at low cost, or nature does it — at cataclysmic cost.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [reproduction](#)

"Hackers" for hire

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Hackers have accessed Brazilian government computer systems and helped 107 companies obtain permits that enabled them to fell over £546million (\$833m) worth of timbre illegally.

In what has come as a shocking revelation, it appears that hi-tech hackers have played an instrumental role in the illegal deforestation of 1.7million cubic meters of the Amazon rain forest.

According to reports from environmental organization Greenpeace, the hackers were hired by at least 107 different companies to access and alter timber export records held by the Brazilian government. As a result, it's estimated that an area of forest the size of 780 Olympic swimming pools has been cleared illegally.

[MCU](#)

To my mind, these people aren't hackers, because they are not interested in the pursuit of knowledge. They're just ordinary criminals.

We don't call hit men "ninjas" and we don't call porno actresses "thespians." Let's not confuse ourselves here: "hacker" is a specific definition for those who use unconventional means to escape the calcification of the conventional and push knowledge, equipment and information further than others would acknowledge.

In any society, there will be those who need rules to tell them the obvious. "Thou shalt not kill" reflects the tendency of most people to be unable to tell the difference between a justifiable killing and one that is not. All killings appear the same, just like all computer break-ins have the same appearance, thus are dubbed "unethical" and "illegal."

Life is not as simple as it seems. When an individual reaches a certain stage of proficiency, he or she either gets sidetracked by quick gratification, such as theft, or rises to a higher proficiency because the love of learning and joy in the powers granted by it drives them forward. Such is the case with hacking, where those who have learned a few trivial skills become destructive, but those who are constantly reverent toward their task become constructive, even if they must use some destruction toward that end.

Some try to divide the hacking community by ethics, as in "white hat" (ethical) and "black hat" (criminal) hackers, but the reality is that there is another category for those who hack because they appreciate technology and like pushing it to do things that otherwise could not be done. They do not get sidetracked by appearance such as theft or vandalism, but use technology toward the end of making technology better.

This is comparable to the state of a knight in ancient cultures. The knight was above all laws made for normal people, as he was trusted to do what was right according to the whole of civilization and nature, even if it meant that some unfortunate would be deprived of life, liberty or happiness. The knight did what was necessary to push his surroundings toward a higher state of order, avoiding the entropy caused by those who were doomed to the world of appearance and could thus see only binaries: living/dying, money/poverty, right/wrong. The knight transcended these boundaries and "hacked" his surroundings by pushing them to do things that otherwise could not be done, replacing previous designs with better ones.

Design and logical structure are the "hidden world" in which hackers, philosophers, artists and knights operate. The world of appearance deals with physical objects, but not the underlying structure which connects them. Similarly, users see the appearance which computers are programmed to show them, but have no idea of the workings of networks and operating

systems. A knight must know how to manipulate this hidden world, and must have the moral strength to be destructive only when it is constructive to do so.

Hacking in 2005 is far different from hacking in 1985. During the formative days of hacker culture, computing resources were scarce. Most people used 1-10mhz machines and could not get access to the instructive operating systems like UNIX and VMS unless they hacked into larger machines for that access. Today, desktop UNIX-like operating systems are plentiful, and network access is a nominal monthly fee. One reason that hacking has appeared to stagnate is that it has not re-invented itself to address this new reality.

When most people think of "hackers," they imagine the black hat criminal element that steals credit cards and identities. White hat hackers have become like adult chaperones at a teenage sex party, wagging disapproving fingers but having little overall effect. Since it is no longer necessary to hack machines for access, hacking must redefine itself according to its core principle: understanding the structure behind the appearances of computing, and to like a good knight, always reinvent the design of the underlying layers so that technology and society move toward higher degrees of organization.

In this capacity hackers are a hedge against entropy, or the state of disorder that occurs over time and is exacerbated by people acting on appearance as if it were structure, causing them to manipulate form but not function. Most human technologies are flawed and operate poorly, subjecting the user to untold problems, much as governments and ideas are flawed and cause similar confusions. The hacker of today must unite philosophy, computing and politics in a quest to find better orders and to defeat entropy by understanding how things work, and not what pleasing appearances will sell to a credulous consumer base.

Hackers as knights represent a potential force of change in our society. We can see where technology could be organized better, so that without inventing a new type of computer we can make older computers better; hackers can prank society to point out its illusions and contradictions. Because we have the skills to do this, we are necessarily above the law, and must use that status to achieve the kind of re-ordering of civilization that normal people cannot. Should we choose to accept the role with all of its responsibilities, we are the knights who can redesign industrial society into something that serves humans instead of imprisoning them in a world of appearances.

[HAQR](#)

In the original manifesto written by hacker The Mentor, he brought up the difference between crowd-reality and the reality of someone who understands how to make the equipment do what it's capable of if not hampered by human fears and groupthink:

But did you, in your three-piece psychology and 1950's technobrain,
ever take a look behind the eyes of the hacker? Did you ever wonder what
made him tick, what forces shaped him, what may have molded him?
I am a hacker, enter my world...
Mine is a world that begins with school... I'm smarter than most of
the other kids, this crap they teach us bores me...
Damn underachiever. They're all alike.

I'm in junior high or high school. I've listened to teachers explain
for the fifteenth time how to reduce a fraction. I understand it. "No, Ms.
Smith, I didn't show my work. I did it in my head..."
Damn kid. Probably copied it. They're all alike.

I made a discovery today. I found a computer. Wait a second, this is
cool. It does what I want it to. If it makes a mistake, it's because I
screwed it up. Not because it doesn't like me...

Or feels threatened by me...
Or thinks I'm a smart ass...
Or doesn't like teaching and shouldn't be here...
Damn kid. All he does is play games. They're all alike.

And then it happened... a door opened to a world... rushing through the phone line like heroin through an addict's veins, an electronic pulse is sent out, a refuge from the day-to-day incompetencies is sought... a board is found.

"This is it... this is where I belong..."

I know everyone here... even if I've never met them, never talked to them, may never hear from them again... I know you all...
Damn kid. Tying up the phone line again. They're all alike...

You bet your ass we're all alike... we've been spoon-fed baby food at school when we hungered for steak... the bits of meat that you did let slip through were pre-chewed and tasteless. We've been dominated by sadists, or ignored by the apathetic. The few that had something to teach found us willing pupils, but those few are like drops of water in the desert.

This is our world now... the world of the electron and the switch, the beauty of the baud. We make use of a service already existing without paying for what could be dirt-cheap if it wasn't run by profiteering gluttons, and you call us criminals. We explore... and you call us criminals. We seek after knowledge... and you call us criminals. We exist without skin color, without nationality, without religious bias... and you call us criminals. You build atomic bombs, you wage wars, you murder, cheat, and lie to us and try to make us believe it's for our own good, yet we're the criminals.

Yes, I am a criminal. My crime is that of curiosity. My crime is that of judging people by what they say and think, not what they look like. My crime is that of outsmarting you, something that you will never forgive me for.

I am a hacker, and this is my manifesto. You may stop this individual, but you can't stop us all... after all, we're all alike.

[PHRACK](#)

While he succumbs to groupthink and crowd reality on political issues — which is why few outside the hacking community take this screed seriously — he makes a good point:

"we've been spoon-fed baby food at school when we hungered for steak"

Society dumbs itself down to preserve *all* of its members, when many are completely clueless. This is why societies start dying as soon as they are born — there is no natural selection to carry away the parasites, liars, depressives, etc.

This dumbing down has a destructive consequence that eventually dooms the society — the creation of a "social reality," or a consensual politeness that insists on equality and not offending anyone. However, that consensual reality is opposed to the truths that a smart kid can perceive. It's also based on the idea of mutual non-aggression, such as our prohibition on stealing, breaking and entering, etc.

But what if there's vital knowledge behind a locked door?

Hackers are the first to throw aside the morality of the crowd, realizing that said morality is ultimately what

will kill their society, and pursue a goal for its own sake — they make knowledge the ends, and everything else the means, of the life process.

It's a more mature worldview that completely threatens the [crowd-order](#), and so panicked societies throw everything they can at hackers — including trying to group them in with petty criminals who are using computers as they otherwise would use lock picks, crowbars and saps.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [Technology](#)

How political morality replaces organic society

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

“One of the guys convicted was African-American. I don’t remember any overt racism. You’re in a war, and you’re the good guys and they’re the bad guys, and that’s how most Americans see the world.”

[The Guardian](#)

Either you have organic society, or your society gets neurotically self-conscious, and then you have an imposed political morality consensual reality layer that confuses everything important.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

The biological basis for race

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Let's hop into this question with both feet:

Are racial-ethnic (when most people say race, they mean ethnicity, and vice-versa) differences innate, meaning biologically and genetically inherent?

I would rather not get into comparing IQs and other abilities here, but simply answering the question: are races biologically different?

Obviously, the answer will be somewhat complex. Races are from the same species and can interbreed, although some data suggest that leads to health problems. However, an individual can be identified as belonging to racial groups by osteopathology, genetic analysis, and even analysis of skin and hair — so obviously race is not “just skin color.”

Here's some input from a mainstream source:

Apparently, participants to the meeting were trying to come up with new language that was based on “non-fraught” terminology, such as “geographic ancestry,” even though researchers acknowledged that they cannot control how the media and the public will interpret what they do anyway. For instance, Carlos Bustamante of Cornell complained that a paper he published was understood by the media to imply that blacks are fitter (presumably, in evolutionary terms) than whites. What Bustamante had actually said was that African-Americans have fewer deleterious genes in their genomes than European-Americans. Not exactly (or even approximately) the same thing!

Apparently, an interesting exchange occurred between Celeste Condit (a professor of speech communication) and Bruce Lahn, who in 2005 had co-authored a paper on natural selection in two genes regulating brain development, genes that are more frequent in Eurasians than in Africans. Condit complained that this sort of study may easily be read as having a “political message” embedded in it, suggesting for instance that Eurasians’ intelligence evolved faster than Africans’, an implication that Lahn firmly denied.

I often discuss the issue of race with my good friend Guido Barbujani, of the University of Ferrara (who occasionally comments on this blog). He is a population geneticist, and doesn't believe the concept of human race has any biological foundation. I disagree, although with my other friend Jonathan Kaplan (a philosopher, and also occasional commentator on *Rationally Speaking*) we published a paper in which we made it clear that we don't think “folk races” exist. (See: Kaplan, J. and M. Pigliucci (2004), On the concept of biological race and its applicability to humans. *Philosophy of Science* 70: 1161-1172.) That is, we think that what most people call “races” are actually independently evolved sub-populations, but that human races exist in the same sense as ecotypes exist among other animals and plants.

An ecotype is a locally adapted population (say, characterized by an “alpine” phenotype for a plant, or a “high light intensity” phenotype for a human), which is not genetically much different from other populations of the same species, except for genes specifically influencing whatever traits are adaptive in that environment (say, short and branched stalks in alpine plants, to protect against strong wind; or dark skin in humans living near the Equator, to protect from high light intensity).

Be that as it may, the question of what a race is, and whether it is a useful biological construct, is an empirical one, though with interesting implications for philosophy of science. It is not,

however, something that should be dictated out of political correctness, as in the above mentioned rather silly (and intellectually offensive) statement by Condit. As another participant to the NHGRI meeting, philosopher Allen Buchanan (Duke) put it: "A visible, concerted effort to change vocabulary for moral reasons is likely to trigger a backlash."

[SciBlog](#)

The United Nations thinks we should not even discuss this issue:

There is no proof that the groups of mankind differ in their intelligence or temperament. The scientific evidence indicates that the range of mental capacities in all ethnic groups is the same.... Genetic differences are not of importance in determining the social and cultural differences between different groups of Homo sapiens.

[UN](#)

Let's take a look at another view, from traditional conservatives:

I should first explain my definition of "race." In biological tradition the word race is simply synonymous with the terms "subspecies" or "variety." The basic unit of classification in modern taxonomy is the species. A species is usually said to consist of a set of individuals capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring. If the offspring are not healthy and fertile, then the parent types are considered separate species. Mules are usually sterile so horses and donkeys are thought to be separate species.

However, in biology things are often fuzzy around the edges, and so it is with species. Sometimes what are considered to be separate species in nature can and will freely interbreed when brought together by man. Sometimes their hybrid offspring are partially or fully fertile. As one example of the fuzziness of species, consider *Canis familiaris*, the common dog, and *Canis lupus*, the Eurasian wolf. They are considered to be separate species because their habitats and life-styles are different. Within the dog species itself there are many varieties that are quite different in physiology and behavior. The tiny Mexican Chihuahua, would have a hard time mating with an Irish Wolfhound, but they are considered to be of the same species.

When wolves encounter dogs, they usually eat them. But sometimes they mate with them. When they mate it is almost always the male wolf with the female dog. The reverse is rare — male dogs are almost never able to mate with female wolves. The hybrid puppies are usually fully fertile, so by this definition *Canis lupus* and *Canis familiaris* are not different species. The point is that species and races are concepts of classification that often blur around the edges. This is because of the very nature of biological reality.

These days humans are thought to constitute one species — *Homo sapiens*. Humans are in many respects typical of geographically widespread mammalian species in that we are polymorphic (meaning we have "many forms"). This is what appears to us as individual differences. The bell-curve distribution of so many traits — height, weight, strength, intelligence, and the like — illustrates polymorphic traits. We are also typical among widespread mammals in being a polytypic species. Polytypic means "many types;" it is simply a fact of biological reality that not all different groups of humans are the same. Naturally occurring polytypic groups within a species are called varieties, subspecies, or races.

{ snip }

This pattern is common among humans and among mammals generally, like the wolves and dogs mentioned earlier: When populations mix, it is usually males of the dominant group that take up with women from the subordinate group. Women are attracted to socially dominant males.

{ snip }

While hybrid vigor is a biological reality, so are hybrid incompatibilities. Some crosses, particularly between genetically distant races, can lead to mixes that don't work very well. Until quite recently there was much scientific concern over hybrid incompatibilities between blacks and whites, and remember from recent evidence the Africans are genetically most different from all others. Before about 1950 the scientific literature openly discussed the problem of what Madison Grant called "disharmonious combinations". After the 1950s, concern over miscegenation almost completely disappeared from mainstream scientific literature. The only thing that had changed was the politics, not the data.

I would like to suggest that modern data, those gold nuggets laying about, contain much that is suggestive of hybrid incompatibilities between blacks and whites. For example, according to the so-called "one drop" rule, hybrids are almost always classified as blacks, so almost all blacks have some white genes. And one of the best reported phenomena in present-day America is that the African-American population suffers a very wide range of health problems. Blacks tend to die sooner and younger from almost every cause but osteoporosis. There are reports that even after all known causes are accounted for there is still "unexplained" poor health among blacks.

This difference is often ascribed to the stresses of "racism," but this is not a very convincing explanation. Recently, Surgeon General David Satcher appeared on television to point out that in America, black babies are 2½ times more likely than whites to die in the first year of life. It is not clear how infants suffer from the stresses of "racism." It may simply be that just as blacks mature more rapidly than whites, they succumb to disease more easily and die at younger ages. On the other hand, if there are no inherent racial differences in longevity and resistance to disease, the poor health could be caused by one of the greatest taboos of all: biological, genetic hybrid incompatibility.

[AR](#)

Inevitably, this issue gets tangled up with *g*, or general intelligence:

Murray argued that general intelligence, so-called "*g*," a general factor that governs performance on all cognitive tasks, is highly heritable. He noted that *g* has a biological background in the brain. He cited differences in glucose metabolism, reaction times, and the volumes of specific grey matter in prefrontal cortices.

[Reason](#)

This becomes important because we get counter-arguments like this:

Intelligence is one of the personality traits most strongly influenced by genes. Although genes have a weaker influence in childhood, a full 80 percent of the variation among adults in intelligence is due to heredity.⁶ The IQs of identical twins have a correlation of 0.86, whereas those of fraternal twins have a much weaker correlation of 0.6. However, after they have grown to be adults, there is no correlation at all between the IQs of unrelated children who are reared in the same household.⁷

This research makes the environmentalist view of racial differences highly implausible. The social factors to which environmentalists attribute racial differences, such as poverty and inferior schooling, are part of blacks' shared environment, as they affect the black population as a whole. However, shared environment has no effect on IQ and little effect on other personality attributes.

[TIW](#)

What I'd like to propose, instead, is that we look at races as groups of traits and do not narrow in on any

single trait. We should analyze those traits as the products of the environments in which those races/ethnicities evolved.

More on this topic at [We're not all equal genetically, either](#) which covers the differences in DNA between races, ethnicities and individuals.

More useful data here on the question of whether DNA indicates races exist:

Q: Isn't there actually more genetic distance between populations within the traditional human races than between the major races themselves?

In 1972, Richard Lewontin studied global variation at seventeen protein polymorphisms,[69] and found that about 85% of genetic variation existed between individuals within a given population. The next largest portion, about 8%, was found between populations within continents, with the remaining 6% of variance attributable to differences between the major human races (Fig. 2). The ~85% within-population figure has been affirmed numerous times, while the relative size of the other components of variance probably depends on the specific populations chosen for analysis, and is often the reverse of Lewontin's findings. In any event, many data sets have been assembled since 1972 for classical polymorphisms and all other genetic markers, and as a general rule, populations within continents are more closely related to one another than they are to the populations of other continents. This pattern can be seen in any matrix of global genetic distances, such as those assembled by Cavalli-Sforza et al. in *The History and Geography of Human Genes*.

Population genetic studies often report AMOVA statistics (Analysis of MOlecular VAriance), which show the hierarchical proportions of variance between aggregates of the individuals sampled. The following is a discussion of worldwide data on autosomal microsatellites and RFLPs, Alu insertions, mtDNA and Y chromosome STRPs:

"The hierarchical AMOVA analysis shows that, with the exception of Y STRPs, all systems show much less differentiation between populations within continents than between continents. This result is expected when there is greater gene flow between populations that are in close geographic proximity to one another. The autosomal values...are especially small, ranging from 1.3% for the RSPs to 1.8% for the Alu polymorphisms. This is in agreement with the small continental GST values shown in table 4...they are highly consistent both with one another and with previous analyses of worldwide variation in autosomal microsatellites and RFLPs, which also show considerably greater differentiation between continents than between populations within continents... The fact that there is little differentiation between populations within continents has important implications in the forensic setting, in that it supports the current practice of grouping reference populations into broad ethnic categories when autosomal STRP data are used..." [73]

[The Race FAQ](#)

Interesting.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [biology](#) · [DNA](#) · [genetics](#) · [race](#)

How marriage keeps men stable

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Liberal policymakers and pundits have spilled buckets of ink over the years promoting social-service programs as the solution to crime, yet—like the Times's recent editorial—those opinion-setters cannot squeeze out one word about the most effective anticrime (and antipoverty) strategy: marriage. The marriage imperative civilizes boys. By contrast, in a world where it is unusual for a man to marry the mother of his children, boys fail to learn the most basic lesson of personal responsibility: you are responsible for your children. Freed of the social expectation that they will have to provide a stable home for their offspring, boys have little incentive to restrain their impulses and develop bourgeois habits.

[City Journal](#)

Something to think about.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Punish male adulterers

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

A good idea:

Officials say two men in Iran have been stoned to death for adultery and murder, while another escaped death only by digging his way out of the hole where he was buried to face a similar fate, according to media reports.

In the practice, the men are buried up to their chests and people pelt them with stones until they die.

The group said the law calls for stones "large enough to cause pain, but no so large as to kill the victim immediately."

[CNN](#)

Stoning may be extreme, but homewreckers should pay!

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

We Want The Traditional Order

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

I think in all of us who have read history, there is a desire to find again a sacred order of life as existed in ancient times.

Part of that is knowing who your tribe are and living among them, people like you, and not others. That tribal definition comprises values, language, customs, and — uh oh — heritage.

To a modern people, told that the only morally correct(tm) society is a pluralistic, multicultural, "freedom"-based one, that is blasphemy. Heresy. Ultimate evil.

However, many of us — especially those who read history, and know science and philosophy — it's clear that our modern civilization is moribund and even more, isn't a pleasant place to live. It rewards the idiotic and subjects us all to it in the name of equality.

I think it's possible to want a traditional order, including ethnic nationalism, without hating others. It isn't "we're excluding you because you're inferior." It's that we want to live among our own, and that requires we exclude everyone, whether they claim to be superior or inferior.

That's only one part of the social order we'd desire. One of the neat things about feudal societies like those in *The Hobbit* is that everyone has a place, and there's a clear social order. You don't just plop down a McDonald's anywhere you feel like it, or ignore reality. Society is an organic framework that works together.

I think we all avoid talking about differences between people to keep the peace. We extend that to ethnicity, and endorse multiculturalism, as a result. We think that supporting pluralism, or the coexistence of many different viewpoints at once, is healthy and not chaotic.

My readings of history suggest exactly the opposite: these things are an absence of order and a desecralization of life, and all societies that have adopted them are heading downward into disorder and eventually, third-world status. (This third world status is not related to ethnicity, but the kind of corruption, disorganization, apathy, etc. you find in failed states, always accompanied by third-world poverty and development levels.)

I know my views on this are taboo, but it's important to tell the truth at all times, because otherwise we can easily lie to each other and end up in failure.

[L.](#)

Doesn't everyone know that modern society is a one way deathtrip?

They don't... what, are they inattentive?

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

Nanophobia

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

And now comes nanophobia, the fear that tiny components engineered on the nanoscale — that is, 100 nanometers or less — could run amok inside the body. A human hair, for example, is 50,000 to 100,000 nanometers in diameter. A nanoparticle of titanium dioxide in a sunscreen could be as small as 15 nanometers. (One nanometer equals a billionth of a meter.)

“The smaller a particle, the further it can travel through tissue, along airways or in blood vessels,” said Dr. Adnan Nasir, a clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “Especially if the nanoparticles are indestructible and accumulate and are not metabolized, if you accumulate them in the organs, the organs could fail.”

[NYT](#)

Our society thinks profit first, consequences later. So we pay, time and again, and now we don't trust — if nanophobia is crap, it's grounded on past experiences that weren't.

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

Quality of sperm depends on intelligence of man

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

THERE are few better ways of upsetting a certain sort of politically correct person than to suggest that intelligence (or, rather, the variation in intelligence between individuals) is under genetic control. That, however, is one implication of a paper about to be published in *Intelligence* by Rosalind Arden of King's College, London, and her colleagues. Another is that brainy people are intrinsically healthier than those less intellectually endowed. And the third, a consequence of the second, is that intelligence is sexy. The most surprising thing of all, though, is that these results have emerged from an unrelated study of the quality of men's sperm.

Ms Arden is one of a group of researchers looking into the connections between intelligence, genetics and health. General intelligence (the extent to which specific, measurable aspects of intelligence, such as linguistic facility, mathematical aptitude and spatial awareness, are correlated in a given individual) is measured by psychologists using a value called Spearman's *g*. Recently, it has been discovered that an individual's *g* value is correlated with many aspects of his health, up to and including his lifespan. One possible explanation for this is that intelligent people make better choices about how to conduct their lives. They may, for example, be less likely to smoke, more likely to eat healthy foods or to exercise, and so on.

Alternatively (or in addition) it may be that intelligence is one manifestation of an underlying, genetically based healthiness. That is a view held by many evolutionary biologists, and was propounded in its modern form by Geoffrey Miller of the University of New Mexico, who is one of Ms Arden's co-authors (and, as it happens, her husband). These biologists believe intelligence, as manifested in things like artistic and musical ability, is such a reliable indicator of underlying genetic fitness that it has been chosen by members of the opposite sex over the millennia. In the ensuing arms race to show off and get a mate it has been exaggerated in the way that a peacock's tail is. This process of sexual selection, Dr Miller and his followers believe, is the reason people have become so brainy.

[The Economist](#)

If intelligence is a survival trait, other positive traits will group with it over time. We might replace "intelligence" with "awareness" and see this result more clearly: people able to consciously make analytical decisions force this grouping by valuing traits which adapt well to reality and intelligence.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Industrial society neuters males

Feb 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The research – to be detailed tomorrow in the most comprehensive report yet published – shows that a host of common chemicals is feminising males of every class of vertebrate animals, from fish to mammals, including people.

Backed by some of the world's leading scientists, who say that it "waves a red flag" for humanity and shows that evolution itself is being disrupted, the report comes out at a particularly sensitive time for ministers. On Wednesday, Britain will lead opposition to proposed new European controls on pesticides, many of which have been found to have "gender-bending" effects.

It also follows hard on the heels of new American research which shows that baby boys born to women exposed to widespread chemicals in pregnancy are born with smaller penises and feminised genitals.

[The Independent](#)

Ignore the weaker header (ironic hipsterism) but focus on the data. Perhaps Nietzsche was right about gender and leadership.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

If it sounds official, obey it

Feb 9th, 2009
by [Raul Singh](#).

Brady is accused of calling people and posing as a doctor. He would then convince them to give themselves a rectal examination while he was on the telephone.

Brady admitted that he would pick names out randomly from the telephone book, ask them questions about their digestive system, and then give them instructions on performing the rectal examination.

[JI](#)

Reminds me of this earlier case:

In 2004, Ogborn, then an 18-year-old McDonald's employee, was humiliated and forced to strip and then perform a sexual act in the back office during her workday.

Summers told Ogborn that the officer on the phone had their store manager on the other line and that he had described her and accused her of stealing a purse from a customer.

"I honestly thought he was a police officer and what I was doing was the right thing," Summers said. "I thought I was doing what I was supposed to be doing."

[ABC](#)

(Pitying but lurid details abound in the article. Ick.)

It's the same way con men work: they convince you that they know something you don't know, or are an Authority, meaning that they are the ones designated by the rest to handle the problem.

Then they tell you what you should do — that's convenient for them.

You might have seen a variant on this in high school. You're listening to Iron Maiden and some older guy from school is like, "Iron Maiden? That's so mullet. Why don't you listen to something newer?" You find out three weeks later than the \$15 CD you purchased was his brother's band and it sucks.

Hipsters, con men, abusers and marketers all fall into this category, and they define our reality more than any other single group.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Keep failing, multiculturalism

Feb 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

It began when a parent was upset her child was told to sing "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." The parent is concerned the words "Christmas" and "Santa" hold religious meaning.

The mother tried to have a Hanukkah song added to the holiday show, similar to other schools in the area, but was denied that request.

[WECT](#)

There's no one rule that will please everyone unless we go radically institutional: ban religion, ban holidays, ban physical appearance and ban heritage.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Obama already running DC like Chicago

Feb 8th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

[President-elect Barack Obama's chief of staff Rahm] Emanuel gave the governor's office a list of "candidates that would be acceptable to President-elect Barack Obama" but no "quid pro quo" or "dealmaking" is suspected.

Citing "a source familiar with the investigation," Fox says that Emanuel had "multiple conversations" with Blagojevich and his chief of staff John Harris, who was also arrested Tuesday on federal corruption charges, about the seat and that they we're "likely recorded and in FBI possession."

[HuffingtonPost](#)

He isn't even in office yet, and we're having corruption scandals worse than anything during the Bush years.

I guess "hope" and "change" beg the question: hope for who? And change for who? Being a third world corrupt banana republic is a big change, and gives hope to all who hate us.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

ObamaWatch: appoints Monsanto "shill" to Dept of Agriculture

Feb 8th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Vilsack is a capable administrator with the right partisan credentials.

But he only moved to the top of the list of Agriculture secretary prospects because he is a prominent Democrat who comes from what Washington insiders know as a "farm state." As governor of Iowa, Vilsack had to engage with farm issues. But that embrace was anything but inspired. Family farm activists, fair-trade campaigners and advocates for organic foods were regularly disappointed by the stands he took. The Organic Consumers Association was blunt, declaring: "Vilsack has a glowing reputation as being a schill for agribusiness biotech giants like Monsanto."

The Department of Agriculture is, to be sure, misnamed. Ever since Abraham Lincoln evolved what had been a subdivision of the Patent Office and then a section of the Department of the Interior into an independent federal agency that the 16th president referred to as "the people's department," the department has been about much more than just farming. And that is only more so today, as the agency deals with everything from food safety and the spread of organic farming to buy-local food initiatives, rural development, food and nutrition programs in urban areas, and overseas aid.

[The Nation](#)

Hope to join the power elites.

Change in his pocket.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

American-Russian collusion after WWII

Feb 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The newly unearthed diaries of a colourful assassin for the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA, reveal that American spy chiefs wanted Patton dead because he was threatening to expose allied collusion with the Russians that cost American lives.

But after a decade-long investigation, military historian Robert Wilcox claims that OSS head General "Wild Bill" Donovan ordered a highly decorated marksman called Douglas Bazata to silence Patton, who gloried in the nickname "Old Blood and Guts".

His book, "Target Patton", contains interviews with Mr Bazata, who died in 1999, and extracts from his diaries, detailing how he staged the car crash by getting a troop truck to plough into Patton's Cadillac and then shot the general with a low-velocity projectile, which broke his neck while his fellow passengers escaped without a scratch.

Mr Bazata also suggested that when Patton began to recover from his injuries, US officials turned a blind eye as agents of the NKVD, the forerunner of the KGB, poisoned the general.

[The Telegraph](#)

Extraordinary. Stalin — the biggest killer and rapist of the war — and America, its biggest profiteer, in collusion at the expense of cannon fodder GI lives?

Quite.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Anarchists are stupid scumbags part III

Feb 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Correct Mr Corrupt. We will not publish comments from openly racist gobshites, so you are getting NoPlatformed.

Claims that you have "debunked" evidence of a link between the imaginary anarchist organisations listed above might be more convincing if you provided evidence more solid than an assertion by a racist fool.

For one thing, I note that the site itself hasn't attempted to defend itself but is relying on you, a racist, elitist pseud to claim that the above story is wrong. It is not.

There is racist crap on that site, racist crap on your site and uncritical weblinks found between the two.

Give it up and get some fucking politics you thick as shit fascist.

[Glasgow Anarchists](#)

I posted informed contesting their assertions, including proof. Their response was to censor it and spit about the above chain of insults.

These people are comical and vicious.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Waking up the philosophers

Feb 8th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

No nation is post-racial, ever.

We all like being what we are, which includes language, values, customs, heritage (including race) and national identity.

This topic, however, is taboo — and we should ask why, seeing how large corporations, hippies, anarchists, media overlords and oligarchs all agree it should be taboo.

Cui bono?

[Talking Philosophy](#)

We can't discuss it because it violates our fundamental belief that all individuals are equal. Yet why do we have this belief? To pander to each other and to sell each other stuff.

Brilliant.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Not wanting to engage with reality

Feb 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

If I had to name the one human disaster, this is it: not wanting to engage with reality.

You can do it any number of ways. You can create a false world called heaven; you can retreat to your apartment and music and internet; you can undertake surrogate activities; you can preach “it shouldn’t be this way” and smile grimly; you can insist on “real world activism” that doesn’t address the problem.

I find that elites run off to gated communities and then participate in Peace, Love, Rainbow Nation Happiness and Justice for All type activities — these are surrogate activities.

I find that metalheads bitch a storm about the world, go home and smoke a doobie, then trade Slayer bootlegs and claim it gives their lives meaning.

It’s all evasion.

For me — a man of words, a writer by day and night — I prefer to seek truth aggressively and then translate it for my fellow humans who haven’t had the fortune to undertake my path.

Truth is like a woman. If you contemplate her, and seek every detail to find a place in the architectonic whole that is her, you soon understand her. And you know when to leap and when to lunge.

Contemplation, or with a clear disciplined mind analyzing the situation according to the principles of the Scientific Method (hypothesize; test; modify; repeat) and then forming logical abstractions, can save us from the opposite — which is not unstudied action, but backward logic which uses abstractions to justify not engaging with the world.

I don’t think it gets clearer than that. Happy holidays, everyone.

[ASBO](#)

While this was designed for metalheads, I think it describes the situation for all of us.

We can withdraw, formulate false worlds whether secular or religious, or look directly at how our world works and act so that we adapt to it.

Almost all of my species are fleeing from reality in everything they do. I find it appalling we give them the vote, or consider their little blogs, bands, books, theatre, drama, and politics.

Intelligent beings should test all new information against reality and determine whether it is knowledge, or accurate according to the whole of reality, or bloviation, meaning that it is a partial truth — correct about one aspect, but by denying others, incorrect according to the whole.

As you go through your day, consider classifying what you encounter as knowledge or bloviation. It makes for amusingly cruel dismissals of the dimwitted but socially pleasing attempts of others, if nothing else.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Random factoid of the day

Feb 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Because of their lack of color, albino alligators can get sun burned.

[TCP](#)

Time to keep your albinogators inside.

Posted in: [Science](#).

Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard Dies at 81

Feb 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Samuel P. Huntington, an influential political scientist and longtime Harvard University professor, died at the age of 81 on Wednesday, according to an obituary on Harvard's Web site. Mr. Huntington's most famous thesis – that world conflicts stem from the competing cultural identities of seven or eight "civilizations" – became a fundamental, if controversial, premise of post-Cold War foreign policy theory. His emphasis on ancient religious empires, as opposed to states or ethnicities, gained even more cache after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world."

[NYT](#)

(silence)

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Washington corruption hits epic peaks

Feb 5th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Read between the lines:

After being told by prosecutors that their testimony could jeopardize the ongoing criminal investigation, the Illinois House panel considering impeachment charges against Gov. Rod Blagojevich will not subpoena advisers to President-elect Barack Obama, the panel's chairwoman said Sunday.

But U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald advised the state impeachment panel that testimony from Obama aides could jeopardize the criminal probe, Illinois Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie told CNN Radio.

The internal report, drafted by Greg Craig, Obama's choice for White House counsel, concluded that neither Obama nor his aides had any "inappropriate" contact with Blagojevich or Blagojevich's staff.

[CNN](#)

We could get more corrupt, but it's impossible. First, offer the guy who's going to write the report a position; he's not going to down his new boss. Next, testify in exchange for immunity, and so protect you and your own staff from implication. A great way to catapult forward on the shoulders of your equally corrupt benefactors.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

The Entitlement President

Feb 5th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

President-elect Obama has called traditional affirmative action “absolutely necessary.”

In his speech on race in Philadelphia back in March, he made clear that America needs some form of affirmative action to address the legacy of discrimination in this country.

[SLA](#)

Humanity could have the stars, but we sit around instead and bicker over how to divide up the wealth so no one — no matter how misbegotten — feels it’s unfair.

This is retarded.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

If money determines who our heroes are, we become corrupt

Feb 5th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

IF WE have learned one thing from the Bernard Madoff scandal, it's that the Jewish community is in need of new heroes. No longer can we look up only to those who are billionaires, even if they are significant philanthropists. If we continue to highlight money men as Jewish role models, then we create the conditions for more Jews to cut corners to make a buck at any cost so that they receive the recognition of their peers.

Our community must stand first and foremost for godly values. Everything else is secondary.

LOOK, I'M not naïve. I understand that money makes the world go round. Without cash, the shuls can't open, the schools would close and Jews would be returned to the impoverished life we suffered for centuries.

But there has to be a balance.

[JPOST](#)

Some sane words.

Posted in: [Politics](#), [Socialization](#).

More health from modern society

Feb 5th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Of 2,000 16- to 25-year-olds surveyed for the Prince's Trust, 12% said their life was "meaningless", whilst 14% thought "life has no purpose". One in five felt like crying "often" or "always" and nearly half (47%) felt regularly stressed.

Further reasons for unhappiness included feeling no sense of community, not feeling safe to walk around at night and not having anything to do. Having a dead-end job was also cited as a major contributing factor.

[CCCUK](#)

Epic fail.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

The pointlessness of "green" activity

Feb 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Let's say I do bother, big time. I turn my life upside-down, start biking to work, plant a big garden, turn down the thermostat so low I need the Jimmy Carter signature cardigan, forsake the clothes dryer for a laundry line across the yard, trade in the station wagon for a hybrid, get off the beef, go completely local. I could theoretically do all that, but what would be the point when I know full well that halfway around the world there lives my evil twin, some carbon-footprint doppelgänger in Shanghai or Chongqing who has just bought his first car (Chinese car ownership is where ours was back in 1918), is eager to swallow every bite of meat I forswear and who's positively itching to replace every last pound of CO2 I'm struggling no longer to emit. So what exactly would I have to show for all my trouble?

A sense of personal virtue, you might suggest, somewhat sheepishly. But what good is that when virtue itself is quickly becoming a term of derision? And not just on the editorial pages of The Wall Street Journal or on the lips of the vice president, who famously dismissed energy conservation as a "sign of personal virtue." No, even in the pages of The New York Times and The New Yorker, it seems the epithet "virtuous," when applied to an act of personal environmental responsibility, may be used only ironically. Tell me: How did it come to pass that virtue — a quality that for most of history has generally been deemed, well, a virtue — became a mark of liberal softheadedness?

[NYT](#)

Some good stuff in the article following, but he never resolves this question. The fact is that overpopulation is the enemy of all things green, and we're unwilling to do what's required to stop it: strong centralized leadership.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Socialization](#).

How the economy wrecks breeding

Feb 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Birth rates do tend to drop in times of economic uncertainty. There was a dramatic decline in fertility rates following the Great Depression in the 1930s, when, for the first time in U.S. history, women went from having an average of three children the previous decade to two.

In each year after the country's last four recessions, general fertility rates — calculated as the number of women of child-bearing age per thousand who gave birth — dipped slightly. For example, in the year following the 1973-1975 recession, fertility rates dropped from 68.8 in 1973 to 65 in 1976, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Similarly, following the 1980-1982 recession, the fertility rate fell from 68.4 in 1980 to 65.7 in 1983.

[MSN](#)

This is terrible, because it means those who can think ahead about breeding are not breeding, while idiots keep surging onward and produce more children even as they impoverish themselves.

Good thinking, humanity.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Conservation is racist because it protects species from interbreeding

Feb 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

There is no justification for conservationists to defend particular species because of their "ethnicity", Professor Christopher Smout writes in a new book, *Exploring Environmental History*.

Campaigns against "alien invaders"—such as the cull of American ruddy ducks to prevent them from breeding with European duck species—have no basis in science, he argues.

"Conservationists are up in arms because they fear the ducks will all get turned into some kind of mishmash," he told *The Independent*.

"The conservationists would say: 'We're doing this because it's endangering the genetic integrity of the white-headed duck.'"

"I don't think that's a scientifically valid point of view. The concern with genetic integrity seems almost quasi-racist. Our attitude to alien species is culturally determined and sometimes you end up with rather bizarre actions by scientists."

He added that interbreeding between species could often bring evolutionary benefits, and dismissed fears that the genetic identity of red deer in Scotland is threatened by silka deer, which were brought to the UK from Asia in 1860.

[The Telegraph](#)

Convenient of this professor to compile every cliché opposing defense of [ethnic-cultural self-preservation](#) into a single article. Well done!

Conservationists realize that each race of each species has adapted over thousands of years to its unique environment, and each race has its own genetic log of these adaptations. If it is suddenly convenient for new species to show up, we are not seeing proof of their adaptation to this environment in the long-term, only a shorter-term aggression.

So to mix the two is not only to reverse evolution and destroy natural selection, but to weaken the species for the future. Like all modern solutions, it's short sighted and outward-directed, not clear on differentiating between our impulses and how our world works.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#).

Are those between clear gender identity more promiscuous?

Feb 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Psychologists have found that adult females who have prominent chins are more sexually active than those with softer features, yet are less attractive to men looking for a long-term partner.

Larger chins on women are often caused by a high level of the male growth hormone testosterone, present in all women in various amounts.

The hormone also increases sexual assertiveness in a woman, a tendency more commonly attributed to males.

It was concluded that men will shun women with such masculine features when looking for a long-term partner because they fear being cuckolded.

[The Telegraph](#)

People hate cheating spouses because they've violated the most sacred human contract there is: to work together to create a family where each member is defended against the world. As we can trust our fellow citizens less and less, this becomes more important.

Masculinized women, in addition to being a blight on the workplace, are more likely to cheat. They lack the complementary force to a male that makes a marriage work. So now you've got a problem. Men who are in touch with their instincts avoid them so they can have functional families instead of joining the world at large in its dysfunction.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Incoming crisis: Food prices rise as supplies fluctuate before a fall

Feb 1st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Ahead of the curve learning:

Despite the economic crisis and widespread deflation fears, world food prices are rising. This major escalation in food prices calls to question the conventional wisdom that inflation is not a problem.

Today's worldwide food inflation is a far different story, because it is happening in the face of widespread deflation fears. Consumers are delaying purchases. Banks are hoarding cash (ie: most Chinese merchants aren't accepting credit cards because banks are delaying payments). Businesses are scaling back expansions and reigning in spending. Yet, despite all these factors, food prices are going up. Isn't that interesting?

The US is not immune from rising food inflation: prices for food in US grocery stores jumped 6.6% last year, the biggest spike since 1980. Even this December, which saw gasoline prices fall by 17.2% (the biggest monthly decline in 71 years), food costs refused to fall. If US food prices couldn't muster a fall in December, five months after the commodity bubble burst and deflation fears gripped the world, then they should not be expected to fall at all.

[Market Skeptics](#)

So capitalism, democracy, etc. make us free, eh?

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Ancient sun temple possibly found in Alberta, Canada

Feb 1st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

From the "life is awesome" department:

An academic maverick is challenging conventional wisdom on Canada's prehistory by claiming an archeological site in southern Alberta is really a vast, open-air sun temple with a precise 5,000-year-old calendar predating England's Stonehenge and Egypt's pyramids.

The central cairn is surrounded by 28 radiating stone lines, four of which align with the cardinal points of the compass. Those lines are encircled by another ring of stones.

A few metres away lies a stone semicircle, with a large stone between it and the central cairn. The left edge of the semicircle lines up with both the central stone and the right edge of the cairn, and vice versa.

The rising and setting sun on both the longest and shortest days of the year lines up precisely with V-shaped sights in the temple's rocks. The spring and autumn equinoxes, when day and night are equal, are similarly marked. They are not the equinoxes of the Gregorian calendar currently used, however, but the true astronomical equinoxes.

Freeman is convinced the temple contains a lunar calendar as well, because the 28 rays radiating from the central cairn correspond to the length of the lunar cycle.

[The Star](#)

But our Native Americans did not have such technologies. How long have humans been this smart? And where did they originate?

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#).

Obnoxious, pretentious, fake-humble fool gets pwnt

Feb 1st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Kirsten Brydum pedaled away from the Howlin' Wolf club into the darkness of another American city that she didn't know very well.

She arrived in New Orleans in late September with a rail pass, a little red notebook and a head full of ideas about the oppressive forces of capitalism and government, and how they might be replaced with something better.

Brydum and an old boyfriend drew up the list of places she would visit: alternative health centers, collectivist punk communes, anarchist bookstores and "guerrilla gardens" planted by activists on land they do not own. Her plan was to document on a website what she found, allowing radicals to share ideas and strengthen tiny institutions that she believed would "prefigure a world without capitalism."

At the now-defunct New College of California, where she earned her bachelor's degree, she immersed herself in contrarian thinkers, particularly the anarchists: Emma Goldman, imprisoned by U.S. authorities for opposing the draft in 1917; David Graeber, the anthropologist who studied the egalitarian communities of northwest Madagascar; and Hakim Bey, a scholar who extolled history's "pirate utopias," which operated beyond the grasp of governments.

Central to her thinking: "She didn't believe that we lived in a world of scarcity," Viola said. "That scarcity was a myth that was used to keep people divided. And so if resources and goods are taken care of and shared equitably, then there's enough for everybody."

[LA Times](#)

We don't live in a world of scarcity.

We live in a world of plenty, where minimal effort — using scientific methods, and learning, and common sense — yields good results.

But then idiots destroy it with disorganization, illusion, chaos, etc. so stuff ends up scarce, and the rest of us end up defending ourselves against masses of delusional fools.

Her body had been found by a church group gutting houses in the 9th Ward; it was lying unidentified in the morgue. Brydum had been shot four times in the face. New Orleans police detectives began their search for a killer, but have thus far had no luck.

When the news reached the Bay Area, some of her fellow activists wondered if there had been a conspiracy. Some suspected the CIA.

Other family members noted, with a disgusted irony, that the killer may have been covering up a robbery. Brydum's bag and bicycle were not found at the scene.

That's because they're loony narcissists who think anyone cares about their cult of disorganization.

This story is designed for your amusement. Pompous young "activist" decides she knows better than others, and determines to justify herself with false humility; New Orleans criminal laughs, takes her bicycle and shoots her in the face.

Satan is illusion and Brydum gave her soul to Satan, who never announces that he's evil. (Insert your own token of evil, selfishness, stupidity, solipsism, illusion, delusion, dysfunction, deception, corruption and monkeyness in place of "Satan"; I use the term for convenience.)

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

What the Buddhists got right

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Instead of focusing on goals, they focused on method — clear the mind of irrelevant BS brought on by social influences and monkey-derived, evolutionary throwback stupidity:

Raj asked Buddha, "Reverend Sir, how come my mind wanders around to forbidden places and yours does not?" "Sir, how come I do back-biting and you don't?" "Sir, how come I don't have compassion for others, while you have?" All the questions that Raj asked were of similar nature.

Buddha replied, "Raj, your questions are good, but it seems to me that in 24 hours from now you will die."

Raj got up and started getting ready to go.

Buddha asked, "Raj, what happened? You came with such vitality now you are totally dismayed."

Raj said, "Sir, my mother told me that your words are true and are to be held in high esteem. So please let me go so that I may meet my family members, friends and others before I die."

Buddha said, "But there are still 24 hours. Sit, we will talk more."

Raj said, "Reverend Sir, please let me go. I must meet my people before I die."

So Raj left and went home. Met his mother and started crying. The word spread. His friends came; other family members came; neighbors came. Everyone was crying with Raj. Time flew.

Raj was busy either crying or counting the hours. When only 3 hours were left, he pulled up a cot and lay down. Although the Death had not yet arrived, poor Raj was kind of dead.

When only an hour was left, Buddha walked in.

Buddha said to Raj, "Raj, why are you lying down on the cot with your closed eyes. Death is still an hour away. And an hour is 60 minutes long. That's a lot of time. Get up, let us talk."

Raj: "Sir, what is it now that you want to talk? Just let me die peacefully."

Buddha: "Raj, there is still time and our talk will get over before the 'ordained' time."

Raj: "Okay, Sir . . . say what you have to say."

Buddha: "In the past 24 hours, did you curse anyone?"

Raj: "How could I curse anyone? I was all the time thinking about death."

Buddha: "In the past 24 hours, did you think or wish ill for anyone?"

Raj: "How could I do that? I was all the time thinking about death."

Buddha: "In the past 24 hours, did you steal?"

Raj: "Sir, how can you even ask that? I was all the time thinking about death."

Finally the Buddha said, "Raj, I don't know who has to die and who has to live. But understanding the ultimate truth — i.e. death — can be very enlightening. All the questions you posed to me have been answered by yourself because of the awareness of death that you experienced during the past 24 hours. The difference between me and you is that you were aware of death for the past 24 hours, I have been aware for the past 24 years."
[24 hours to die](#)

There's a simple lucidity in this:

Most people will deny reality, and relapse into themselves. They can socialize, they can make money, they can consume. All of these things reinforce self.

Others see how fragile the self is, and instead try to find meaning in the world that connects the self to the world. These are mentally healthier.

If we could learn this discipline — and I don't suggest doing it by Buddhism, as the religion is corrupted — we would not be committing ecocide, wasting our lives in boring obligation, etc.

However, it's not accessible to everyone. It probably requires at least 120 IQ points to see.

I guess we could always enforce a "natural selection event" which peeled off the under-120s. Hmm.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The real cause of ecocide: overpopulation

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Can't love this article too much:

Jonathon Porritt, former chairman of the Green party, and the heart of the Sustainable Development Commission, is back on the scene today, reminding us that the battles we are waging against global warming are not reaching the real root of the problem... population control!

You wouldn't help an alcoholic much by picking up the beer cans from around their yard, you wouldn't help a sex addict by providing free condoms at their doorstep every morning, and you certainly couldn't solve all the global warming issues of the world with advanced technology alone, when its the overpopulation of people who are causing the greatest burden on the planet.

Porritt is not advocating lining every adult male and female up for involuntary vasectomies and tubal ligation's. He is recommending that couples be taught about the importance of their responsibility for their our own carbon footprint and do what they can to reduce it. This means having fewer children, who would otherwise add a whole other imprint upon your own footprint.

[Treehugger](#)

His conclusions, however, are daft.

Our problem is that we have a species of glorified monkeys who have no problem eating a candy bar and throwing the wrapper on the ground — wherever they are.

Instead of trying to stop breeding by begging educated, compassionate people to stop breeding, guaranteeing that the next generation will be dumb and discompassionate, we should urge the dummies, criminals, perverts, impoverished, etc. to stop breeding so we don't get more of them.

Oh no, that's blasphemy! Worse than racism or Satanism! More vile than Stalin or Hitler!

Yeah, well, take your hidebound thinking and shove it. You liberals — people who believe humans as individuals are more important than a collective goal — have basically sponsored this ecocide, and now your empire's crumbling.

It's our turn now, and we aren't addicted to insane proclamations of human value that don't correspond to reality. Most people are stupid and defective, cruel and destructive, careless and wasteful, and most of all, not very bright. They're a half-step up from monkeys.

When we took over from nature by forming civilizations, we basically agreed to be responsible for our own natural selection. Because some fear, we've been chiseling away at that idea for centuries, creating this illusion of the self as higher than reality itself — in religion, it's called evangelical Christianity; in secular circles, it's called humanism.

Let's grow up, for once, and actually solve a problem. And all you antiquated, outdated, pathetic people who think liberalism is a solution will see how brainwashed and delusional you've been.

The Muslim population in Britain has grown by more than 500,000 to 2.4 million in just four years, according to official research collated for The Times.

The population multiplied 10 times faster than the rest of society, the research by the Office for National Statistics reveals. In the same period the number of Christians in the country fell by

more than 2 million.

Experts said that the increase was attributable to immigration, a higher birthrate and conversions to Islam during the period of 2004-2008, when the data was gathered.

[The Times](#)

Why is it that the whole world wants to immigrate to Europe and the USA?

Oh: because through the hard work of our ancestors, and their intelligence, we invented wealthy societies.

Why do the others not have wealth? Obviously, they weren't oppressed for all 3,000 years by the white man.

Something went wrong in their societies, obviously. Funny how it corresponds to [the IQ of each nation, which corresponds to its wealth.](#)

That's racist or classist, you say? Well, note how many white nations differ in IQ and so do their fortunes. So it's obviously not racist. Also note how class isn't mentioned. All I'm talking about is intelligence — which as [Stephen Pinker noted, is biological not "taught"](#) — which seems to be distributed unevenly.

Do we cry over the unevenness, dooming ourselves to the past, or move on? Some helpful words:

Mankind does not represent a development of the better of the stronger in the way that it is believed today. 'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea. The European of today is of far less value than the European of the Renaissance; onward development is not by any means, by any necessity the same thing as elevation, advance, strengthening.

In another sense there are cases of individual success constantly appearing in the most various parts of the earth and from the most various cultures in which a high type does manifest itself: something which in relation to collective mankind is a sort of superman. Such chance occurrences of great success have always been possible and perhaps always will be possible. And even entire races, tribes, nations can under certain circumstances represent such a lucky hit.

- Friedrich Nietzsche, The Anti-Christ

Knock yourselves out. (By "race" he means what we in modern times would call ethnicity, like Finnish or Nordic.)

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Darwinism](#).

Life would be easier this way but we choose to ignore it

Feb 1st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Cartwright's von Stauffenberg, you won't perhaps be surprised to learn, is a complex, nuanced figure, loathing Hitler but absorbed in an almost mystically conceived Teutonic past that leads straight back to Junker notions of an exclusive national destiny.

[The Independent](#)

Oh, the wise witty modern. Surrounded by his wasteland of a city strewn with crime and debris, in a disposable world, he scorns those antiquated notions of "exclusive national destiny," which means an organic society: one nation, one people, one culture, one language.

Yet every day we see how diversity means dumbing us all down into a generic culture, and how wasted our society is, and how neurotic and miserable everyone is.

Smart people would consider options, even those that had been used in the past.

Dumb people just keep congratulating themselves on how above it all they are.<

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Misconceptions about sluts

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

“A lot of women may call me a slag, but I’m not. The sex is on my terms — I call the shots.”

This is from Louise, who likes to bed random strangers:

The 25-year-old bar manager is hooked on net sex and has slept with 200 online date mates.

She admits: “I can’t explain the buzz I get from meeting someone for the first time and knowing that in a couple of hours we’ll be ripping each other’s clothes off. It’s addictive.

[News of the World](#)

Louise, a slag is someone who is addicted to sex in lieu of having a plan. A slut is someone who sleeps with others easily. You’re the ultimate easy — they just have to go along with it and, thinking you’re in control, you act out your slaggishness.

Brought to you by the committee for the correct usage of insults.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Italy defends its culture, culinarily

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Other European countries do this, just indirectly and not as effectively. Asian countries are more forthright about it -and- no one wants to import cuisine into the land of lemon chicken.

The tomato comes from Peru and spaghetti was probably a gift from China.

It is, though, the “foreign” kebab that is being kicked out of Italian cities as it becomes the target of a campaign against ethnic food, backed by the centre-right Government of Silvio Berlusconi.

The drive to make Italians eat Italian, which was described by the Left and leading chefs as gastronomic racism, began in the town of Lucca this week, where the council banned any new ethnic food outlets from opening within the ancient city walls.

[The Times](#)

It's sensible to be honest in what we want:

- Set a goal
- Define the steps that need to be taken
- Make sure those who do them are rewarded
- Clearly define what is not wanted

Most Western societies let money, not the law, do the talking for them, because they're afraid of revolutions.

The result is a maze of hidden rules and regulations and inefficient enforcement that will collapse as soon as 20 guys with AKs arrive angry in the same place at once.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

We are starved for real experience

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Companies are sending staff to experience a plane crash in simulators run by British Airways as the ultimate team-building exercise.

For £130 a head, employees are taken to a hangar at Heathrow where they board a shortened version of a Boeing 737 mounted on a motion platform.

After "takeoff", they are plunged into darkness and put into a nose-dive from 3,000ft as the cabin begins to fill with smoke.

Once the plane has hit the ground, the "passengers" have to get out as fast as they can through the front and rear exits. By this stage, the employees are so pumped up that on three separate occasions businessmen have shorn through a half-inch steel bolt by hand so as to lift a 45lb overhead escape hatch and climb onto the plane's wing.

[The Times](#)

People have no meaning in their lives.

Give them an emergency and they leave their comfort zones and wish-fulfillment fantasies, and feel "real" again.

Instead they get this surrogate, which probably causes massive depression when it's over.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

What does modern society do to children?

Feb 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Experts warn that young people are suffering from stress and anxiety, parents are too scared to let their children play freely and newspaper headlines paint a picture of Britain in which childhood is fast disappearing.

- Depression and anxiety have increased for boys and girls aged 15 to 16 since the mid-1980s, as have what are called “non-aggressive conduct problems” such as lying, stealing and disobedience
- One in five children and young people have mental health problems at some point, and one in 10 have a clinically recognisable mental health disorder
- Up to one in 12 children deliberately hurt themselves on a regular basis – the highest rate in Europe
- Children have lost the freedom to play outside because of their parents’ fears.

[The Guardian](#)

And:

BRITAIN'S cult of individualism, greed and selfishness has so blighted children's lives that families and pupils need basic training in love and moral responsibility, according to a landmark report on the state of childhood.

The report, endorsed by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, is likely to be used as a weapon by the Conservatives to attack Labour for what David Cameron has called “broken Britain”.

A Good Childhood states emphatically that society has been damaged by rampant individualism, that Britain is one of the countries worst affected and that this ethos needs to be replaced by a greater sense of personal responsibility and the common good.

[The Times](#)

Society has lost track of a positive goal.

We support facilitative goals, like diversity and openness, but not having an actual goal.

As a result, chaos surges in. From that, parents get scared. Schools have to educate the stupid instead of the smart. Childhood becomes a boring, fearful time.

And this is in one of the richest nations on earth! Good thinking. Where you went wrong was in pandering to the broadest elements of your electorate.

Since all instinctive behaviors have an evolutionary advantage or they would not have been retained for millions of years, chances are that this one too has helped us survive as a species. And, indeed, accumulating evidence strongly suggests that eating dirt is good for you.

In studies of what is called the hygiene hypothesis, researchers are concluding that organisms like the millions of bacteria, viruses and especially worms that enter the body along with “dirt” spur the development of a healthy immune system. Several continuing studies suggest that

worms may help to redirect an immune system that has gone awry and resulted in autoimmune disorders, allergies and asthma.

These studies, along with epidemiological observations, seem to explain why immune system disorders like multiple sclerosis, Type 1 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, asthma and allergies have risen significantly in the United States and other developed countries.

[NYT](#)

It's a metaphor: in our quest to rid ourselves of "bad," we have been left with not "good" but an incomplete cycle.

The full cycle requires both good and bad, like life is both birth and death.

We want to convince everyone they're OK so we can manipulate them. This is a byproduct of specialization of labor: you need to get other people to do stuff for you, and the best way is through conspicuous altruism, or "demonstrating" to them that you're good by:

- Helping those who cannot help themselves (pity)
- Accepting all blindly (equality)
- Crusading against those who do not accept the above (solidarity)

So we've removed dirt, hackers, racists, fundamentalists, etc. — the list will always go on.

But we're not left with health. Instead, we have broken lives in which our defenses attack ourselves because we're incomplete.

That's how societies die.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Government-Sanctioned Duopoly: Pick Verizon or Comcast

Jan 31st, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

I have Verizon Wireless for cell phone service and based on their customer service over the years, I see no reason to give them any more money. I also read [an online blog](#) about their horrible customer service and was convinced to stick to Comcast wherever possible. Verizon owns the telephone lines (DSL service where available and telephone service), and a new infrastructure they spent billions throwing into the ground, called FiOS; Comcast owns the cable lines (cable TV, cable internet, digital voice through Verizon's phone lines).

Problem is, those are my choices. I'm not one for too many choices – go into a furniture mega-store and try to figure out exactly what you want within an hour; I tried that recently and it didn't work out so well. We recently got the itch for a land line, more for security reasons than a need to call people, and here were our options:

- Verizon: \$39.99 per month for unlimited national dialing with a few features (Caller ID, Voicemail, etc.), or \$29.99 per month for a local calling plan that allows us to call towns we border for free, and 5 cents per minute otherwise.
- Comcast: \$39.99 per month for unlimited national dialing with a bunch of features, a few more than Verizon but not much, or \$29.99 per month for local calling to towns near us.

\$40 a month for national; \$30 a month for local. Most economists would call that price fixing, but since we have VoIP networks now, technically there's competition (even though having a land line from actual telephone wires tends to be superior to internet-based phone services).

That means suddenly our "services" bill nearly doubles. It's interesting just how much people are willing to pay for TV and internet services these days, with the land line being a mere afterthought. The land line is now priced at a premium because if you want an old-fashioned land line, you have two choices, and the prices are the same. This is your government at work: years of regulation and then semi-deregulation allowed the "haves" to continue to own the infrastructure, so why should they even allow competition?

[This article](#) does a good job of explaining the problems with two companies controlling these services that most want.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [television](#)

Why I Hate iTunes

Jan 31st, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

I've been using iTunes for about 3 years, ever since I first had the (mis)fortune of receiving an iPod for a Christmas gift. At the time, and since, I was working out often enough and decided it would be nice to have. It's also nice once you can get it working in a car built before 2003 or so. Speaking of that, let's get right to the reasons I hate Apple and iTunes.

iPod:

- My car's tape deck comes with a little flip top lid which has an exterior LCD display. People told me, "just get one of those radio transceiver thingies and you'll be fine". The quality is always terrible, especially in a place like Massachusetts where there are so many radio stations there's hardly any bandwidth left to use for the broadcast of your iPod. I have an iPod; why would I want to broadcast it through the air so I can listen to something of less quality?
- Crashes a lot after 3 years of light use. I know, I know, which electronics out there last a while? Hm, let's see – I've had the original hard drive in my PC for six solid years now, added components, taken some out, had wireless, had Norton on there (thankfully that's gone), done ridiculous amounts of downloading, asked it to do more than I probably should...and it's still kickin'. No problems...knock on wood. Even the power supply is original. I'll be upgrading some components shortly, but if Dell can make a much more complicated piece of machinery and Windows can make an OS that doesn't crash for six years, what is Apple doing wrong, and what's with all the snooty commercials about how stable their products are?
- Recently, I had to make an appointment with an "Apple genius" at an Apple store so he could revive my iPod after it was "REALLY frozen". Not "kinda" frozen, but "REALLY" frozen. He had to do some weird mojo on it: toggle the "hold" switch (courtesy of Sony...had one of those on my MiniDisc player, which I actually preferred now that I think of it); plug it into a wall outlet, then do the "hold down menu and middle button" thing to restart it.
- Back to the car thing, I had to take out my tape deck, put a tape converter in, thread the wire around the back of the tape deck, and have the wire piece hanging out by the ash tray so I could use my iPod via my tape deck and get somewhat decent quality during car rides. I guess I'd have to do that with any car without an Aux In port, but it still pissed me off.

iTunes:

- Generally speaking, it's a clunky program. Weird menus, iTunes store sucks and it's difficult to find things...and they wonder why people illegally download music and movies. Search capability and user-specific sorting capability is sorely lacking. And therein lies the problem with Apple: its users just blindly accept whatever the programmers want them to do, instead of customizing for the benefit of the user. Seems like a small thing until you're trying to appeal to millions and millions of PC users and making annoying commercials.
- You go and download some album from some random source, and you instruct iTunes to "Add folder to your library". Pretty simple, but if it's not tagged using one of iTunes' preferred methods, you have to search for your recently added music – which means if there's no tag, you have to go through ALL of your music until you figure out how iTunes decided to label it, or maybe it was mislabeled in the first place. You can't just scroll to the bottom of the list of all of your music.

I'm going back to WinAmp, where at least when you add something it goes to the bottom of the list and you have the option of relabeling and sorting easily. It's been hours and I cannot find some music anywhere in iTunes even though I saw iTunes go through the process of adding the songs...no thanks to this program.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Heating up the ethnic-cultural comedy

Jan 31st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Now that we've got a black president, people are feeling more empowered to make comedy not about empowerment, but about mocking stupidity. In this case, it's trans-racial appropriation of a grotesque caricature of that moronic subculture that imitates the music and lifestyle made by black people and predominantly consumed by bored suburban youth: gangsta rap.

There is a huge population of people trying to make themselves look like gangsters and thugs while talking in fabricated words and taking shirtless pictures of themselves in their bathrooms with camera phones. Fat 19-year-olds with half a dozen children that they dress up like dolls keep trying to talk to me as if I think they are human beings. I've decided to go undercover and infiltrate their community by acting as one of their own. Here are the results of my experiment...

<http://www.holladaddy.com/>

Most of those ensnared are black, but not all. He's an equal opportunity stupidity identifier. Look for this meme to catch on as people stop tolerating stupidity because it appears under the guise of racial empowerment.

And also from the "Let's all be equal" comedy files:

A drug that stimulates the body's tanning response — turning pasty skin caramel for up to two months — has been approved for human trials, but not for tanning.

"It's a bioabsorbable implant that you just inject into the skin," said Colin Mackie, director of business development for Clinuvel, the company bringing the drug to the U.S. "It stimulates melanin production."

Melanin is the body's natural pigment. It's responsible for the color of skin and protects humans from harmful solar radiation.

[Wired](#)

Reminds me of the time Oliver Wendell Holmes turned Steve Dallas "black" with his melanin ray.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Modernism (personal reality) kills

Jan 31st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

On the eve of a BBC1 documentary on the life of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution, Sir David has criticised the centuries-old idea running through the Judaeo-Christian tradition which assumes God gave the Earth to man to exploit and use in whatever way he saw fit in order to populate the world.

Sir David, 82, said the devastation of the environment has its roots in the first words that God supposedly uttered to humankind, as detailed in Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

"That basic notion, that the world is there for us and if it doesn't actually serve our purposes, it's dispensable, that has produced the devastation of vast areas of the land's surface.

"Of course it's a gross oversimplification, but that's why Darwinism, and the fact of evolution, is of great importance because it is that attitude which has led to the devastation of so much, and we are in the situation that we are in," he told the science journal Nature.

[Independent](#)

Just like a scientist: identify the hammer, not the hand that swings it!

The problem is the idea of a personal reality. I am human, therefore I gain the right to believe in my own reality and judge earth accordingly.

From that comes: we're all equal, because I'd hate to admit someone has better judgment skills than I do.

That in turn unravels into "no one can tell me what to do," and because that's bratty, it becomes "I am oppressed by the law / the money / the Gods."

And so we have a huge mass of people united only by "I only wanna do what I wanna do."

France paralysed by a wave of strike action, the boulevards of Paris resembling a debris-strewn battlefield. The Hungarian currency sinks to its lowest level ever against the euro, as the unemployment figure rises. Greek farmers block the road into Bulgaria in protest at low prices for their produce. New figures from the biggest bank in the Baltic show that the three post-Soviet states there face the biggest recessions in Europe.

It's a snapshot of a single day – yesterday – in a Europe sinking into the bleakest of times. But while the outlook may be dark in the big wealthy democracies of western Europe, it is in the young, poor, vulnerable states of central and eastern Europe that the trauma of crash, slump and meltdown looks graver.

Exactly 20 years ago, in serial revolutionary rejoicing, they ditched communism to put their faith in a capitalism now in crisis and by which they feel betrayed.

[The Guardian](#)

Ah, idiots. So resourceful in always finding someone to blame, thus obscuring reality.

They ditched 1968-style socialism in the 1980s because it was convenient.

Now they want to ditch capitalism for 1968-version-2.0-cum-Obama socialism, and are hoping that's the magic bullet.

All these buttons, just gotta press the right one!

Maybe look at the whole of society for a change, and identify where it's gone off course? Well, that brings us to the troubling realization that we're not all kings in our own domain... but it would save us... but it offends us personally, so it's taboo.

More than one society has died of its own taboos.

"Sarkozy gives money to the people who created this crisis, but what about the man in the street?" shouted Antoine Laurent, 20, a history student at the Sorbonne University.

Behind him a group chanted: "Stop the sackings, it's not up to workers to pay for bankers."

[The Telegraph](#)

No, dummies... it's not that easy.

You need to build infrastructure.

You're looking at a barren farm and saying "But the farmer got fed!"... yes, because if you're a farmer and you produce 20% of what crop you normally have, you better eat it, because no one else is going to give you anything.

These entitlement brats think we can just hand out cash and there are no consequences. Durr, that cash has to come from somewhere — if we just hand it out, we devalue it and so your \$500 handout becomes \$5 in the "old money." (We saw that happen in Mexico in the 1980s, remember?)

World leaders are in retreat as well. Sarkozy will do nothing radical because we all saw what happened to George W. Bush. Even if what you do is not that bad, the media and the great masses of clueless will fawn and howl and whine and riot until you're out of office, replaced by a panderer.

Behind the plastic smile of Barack Obama, for example, there's a simple Bill Clintonian truth: figure out what the polls say, and give it to them — the undifferentiated masses — because you never stay in power by supporting those with a clue.

You stay in power by supporting those who are clueless, and so demand a lot, and you can give it to them and not tell them it's going to be worth \$5 tomorrow.

You stay in power, and the economy slowly collapses inward, and the next guy in office needs to deal with it.

But you? You've made the right decision, personally: you got your \$25 million career and you can now afford to join the ultra-rich and leave behind your shattered homeland as it careens into third-world status.

Watch the USA and Europe do it.

What's more fascinating is the people who aren't rioting. The engineers at home designing breakaway civilizations. The country folk building hamlets. The hackers conspiring toward a technological new world order that could hide itself in the midst of the decay.

That's tomorrow's story. The fall of the West is yesterday's, in case you don't get the *T.S. Eliot News and World Report*.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Remember that race isn't genetic according to corporate barons and hippie activists alike

Jan 28th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Your last three presidents think race isn't genetic.

Every single person in Hollywood thinks race isn't genetic.

All of the hippie activists think race isn't genetic.

Every American and multi-national corporation has adopted the position: race isn't genetic.

It flatters everyone to think we can all be whatever we want to be. Social mobility. If your grandparents were peasants, maybe you can be President. Hope, Change, Freedom, Justice, Equality, Liberty, Fraternity!

We also like to get ahead in social status by telling everyone they can be anything, and by helping those who cannot help themselves. These ineffective and inexpensive actions make us look good, even if we have to lie to do it.

African-American men with family histories of prostate cancer could benefit from a baseline prostate-specific antigen (PSA) reading to determine their probability of developing the disease.

The effect of the baseline PSA level on future prostate cancer risk was so robust that the correlation held true even for men with other significant risk factors.

Using a study cohort drawn from a longitudinal screening study enrolling more than 26,000 volunteers between 1991 and 2001, researchers analyzed a group of 329 African-American men with a family history of prostate cancer.

Eight percent of men in their 40s with both risk factors and a PSA above the median were diagnosed, as were 16 percent of men in their 50s. Twice as many men in their 60s with both risk factors and a baseline PSA above the median were diagnosed with prostate cancer.

[Science Daily](#)

Medical science treats all of these factors as important: race, age, PSA and risk-factors. African-Americans have more, different, and more pernicious cancers than white people.

At some point, we will grow up as a species and admit that evolution happened, and different groups going into different types of civilizations in different climates permitted genetic change — or genetic adaptation. Africans, for example, are the most diverse; white people are the least diverse. But the specialized groups have genes adapted to deal with certain circumstances they encountered.

Our wise cohorts think that genetic engineering will be the future. But GM foods have worked so badly we're rethinking that. Race, like age and gender and other factors, is part of reality, and denying reality always ends badly.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Why humanity is unable to respond to global warming and ecocide

Jan 27th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

We, the People, are about to exterminate multiple ecosystems on our planet and kill all things within them. In addition, we are about to raise our planet's temperature and cause other grisly effects. So say many but not all of our best scientists.

Yet nothing is happening. I mean, besides buying fluorescent light bulbs. Why? Do people not care? Do people want to do evil? Are we really this bad?

Think it through:

To act, we have to act together. If just some of us act, the others will take advantage of that and make themselves more powerful at the expense of those. This means that we have to force all of us together to do the same things.

Even more, we're divided by inequality, despite two thousand years of trying to eradicate it. Third world nations want the first world to take the brunt of this issue. First world nations point out that they have infrastructure obligations and aren't going to back down from civilization so others can get ahead.

Finally, we have to all somewhat agree on the issue, and we don't. Some scientists say that global warming is real, yet we can all recognize the kind of cliques that can form when an idea is trendy.

Many of us distrust the media and government, including people like Barack Obama and Bill Clinton who always pander to the crowd, doing exactly what is popular but not necessarily what's best in the long term.

Did that last sentence offend you? I was just about to mention how politically divided we are, forming our identities from politics and uncritically believed one side or the other.

We just can't get consensus on how we should act about global warming as a result of these factors.

The pioneering study, led by NOAA senior scientist Susan Solomon, shows how changes in surface temperature, rainfall, and sea level are largely irreversible for more than 1,000 years after carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are completely stopped.

The study examines the consequences of allowing CO₂ to build up to several different peak levels beyond present-day concentrations of 385 parts per million and then completely halting the emissions after the peak. The authors found that the scientific evidence is strong enough to quantify some irreversible climate impacts, including rainfall changes in certain key regions, and global sea level rise.

[NOAA](#)

(My take on the above article: we're about to run into expensive petroleum, which is a good thing. In fact, it would be best if some nation like the USA took over a major part of the supply and hoarded it for military purposes. That would fix our global warming dilemma by not letting us get over the threshold identified in the article.)

Therefore, my prediction:

Humanity will take no effective action against environmental change, climate change, or ecocide. And we'd all rather be right, by our own political identities, than fix the problem — at least we all go down together,

equally.

Posted in: [Conservation](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

We're all equal, and if not, we'll punish those more equal until they're equal like the rest of us

Jan 26th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The coach of a Texas high school basketball team that beat another team 100-0 was fired Sunday, the same day he sent an e-mail to a newspaper saying he will not apologize "for a wide-margin victory when my girls played with honor and integrity."

On its Web site last week, the Covenant School of Dallas, a private Christian school, posted a statement regretting the outcome of its Jan. 13 shutout win over Dallas Academy. "It is shameful and an embarrassment that this happened. This clearly does not reflect a Christlike and honorable approach to competition," said the statement, signed by Kyle Queal, head of school, and board chair Todd Doshier.

"In response to the statement posted on The Covenant School Web site, I do not agree with the apology or the notion that the Covenant School girls basketball team should feel embarrassed or ashamed," Grimes wrote in the e-mail, according to the newspaper. "We played the game as it was meant to be played. My values and my beliefs would not allow me to run up the score on any opponent, and it will not allow me to apologize for a wide-margin victory when my girls played with honor and integrity."

[ESPN](#)

We like to pander to the crowd with little fictions. When we cannot maintain those fictions, we get upset and blame someone, so that the rest of us can continue evading responsibility and living with an ethic of convenience.

That's clearly not the way to a superior society, but if you say that, you're a bigot and need to burn in hell and/or be fired, whichever comes first, you fascist.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Bush won

Jan 26th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

OSAMA BIN LADEN'S messages from the wilderness get little attention nowadays. Al-Qaeda has been unable to land a blow on Western soil since the 2005 London bombings. Its leaders lurk in Pakistan's tribal belt, hiding from regular lethal attacks by America's unmanned Predator aircraft. Their Pushtun hosts are tiring of their troublesome guests. Perhaps most damaging, former supporters publicly denounce its ideology.

The resultant bickering and low morale do not mean that al-Qaeda and its followers cannot still mount spectacular attacks. Western intelligence services are convinced the group tried to blow up several transatlantic airliners in 2006. It can still pose a menace in, say, parts of Asia. But for now, Mr bin Laden has to try to exploit the news, rather than to make it.

[The Economist](#)

Bush's plan for al-Qaeda wasn't much different than Reagan's plan for the Soviets: since war is basically a case of who can outspend the other, why not use the threat of war as a weapon to force your enemy into outspending themselves?

Al-Qaeda could afford to run an organization when they didn't need to hide every single detail of what they did. Now, they must have layers of additional protocol, and carefully hide their funds. All this adds up to a lot of money, and now they're broke and ineffective.

History will probably eventually note that G.W. Bush did this to them. Even while 78% of the American people whine like sofa-bound brats about him, he achieved what he set out to do: defeat the enemy and protect the homeland. Whether he did it for Jesus, alcoholics anonymous, or the goodness of his heart is probably irrelevant.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Politics](#).

We all want to be with people like us

Jan 26th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The big human fiction: we can all be whatever we want, at any time, because we're all important if we're socially important.

The reality: our abilities determine what we're going to be.

The controversy:

A holiday firm which emailed its customers offering 'chav free' vacations has found itself accused of class discrimination.

Activities Abroad contacted 24,000 customers with a list of names they were not likely to encounter on one of their holidays, including Britney, Dazza, Chardonnay and Candice.

In the email newsletter, headed Chav Free Activity Holidays, [Founder Alistair McLean] wrote: 'According to the Daily Mail, children with middle-class names such as Duncan and Catherine are eight times more likely to pass their GCSEs than children with names such as Wayne and Dwayne.'

Stung into replying, Mr McLean launched an impassioned defence of his original email, writing: 'I simply feel it is time the middle classes stood up for themselves. We work hard to make a decent home and life for our families and we pay our taxes to contribute to our society and economy.'

'Unfortunately, everybody else in our society seems to take from us, whether it is incompetent bankers or the shell suited urchins who haunt our street corners.'

[The Daily Mail](#)

If you work hard, think hard, take what you do seriously, you do not want to take a vacation alongside people who resentfully follow orders, are sloppy, and live lives of half-work and half-thought. You view these people as idiots, but not pejoratively, only that the reward of your work should include not being near them.

They, on the other hand, see no reason why they shouldn't have what you should have. And this issue has divided the West for centuries and now is destroying it: the we-should-all-have-it individualist have-nots, who have no idea that someone has to actually *create* wealth, and then the people who are trying to escape the morass of dysfunction made by the have-nots.

The targets for 'abolishing child poverty' do not aim to bring real light and rescue into these nightmare lives. They just aim to 'close the gap' between them and the remaining working households, the hated 'middle class'.

It only makes sense when you grasp that the target is the difference in income between the neglected classes and the striving classes. It is nothing to do with the truly rich, for many New Labour backers are very rich themselves, and in any case, they will simply go elsewhere if they are robbed by the state.

The middle classes are not good because they are better off. They are better off because they are good. This is the fundamental truth that socialism has always hated.

For socialists believe that they alone are good, that their ideas alone are good. This leads on to

the next stage – their belief that they alone should control the state, that they should decide what is good for us, and how we should be rewarded – and in the end that those who disagree with them are dangerous and should be silenced.

[Peter Hitchens](#)

Hitchens says it well: socialism is well-named, because it is when a group of people get together and using social logic of flattering each other, decide they're all entitled to whatever others have. Further, they argue, since they discovered this Christlike new Truth and Progress, they alone have the right to rule.

In France and in Russia, they left ruined societies behind them. In the third world, like Brazil or Venezuela, they specialize in driving out smart people and replacing them with teeming masses who are not only incompetent but hate anyone who is.

Police states exist when large groups of people exist who cannot control themselves. Since we can't acknowledge that some people can control themselves, and we need more people like this, we invent equal draconian rules to keep people in line since they do not have the common sense to do it themselves in all cases.

We should just grow up and get over this problem. Some are gifted by nature; they are the future of evolution. Others are not, and should not be supported. Let natural selection make better people. We need people who do not need to be controlled.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Thailand gets rid of parasites

Jan 26th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Summary: Myanmar sets loose members of a minority sect, sends them to Thailand. Thailand says "Hmm, parasites," and drags them out to sea and cuts them loose.

A CNN crew traveled to a remote stretch of the Thai coast four hours north of the tourist island of Phuket to investigate the growing reports that the Thai military was secretly detaining Rohingya refugees before towing them out to sea and setting them adrift.

One photo shows the Thai army towing a boatload of some 190 refugees far out to sea.

The Rohingya, a persecuted minority in Myanmar, have been fleeing their country in rickety boats for years, in search of a better life.

[A source in the Thai military] claimed local villagers had become afraid of the hundreds of Rohingya arriving each month, and that they were accusing the refugees of stealing their property and threatening them.

[CNN](#)

The same story everywhere:

People become refugees for a reason.

They then become parasites when they reach a new nation whose population is different than they are.

If we are to be penalized for excluding others for their differentness, who will speak up for us when immigrants exclude us because of our differentness, and refuse to assimilate?

The answer is that assimilation and integration never work, as is shown by the total lack of historical examples of successful multicultural ("diverse") societies.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#).

Prison labor makes a comeback

Jan 26th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

But this farming town of 1,500 wants its criminal element to stick around. Town leaders say they don't know what they will do without the free or ultra-cheap labor the jailbirds provide. "Oh my goodness, gracious, they are such an asset — they are our public-works department," said Ms. Hall.

Last year, Charleston's prisoners did 39,337 hours of community work, prison officials say, roughly the equivalent of 19 full-timers.

When a minimum-security prison was built in downtown Wooster, Ohio, a decade ago, "we took a lot of heat" from people who didn't want it, says Capt. Charlie Hardman of the sheriff's department there. But now that budget cuts could close the facility, he says, "People are concerned. Who is going to pick up the litter?"

[WSJ](#)

Why not view all of us as resources to be used as we best fit? Prison labor and robot labor eliminate the need for tiresome employees who hate their jobs, hate their lives and are consequently destructive.

It makes sense even further to go to a feudal system and enslave the chronically poor. They cannot manage their own lives, as is evidenced by the ghettos they create wherever they move. They cannot manage their own finances. They have trouble keeping jobs. Solution: tell them exactly what to do and provide a nice life for them via benevolent slavery.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Not everyone feels accepted and represented — so dumb it down!

Jan 26th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Exhibits in the progress of hilariously unsubtle yet completely ignored decline:

Learning to write in script is a time-honored tradition. But in today's time-starved classrooms, some around the country are questioning whether, given everything else vying for space in the curriculum and the increasing use of technology, teaching these children cursive is even necessary.

Local teachers say, if nothing else, its emphasis has diminished in recent years.

"Historically, we teach less cursive now," said Webb, whose class works on handwriting for short periods two to three days each week. "It seems we have more and more standards we need to cover. The emphasis is on science and reading."

{ snip }

Ninety percent of teachers who responded said their schools required instruction in handwriting. Of those who taught it, half of second-grade teachers and 90 percent of third-grade teachers offered cursive instruction.

Also, the emphasis has shifted from the beauty of handwriting to writing efficiently, the study found.

[IndyStar](#)

Science and reading... that sounds good. Those are good categories. You almost think, that's the right thing to do!, until you realize that those, too, are probably dumbed down. Science means watching nature TV and reading probably means political propaganda in very small words.

Continuing the circling of the drain:

Research suggests a third of UK adults will be grossly overweight within three years, with Britain even predicted to overtake the US as the most obese nation in the world.

The problem already causes 9,000 premature deaths in the UK a year and costs the NHS £1billion.

[Daily Express](#)

You have the freedom to be fat. You have the freedom to be dumb. You have the freedom to not give a damn about the national culture, and the freedom to run a business that indirectly creates destruction. I don't have the freedom to demand a functional society staffed by those I consider my peers, or the freedom to demand people think clearly.

That's not "freedom," because We define freedom.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Diversity: possibly poisonous

Jan 25th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Multi-ethnic societies have always faced a high risk of dissension and civil war, and few such societies have been fully successful. Yet since the 18th century the United States has impressed foreign observers with its ability to unite and integrate people from diverse and even mutually hostile backgrounds (e.g., Crevecoeur, 1782/1997; de Tocqueville, 1835/1945).

{ snip }

Beginning in the 1960s, however, American society has seen a major movement away from "unum" and toward "pluribus." With the rise of identity politics, political correctness, and the multiculturalist movement in the 1980's, many historians and political scientists began to worry about new divisions and hostilities within American society.

{ snip }

In a widely cited book, *The Disuniting of America*, the liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger (1991, p.58) worried that "the cult of ethnicity exaggerates the differences, intensifies resentments and antagonisms, drives ever deeper the awful wedges between races and nationalities. The endgame is self-pity and self-ghettoization."

{ snip }

When divisions are made on the basis of socially significant factors such as race, religion, sexual orientation, or country of origin, the resulting intergroup hostility can be far more serious. The most deadly riots in American history, from the draft riots of 1863 to the Los Angeles riots of 1992, have been race riots (Morris & Morris, 1976). Most American street gangs form along racial or ethnic lines (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 1997). It seems that people, especially young men, will spontaneously form groups based on racial or ethnic similarity, and groups of young men will actively seek out other groups of young men for competition and conflict (Tiger, 1969).

{ snip }

Several organizational behavior researchers have suggested that different kinds of diversity may have different kinds of effects. Jackson, Stone, and Alvarez (1992, p.56) distinguished demographic attributes from personal attributes. Demographic attributes are "those that are immutable, that can be readily detected during a brief interaction with a person, and for which social consensus can be assumed (e.g., sex, race, ethnicity, age)." Personal attributes, on the other hand, are "mutable and subjectively construed psychological and interpersonal characteristics (e.g. status, knowledge, behavioral style), which can change as a consequence of socialization processes." One personal attribute that they mentioned but did not discuss at length is values, including attitudes of all sorts.

{ snip }

Moral diversity can be similarly defined as the state of a group when a substantial percentage of its members (20%?) do not value the most valued moral goods of a community. Moral goods are social, personal, or spiritual obligations (e.g., justice, social harmony, self-actualization, piety, chastity) to which one appeals to justify or criticize the practices and behaviors of others, and which are felt to be binding on all people (or at least on all people in a particular role or position; see Shweder & Haidt, 1993; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997). Moral goods

are experienced as affectively laden self-evident truths, or intuitions; people care strongly about them, and find it difficult to explain their goodness to someone who does not share their intuition (Haidt, in press). A simpler but equivalent way of describing moral diversity is as the state of a group when many different ideas of right and wrong are represented, and there is no widespread consensus about which moral goods should be pursued.

{ snip }

An enormous body of research demonstrates the importance of similarity, particularly shared attitudes, for interpersonal attraction and cooperation (Byrne & Clore, 1970; Byrne & Nelson, 1965; Heider, 1958; Newcomb, 1961, 1978). Interacting with people who hold dissimilar attitudes raises skin conductance levels (Clore & Gormly, 1974), providing a visceral cue that may damage further interactions. Disagreements that challenge one's cultural and moral worldview lead to desires for ostracism and punishment (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). Byrne et al. (1975, p.206) noted that "the response to the threat raised by disagreement is to denigrate those who disagree; not only are they rejected, but they are also seen as lacking in intelligence, knowledge, morality, and psychological adjustment."

[Differentiating Diversities: Moral diversity is not like other kinds](#)

Interesting point: if we're not all on the same page regarding our most commonly accepted values, our society falls apart. The biggest problems are the ones everyone assumes are obviously answered.

Haidt updates this research with a quick note of common sense:

The most offensive idea in all of science for the last 40 years is the possibility that behavioral differences between racial and ethnic groups have some genetic basis. Knowing nothing but the long-term offensiveness of this idea, a betting person would have to predict that as we decode the genomes of people around the world, we're going to find deeper differences than most scientists now expect. Expectations, after all, are not based purely on current evidence; they are biased, even if only slightly, by the gut feelings of the researchers, and those gut feelings include disgust toward racism..

A wall has long protected respectable evolutionary inquiry from accusations of aiding and abetting racism. That wall is the belief that genetic change happens at such a glacial pace that there simply was not time, in the 50,000 years since humans spread out from Africa, for selection pressures to have altered the genome in anything but the most trivial way (e.g., changes in skin color and nose shape were adaptive responses to cold climates). Evolutionary psychology has therefore focused on the Pleistocene era – the period from about 1.8 million years ago to the dawn of agriculture — during which our common humanity was forged for the hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

But the writing is on the wall. Russian scientists showed in the 1990s that a strong selection pressure (picking out and breeding only the tamest fox pups in each generation) created what was — in behavior as well as body — essentially a new species in just 30 generations. That would correspond to about 750 years for humans. Humans may never have experienced such a strong selection pressure for such a long period, but they surely experienced many weaker selection pressures that lasted far longer, and for which some heritable personality traits were more adaptive than others. It stands to reason that local populations (not continent-wide "races") adapted to local circumstances by a process known as "co-evolution" in which genes and cultural elements change over time and mutually influence each other. The best documented example of this process is the co-evolution of genetic mutations that maintain the ability to fully digest lactose in adulthood with the cultural innovation of keeping cattle and drinking their milk. This process has happened several times in the last 10,000 years, not to whole "races" but to tribes or larger groups that domesticated cattle.

Recent "sweeps" of the genome across human populations show that hundreds of genes have

been changing during the last 5-10 millennia in response to local selection pressures. (See papers by Benjamin Voight, Scott Williamson, and Bruce Lahn). No new mental modules can be created from scratch in a few millennia, but slight tweaks to existing mechanisms can happen quickly, and small genetic changes can have big behavioral effects, as with those Russian foxes. We must therefore begin looking beyond the Pleistocene and turn our attention to the Holocene era as well – the last 10,000 years. This was the period after the spread of agriculture during which the pace of genetic change sped up in response to the enormous increase in the variety of ways that humans earned their living, formed larger coalitions, fought wars, and competed for resources and mates.

The protective “wall” is about to come crashing down, and all sorts of uncomfortable claims are going to pour in. Skin color has no moral significance, but traits that led to Darwinian success in one of the many new niches and occupations of Holocene life — traits such as collectivism, clannishness, aggressiveness, docility, or the ability to delay gratification — are often seen as virtues or vices. Virtues are acquired slowly, by practice within a cultural context, but the discovery that there might be ethnically-linked genetic variations in the ease with which people can acquire specific virtues is — and this is my prediction — going to be a “game changing” scientific event. (By “ethnic” I mean any group of people who believe they share common descent, actually do share common descent, and that descent involved at least 500 years of a sustained selection pressure, such as sheep herding, rice farming, exposure to malaria, or a caste-based social order, which favored some heritable behavioral predispositions and not others.)

I believe that the “Bell Curve” wars of the 1990s, over race differences in intelligence, will seem genteel and short-lived compared to the coming arguments over ethnic differences in moralized traits. I predict that this “war” will break out between 2012 and 2017.

[Edge](#)

Something in me gets queasy when truth and observable knowledge are swept under the rug by social pretense.

I hope he's right, and that science continues to illuminate humanity from within without bowing to the opinions of humans as they'd like to consider themselves. So far, the record is very mixed.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Narcissism is surrender

Jan 24th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

"What does a woman want?" A host of controversial theories about the nature of female desire are offered up — most notably, that it is "rudderless," "receptive," "narcissistic" and "dominated by the yearnings of 'self-love.'"

Most interesting is a study of men's and women's responses to various genres of pornography, including "heterosexual sex, male and female homosexual sex, a man masturbating, a woman masturbating, a chiseled man walking naked on a beach and a well-toned woman doing calisthenics in the nude."

As for the women? They reacted like total horndogs — everything got their blood flowing:

"No matter what their self-proclaimed sexual orientation, they showed, on the whole, strong and swift genital arousal when the screen offered men with men, women with women and women with men. They responded objectively much more to the exercising woman than to the strolling man, and their blood flow rose quickly ... as they watched the apes."

In other words, women were physiologically aroused by a far greater range of sexual images; however, they were cognitively clueless to that fact.

The occasional cases of women having an orgasm while being raped and evidence of women's physical arousal while hearing a description of a rape have supported her thesis. Chivers guesses that the physical response is a way "to reduce discomfort, and the possibility of injury, during vaginal penetration. . . . Ancestral women who did not show an automatic vaginal response to sexual cues may have been more likely to experience injuries during unwanted vaginal penetration that resulted in illness, infertility or even death, and thus would be less likely to have passed on this trait to their offspring."

It's at this point in our journey into the dark world of women's sexuality that those politically incorrect ideas arise. Here, the leap is made to also viewing women's desire, and not just their physiological sexual responses, as reactive — or, as Chivers puts it, "rudderless." She tells Bergner:

"Certainly women are very sexual and have the capacity to be even more sexual than men, but one possibility is that instead of it being a go-out-there-and-get-it kind of sexuality, it's more of a reactive process. If you have this dyad, and one part is pumped full of testosterone, is more interested in risk taking, is probably more aggressive, you've got a very strong motivational force. It wouldn't make sense to have another similar force. You need something complementary. And I've often thought that there is something really powerful for women's sexuality about being desired. That receptivity element."

In a similar line of thinking to Chivers, Marta Meana, psychology professor at University of Nevada at Las Vegas, argues that female desire is actually based on being desired.

Meana, a self-described feminist, argues that women's lust is "narcissistic" and guided by "the wish to be the object of erotic admiration and sexual need."

[Thalon](#)

The duality makes sense: the body is ready to be taken, and the brain has to plan ahead to see if giving in

to that arousal makes sense. A creature designed around receptivity, as Chivers alleges, would need this dual system because it does not originate its thinking around an objective. So then every system it has must check off: Physical? Check. Emotion? Check. Logical? Check.

I found the article mostly interesting for its discussion of narcissism independent of women. Narcissism means focused on the self, so unaware of the world, and therefore receptive more than motivational because it is satisfied with itself. Better metaphors could be masturbation, a coma, sleep-walking or blindness. It explains at least why this society staggers unaware into oblivion.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

How many people attended inauguration?

Jan 23rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Congress took up the issue in 1997 and actually prohibited the Park Service from conducting crowd estimates. So this year, because Tuesday's "events were historic in nature to our nation," Line said, his agency would use the figure ascertained by someone else.

That reported figure, Line said, came from the Washington Post, which reported on Wednesday "a crowd that some estimates put at nearly 1.8 million." And that report, according to the paper, came from an unsourced official.

Maggie Daniels, a George Mason University professor of tourism and events management who has conducted research on crowded Mall festivities, said the 1.8 million figure seems too big, but precise analyses remain to be completed.

"I tend to think it's closer to about 1 million" on the Mall, she said.

Clark McPhail, an expert in crowd counting and professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, said that 1.5 million people spread from the west lawn of the Capitol to the far end of the reflecting pool would have a consistent density equivalent to packing nearly 2,000 people on a basketball court.

[DCE](#)

Maybe it's all media hype.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Is liberalism passive aggression?

Jan 23rd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Asked how he could reconcile a strict ban on lobbyists in his administration with a deputy defense secretary nominee who lobbied for Raytheon, Obama interrupted with a knowing smile on his face.

"Ahh, see," he said, "I came down here to visit. See this is what happens. I can't end up visiting with you guys and shaking hands if I'm going to get grilled every time I come down here."

[Politico](#)

Just like Clinton: when people ask hard questions, evade, and accuse them of being the aggressors. They were being aggressive, but with legitimacy in the political sphere, and the response is to not answer the question and pretend you've been attacked.

Passive aggression relies on using the weight of other people's condemnation against any who ask you to make sense of what you do. It is the worst human trait imaginable, and generally is used by those who hate how their lives have turned out.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Nebraska does away with affirmative action, more states to follow

Jan 23rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

A Nebraska judge on Thursday rejected a lawsuit that challenged the petition that led to a statewide ban on affirmative action.

Voters approved the initiative in November, after opponents of the effort filed the lawsuit in Lancaster County District Court.

The constitutional amendment never uses the words "affirmative action." But it prohibits state and local governments from giving preferential treatment to people on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity or national origin.

[HDN](#)

Just to keep this race-blind: imagine that Nebraska were inhabited by two groups, Frenchmen and Finns.

The Finns, a minority, are subsidized by the state because they are a minority. This is assumed to address inequality of opportunity.

However, thirty years later, Finns are still in roughly the same economic position, and affirmative action causes problems because the law doesn't recognize that someone can be both Finnish AND incompetent.

So the state looks at the law, and thinks: we're in a never-ending cycle where we punish our people for being successful, AND it hasn't helped the Finns. Yank the chain on this stupid idea.

This eliminates layers of bureaucracy designed to enforce the law, makes hiring and firing clearer and easier, and lets each person find his or her level of competence.

In addition, it encourages an exodus of those — French and Finnish alike — who are less competent and want to go somewhere where affirmative action either requires they be hired, or lowers the bar on performance so they can feel comfortable.

In other words, while other states are fighting yesterday's battles, Nebraska is gearing up to become more competitive. Look for other states to do this, especially as the Baby Boomer false wealth Ponzi tsunami passes under our modern society's feet, because without all the extra wealth, they're going back to basics.

And that means get competitive and let the gods worry about whether it was fair or not.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#).
Tagged: [race](#)

The end of modern society

Jan 23rd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Here's what I think the truth is: We are all addicts of fossil fuels in a state of denial, about to face cold turkey. And like so many addicts about to face cold turkey, our leaders are now committing violent crimes to get what little is left of what we're hooked on.

[ITT](#)

The industrial revolution allowed The Revolution to exist long past its expired-by date.

It empowered millions of selfish people to be manipulated by a callow but shrewd few.

When it comes to the end, we won't weep for it, but for what we could have done with all that energy.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Why racial separatist movements will eventually triumph

Jan 23rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

I pledge allegiance to my Black People.
I pledge to develop my mind and body to the greatest extent possible.
I will learn all that I can in order to give my best to my People in their struggle for liberation.
I will keep myself physically fit, building a strong body free from drugs and other substances which weaken me and make me less capable of protecting myself, my family and my Black brothers and sisters.
I will unselfishly share my knowledge and understanding with them in order to bring about change more quickly.
I will discipline myself to direct my energies thoughtfully and constructively rather than wasting them in idle hatred.
I will train myself never to hurt or allow others to harm my Black brothers and sisters for I recognize that we need every Black Man, Woman, and Child to be physically, mentally and psychologically strong.
These principles I pledge to practice daily and to teach them to others in order to unite my People.

The Black Panther, October 26, 1968
by Shirley Williams

[UCC.IE](#)

They have an ethos connected to an organic factor: their heritage and the accompanying culture.

While the rest of you are getting fat on those sofas watching TV, the people who still recognize reality determines what succeeds are adapting to that reality.

And biding their time.

And over time, they're going to kick your ass.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Now that Obama is president, some people don't believe they should pay their bills.

Jan 23rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

One of my wife's friends told her on Tuesday that someone she knew had been renting a house to a single African-American woman for several years. The lady had apparently never missed a payment or even been late with one.

But, for some strange reason, immediately after Barack Obama was elected to office last November, the woman reportedly stopped paying rent. When politely questioned about it, she told her landlord: "We have a new president now and some things are going to change." He replied: "Well, that's fine, but you still have to pay your rent," to which she reiterated: "No, we have a new president now—and some things are going to change."

From what I understand, the rent has yet to be paid.

Later that same day, while watching ABC News coverage of the inauguration with my wife over lunch, hosts Charles Gibson and Diane Sawyer were joined by Donna Brazile, a Democratic African-American author, educator and political activist, who gave a humorous account of her snatching the complementary fleece blanket she found abandoned in Barack Obama's chair after the swearing-in ceremony. Apparently she wanted a souvenir of the momentous occasion and when the opportunity arose, she took it.

As they all laughed about it, Gibson responded playfully to her candid admission by saying: "We're going to check with the legal staff and find out if that's a felony or a misdemeanor."

Brazile then gave a stern look into the camera and said: "We have a black president—it's neither."

[NWV](#)

White people think multiculturalism is about extending a helping hand to black people, which makes white people feel all warm inside.

But to black people, it's about a more realistic and natural struggle: who gets to rule, and as a result, who is the favored group?

This is why multiculturalism always fails:

Every group fights to reach the top and in doing so, they fragment the nation and make it a festering horde of resentment and hatred.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Multiculturalism leads to monoculturalism and fragmentation

Jan 23rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Multiculturalism is an ideal for many people. You wonder if they realize that every effect has a cause, and then becomes a cause of other effects, and that nothing is static. As a result, you can't design for a static state — multiculturalism — but you need to design society for a process.

A neo-Nazi group has joined the state's "Adopt-A-Highway" volunteer litter pickup program, taking advantage of a free speech court fight won four years ago by the Ku Klux Klan.

Two signs noting the group's membership in the Adopt-A-Highway program went up in October but drew attention only recently when the group picked up litter as part of a gathering in Springfield.

The state says it had no way to reject the group's application. A 2005 U.S. Supreme Court ruling arising from a similar effort by the Ku Klux Klan says membership in the Adopt-A-Highway program can't be denied because of a group's political beliefs. At the time, the state could reject applications for the program from groups that denied membership based on race or had a history of violence.

[FOX](#)

If we're going to be fair and let the Black Panthers adopt a highway, or the local Mennonites, or the Scientologists, or the Indian-American Sangerbund, or whatever, we're gonna hafta let the Klan do it too.

As time goes on, more groups will demand their rights to do such things, even though they are incompatible with others. Radical Islam? Fundamentalist Christianity? Militant Atheist? Randian Objectivists? They all want a different type of society.

Eventually, enough of one group accumulates in an area that they dominate it — some would say the Scientologists have already done this in Los Angeles — and they exclude others because their beliefs are compatible. At first, we're outraged because we assume multiculturalism is the belief that all other beliefs must be compatible with.

But... if you want to make your vision a reality, you need for it to exist in such a way that it influences all aspects of life, and even the design of the civilization in which it exists. So you need your own "monocultural" civilization, whether that's ethno-cultural or religious or secular in nature.

As a result, the logical extension of multiculturalism is that it encourages society to fragment into disparate, increasingly polarized, isolated camps that are alienated from the whole. They perceive the majority, who support multiculturalism, as being devoid of inherent values and so competing with their own — and we have to admit, they're right.

Look for more exciting breakup of the USA along these lines. Of course, the rest of the world is cheering this on: everyone likes to see a king fall, even if what follows is worse.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Obama wants government to spy on you

Jan 22nd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The Obama administration fell in line with the Bush administration Thursday when it urged a federal judge to set aside a ruling in a closely watched spy case weighing whether a U.S. president may bypass Congress and establish a program of eavesdropping on Americans without warrants.

In a filing in San Francisco federal court, President Barack Obama adopted the same position as his predecessor.

[Wired](#)

Welcome to superpower politics: anyone who can will destroy you, so you're gonna hafta crack a few eggs to make an omelette. You're going to have to torture people, spy on people, and kill people without confirmation that they're bad guys, and not their families or friends. It's a beast. "Hope" and "Change" were just advertising and do not reflect reality.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Tagged: [Technology](#)

What happens when a Ponzi scheme is so big you can't see its boundaries

Jan 22nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

"I never thought I would live to see a day when the economy was in such danger, that interest rates were near zero, when some \$20 trillion in wealth has vaporized, and when no one is sure what to do." That, in a nutshell, were the sentiments one heard quietly on the sidelines of parties from economic heavy hitters.

Paul Volcker, one of the most respected economic figures in the country, told Congress yesterday that it may take trillions of federal dollars in spending, loans and guarantees to put us aright. That comes at a time when Washington is already deeply in hock.

There is growing talk in both the U.S. and the U.K. that banks are continuing to weaken so much that governments may have to nationalize them – a huge step. And few think that if Washington takes over Bank of America and Citi that it can stop there. "How will J.P. Morgan compete against one percent loans from a nationalized Bank of America? It can't. If we go down that road, nationalization would have to be widespread." John Gapper, a noted columnist, says today in the Financial Times that nationalization of the top 10 banks in the U.S. could easily cost a trillion dollars.

[CNN](#)

Oh, you silly monkeys with car keys. The Baby Boomers were, like Bill Clinton, generators of wealth — but wealth made by moving around assets on paper and using the opinion industry to convince people to participate in trends. *It never was real.*

But now, their chits are coming due, mainly because they're all getting ready to retire and take their wealth out of the market. Clinton ran up the value of our money with phantom internet income, and ten years later in 2002, the bomb began to drop. It took awhile for all the dominoes to fall.

Now — not surprising — we're in a third world cycle: we have no real way of making income, because we're supporting people who mostly just do very frangible jobs that involve following orders and repetitive work, and our middle classes are drunk with their success in an opinion industry that's gonna be replaced by blogs. We make no real wealth. Yet we have millions of people who want to partake in whatever we do have, and they're too clueless to notice when their \$500 check is now worth \$250 — hey, it's still FIVE HUNNERIT dollars.

So what are you going to do?

If Barack Obama were smart, which he is not — he specializes in convincing people of happy truths, not facing reality — he would start by cutting out parasitisms. Slash those government programs. Force the military to release more R&D to stimulate the economy. Capitalize on assets we have, and slash all foreign aid and kick out parasites like the UN, HUD, etc. Cut government staffs. You'll send unemployment through the roof, but in doing so, will equalize the dollar by making it scarce again, and tying its value to actual industries that produce things people need.

Further, let's cut away the oil crack habit. We know cars are never going to be the boom industry they once were; let that industry die, because it has lost to the Japanese already. But put all other manufacturing front and center, and find some way to re-attract computer component makers to the USA, and invent a big industry we can all use: green recycling and reuse. Let's start leading in some industries. We've basically pissed away manufacturing and agriculture, but we need them again, instead of paper and

entertainment industries.

Finally, give people a reasonable object to expect: it'll be bad for x years and we'll do y to fix it. They can live through it, but they need to know the unraveling will stop somewhere. But unfortunately, in a media-fed democracy of people empowered by an ethic of convenience, truth doesn't sell; entitlement, "free" things, and hidden forgotten socialized costs do. Let's hope the Republicans aren't so stupid this time and give up on elections in 2012 and 2016 so that a Democrat can, for the first time in history, inherit the damage another democrat has done.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Why liberals love race

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The phrase was seized upon by those Trevor identifies as 'guilt-tripping white folks' as a potent stick to batter every public institution in the country.

They have used the catch-all cliché of 'racism' to advance their own agenda, silence dissent and bully the paying public into submission.

Fear of being accused of 'racism' has paralysed the police force.

Fear of being accused of 'racism' stalks the corridors of our Town Halls and government departments, creating a generation of box-ticking, brain-dead bureaucrats. Zey are only obeying orderz.

While it is true most of the phoney allegations of 'racism' come from humourless, middle-class, white Guardianistas, they're not on a guilt-trip.

As far as they are concerned, they are good people. And the way in which they reinforce their own self-righteousness is via a constant crusade to make the rest of us feel guilty.

In truth, most of the hatred comes from the Left, who enforce the cult of 'diversity' with Stalinist zeal, deliberately destroying the careers and reputations of decent people who dare to disagree with them. Being wrongly accused of racism is as hateful as racism itself.

[Daily Mail](#)

Multiculturalism destroys what we are genetically, which evolved differently and with some benefits, from where others went. Who wants to bring destruction on their own people?

We might as well just admit that "liberal" is a code-word for low self-esteem, revengeful person who'd rather see us all burn than admit they're lost in life. The cure for liberalism is social order that gives former liberals meaningful activities.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

European politician on trial for anti-Islam statements

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The whole debate is sad:

A Dutch court has ordered prosecutors to put a right-wing politician on trial for making anti-Islamic statements.

Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders made a controversial film last year equating Islam with violence and has likened the Koran to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf.

"In a democratic system, hate speech is considered so serious that it is in the general interest to... draw a clear line," the court in Amsterdam said.

[BCC](#)

The left wants multiculturalism so it can destroy all traditions and replace them with an ethic of convenience. The right wants Europe for Europeans, but can't say that out loud or they'll get arrested and jailed even faster.

Say what's unpopular, and the crowd will revenge itself upon you.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Patriotism is dissent, until it's time for Groupthink

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Obama, though, has spent the past year preaching his own brand of morality — with a list of demands. Everyone, you see, “must” sacrifice. Michelle Obama recently explained, “Barack Obama will require you to work. . . . Barack will never allow you to go back to your lives as usual, uninvolved, uninformed.”

Those of us who refuse to buy left-wing orthodoxy will remain “uninformed” and, inevitably, “selfish.”

To be fair, I’m uncertain what Obama is going to require of me during these next four to eight years. I do know, right off the bat, that if he passes his centerpiece trillion-dollar, ideologically driven government expansion (in the guise of a “stimulus” plan), he will be demanding my grandchildren work overtime to pay it off.

To require such fealty to power in the name of patriotism was once repugnant to the left. Now, with the right guy in charge, apparently it can once again be embraced.

[Denver Post](#)

His point: all the bloviation about a duty to rebel and patriotism is OK if it's popular with the in-crowd, but bad if it's realistic. Signs of a dogma-based economy like that of the Soviets, post-French revolution, etc.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Remember, race isn't genetic

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The classic study dates to 2000, from a team lead by Michael Hammer of University of Arizona. They looked at Y-chromosome haplotypes – this is the genetic material passed from father to son down the generations.

What they revealed was that Arabs and Jews are essentially a single population, and that Palestinians are slap bang in the middle of the different Jewish populations (as shown in this figure).

Another team, lead by Almut Nebel at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, took a closer look in 2001. They found that Jewish lineages essentially bracket Muslim Kurds, but they were also very closely related to Palestinians. In fact, what their analysis suggested was that Palestinians were identical to Jews, but with a small mix of Arab genes – what you would expect if they were originally from the same stock, but that Palestinians had mixed a little with Arab immigrants.

[BHAS](#)

That's very un-PC.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Egomania will make you schizoid

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

21st century schizoid people:

Schizophrenia may blur the boundary between internal and external realities by over-activating a brain system that is involved in self-reflection, and thus causing an exaggerated focus on self, a new MIT and Harvard brain imaging study has found.

But this study, appearing Jan. 19 in the advance online issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found that schizophrenia also involves an excess of connectivity between the so-called default brain regions, which are involved in self-reflection and become active when we are thinking about nothing in particular, or thinking about ourselves.

"People normally suppress this default system when they perform challenging tasks, but we found that patients with schizophrenia don't do this," said John D. Gabrieli, a professor in the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT and one of the study's 13 authors. "We think this could help to explain the cognitive and psychological symptoms of schizophrenia."

[MIT](#)

But modern people are egomaniacs. Will there be crossover? There is, in that one can be schizoid — of a mind divided between one's own fantasy and reality — without being schizophrenic. And our society is clearly schizoid as a result of its solipsism.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Sanitation truths

Jan 21st, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

...and illusions debunked:

According to an American Society for Microbiology survey in 2007, 92% of Americans say they always wash after using a public restroom. But when researchers actually watched, it turned out only 83% did.

When people wash their hands, only 33% use soap and only 16% adequately wash. The average hand-washing time was a pathetic 11 seconds.

Soap and water help dislodge dirt, bacteria and viruses so they "can go down the drain," he says. With popular alcohol hand gels, "the bacteria has nowhere to go."

On the other hand, don't buy the hype about antibacterial soap. There's little evidence it's any more effective.

[USAT](#)

Gross!

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

We romanticize the underdog because we hate ourselves

Jan 19th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Weinberg and I are both employed at the University of Texas at Austin. I'm...not quite as accomplished or celebrated (as Weinberg is).

As we parted he said to me, with what I took to be a condescending smirk, "Don't romanticize Palestinians just because they are primitive."

Someone who refers to a group of people as "primitive" is on shaky ground when he makes judgments about the alleged prejudice or religious bigotry of others.

[Counterpunch](#)

Dude, get ahold of yourself. Primitive: less technologically and intellectually developed. Palestine has the Qassam, Israel has the Lavi and guided bombs. Palestine's average IQ is 95, but in Israel, it's 105. You're so busy trying to pander to the equality crowd you're in denial of reality!

People always want to romanticize the underdog to show other people how they're NOT like the rest of us, who are perceived to be a cancer upon the earth. Is humanity a cancer? Most likely, in environmental effect; in everything else, not likely at all. Are we so horrible we must romanticize the primitive out of guilt for what we are? No, we're just trying to show others how open-minded we are. Escape that mental trap for bonus points.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Too much truth for public self-image

Jan 19th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

People like to think of themselves as kind, benevolent, gift-givers of themselves because, having turned in fear from reality, they have nothing but themselves so like good used-car salesmen they've turned up the hype machine.

The middle classes are not good because they are better off. They are better off because they are good. This is the fundamental truth that socialism has always hated.

[Mail on Sunday](#)

CNN: At one point in your act, you said, "Racism will never die. It will only multiply." Why do you believe that?

Rock: Well, it's never going to die. Maybe it won't multiply. Is racism going to end? No.

It's not even race. People are always going to, you know, find something wrong with people who are not the exact same as them. That's just what it is. Black, white, short, tall, religions, whatever. People are bad, man.

[CNN](#)

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Race relations better for blacks, worse for whites

Jan 19th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

In November, a majority of blacks for the first time believed that the U.S. would eventually find a solution to its racial problems; now a majority of blacks believe that race relations will always be a problem in this country. Blacks do believe that the Obama presidency will be good for them — 61 percent say that the quality of life for African-Americans will improve over the next four years. Optimism for a new era has also dropped among whites.

The poll found 69 percent of blacks said King's vision has been fulfilled in the more than 45 years since his 1963 "I have a dream" speech — roughly double the 34 percent who agreed with that assessment in a similar poll taken last March.

What about the Voting Rights Act, one of the signature achievements of the civil rights movement, which will be reviewed by the Supreme Court later this year? Two-thirds of blacks questioned in the poll say the U.S. still needs the Voting Rights Act today, but white respondents are split down the middle over whether that law is still necessary.

[CNN](#)

The voting rights act prohibits things like literacy tests at the polls. People act like the wealth of this nation just happens, and doesn't come from the hard work of a dedicated few. The future will have surprises.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Memories of past loves haunt us

Jan 19th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

So have as few loves/lusts as possible:

They say that you never forget your first love.

But perhaps you should, because memories of it can wreck your relationships for life, research suggests.

Professor Helen Fisher, an anthropologist at Rutgers University in New Jersey, suggests striving for that initial intensity of emotion can help relationships survive.

Using MRI scans, she observed similar brain activity among those who had been happily married for more than two decades with those who had been in relationships for less than six months.

She said: 'I found incontrovertible, physiological evidence that romantic love can last.'

The book also examines why people pick partners with a similar social background.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Our vision of "romantic love" is actually a vision of self-love: find someone who completes you, who makes you feel like the center of the world, who inspires great passion in you, who uplifts you... it's all about you, you, you!

These cliches describe an exceptional hired servant more than a lover or spouse.

Research increasingly shows that finding someone like you who understands you and you can respect is more important than some wacked-out notion of love centered around yourself. It also suggests that years of casting around blindly fornicating in search of that love just makes you a burnt out slag.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Happy Warm Feelings for Obama Fade Worldwide

Jan 18th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

"Just two months ago, the future president seemed a cross between Superman and Merlin the magician," Massimo Gramellini wrote in a commentary for Italy's La Stampa newspaper. "Now he himself admits he won't be able to keep all his promises, and who knows? Maybe someone will ask for his impeachment by the end of next week."

"The idealism has diminished," said Samuel Solvit, who heads an Obama support network in France. "Everyone was dreaming a little. Now people are more realistic."

Muslims want to know why Obama hasn't joined the chorus of international criticism of Israel's Gaza offensive. Last week posters of him were set on fire in Tehran to shouts of "Death to Obama!"

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and German Chancellor Angela Merkel both say they're confident the Obama administration will succeed in working with Europe and China to build a stronger global economy.

[AP](#)

1. Oh no, the dream is over.
2. No one really believed it.
3. Those that still do are thinking about their wallets.

Amusing whores.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Traffic is created by idiots

Jan 18th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

In theory, given the old rule about maintaining one car length ahead of you for each ten miles per hour driving speed, the capacity of a single lane of expressway is 40 cars per minute (2,400 per hour) at 60 MPH. In practice, however, drivers instinctively begin to slow down at loads higher than 25 cars per minute (1,500 per hour). At 33 cars per minute (2,000 per hour), average speed drops to 35 MPH.

At this critical juncture, drivers are jumpy, and they'll slam on the brakes at the slightest provocation—anything from an accident or a stall to a couple extra cars trying to merge into traffic at an on-ramp. The first guy slows down a little, the second guy slows down a lot, and the third, fourth, or fifth guys may stop altogether, bringing traffic to a halt. That's why you almost never find smoothly flowing expressway traffic at speeds below 35 MPH—it's usually stop-and-go, or, at best, speed-up-and-slow-down-quick.

It also explains why relatively minor increases in traffic volume, such as those caused by mass transit strikes or fare increases, can cause chaos on the highways.

[The Straight Dope](#)

I've observed the same thing in the past.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

We live in a giant space hologram

Jan 17th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Sometimes I bookmark stuff here just because it's neat. No profundity:

According to Craig Hogan, a physicist at the Fermilab particle physics lab in Batavia, Illinois, GEO600 has stumbled upon the fundamental limit of space-time – the point where space-time stops behaving like the smooth continuum Einstein described and instead dissolves into “grains”, just as a newspaper photograph dissolves into dots as you zoom in. “It looks like GEO600 is being buffeted by the microscopic quantum convulsions of space-time,” says Hogan.

If this doesn't blow your socks off, then Hogan, who has just been appointed director of Fermilab's Center for Particle Astrophysics, has an even bigger shock in store: “If the GEO600 result is what I suspect it is, then we are all living in a giant cosmic hologram.”

The holograms you find on credit cards and banknotes are etched on two-dimensional plastic films. When light bounces off them, it recreates the appearance of a 3D image. In the 1990s physicists Leonard Susskind and Nobel prizewinner Gerard 't Hooft suggested that the same principle might apply to the universe as a whole. Our everyday experience might itself be a holographic projection of physical processes that take place on a distant, 2D surface.

[New Scientist](#)

Makes sense nature would use the most efficient method of data storage possible. It reminds me of Plato's discourse on intelligible forms versus their appearance: the design is more important than the tangible reality.

Posted in: [Science](#).

More ways success determined in the womb

Jan 13th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Researchers at the University of Cambridge in England report that men with longer ring fingers, compared to their index fingers, tended to be more successful in the frantic high-frequency trading in the London financial district.

The length ratio between those two fingers is determined during the development of the fetus and the relatively longer ring finger indicates greater exposure to the male hormone androgen, the researchers noted.

Previous studies have found that such exposure can lead to increased confidence, risk preferences, search persistence, heightened vigilance and quickened reaction times.

[AP](#)

But you can be anything you wanna be, honest. Just click your shoes three times and repeat the wish in your head, and the tooth fairy will take care of it.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Reality is far away from our pretense

Jan 12th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Summary: idiot reporter sees video, and finally realizes that “out of sight out of mind” isn’t practical, and that murder occurs. Still doesn’t realize it happens whether she sees it or not, and that no one cares about her emotional reaction except other people similarly isolated from reality. Modern people are neurotic and delusional.

Four weeks ago I saw a murder on the internet.

I have not really felt the same since I saw the murder, so I am not going to describe things in great detail – even though it is the details in watching someone die that are the most awful, and fascinating, and that rattle you the most.

The footage is nearly seven minutes long. I stopped watching after 1.47. I felt physically different – very very high, in a bad way, as if I were going to pass out. I was also, with sudden irrationality, worried that the footage might in some way damage my computer, which I turned off, then unplugged, then covered with a cloth.

I don’t want to overstate the whole thing, or be too dramatic. I had two subsequent nights during which getting to sleep was quite difficult, and I had to climb into my youngest child’s bed and wrap myself right round her while pints of anxiety sat, like bad alcohol, in my guts.

[The Times](#)

Our whole society in denial of its own mortality cannot face the realities of life. And so when it rears its head, they retaliate with the kind of emotional drama you see above. What does it have to do with reality? Nothing. It’s a shelter, shallow, delusional person bloviating.

Sadly, most people in our society think like this!

At least one full video was leaked to the internet, showing the murder of 48-year-old Sergei Yatzenko. He is seen laying prostrate in a wooded area when he is repeatedly struck in the face with a hammer held inside a plastic bag. The murderers then poke out Yatzenko’s eyes with a screwdriver, and stab him with the screwdriver elsewhere. Yatzenko is then repeatedly struck with the hammer to ensure he’s dead. The brutal attack lasts over 4 minutes, during which the victim lapses in and out of consciousness. The murderers walk back to their car, showing that the crime took place just a few feet away from the side of the road, right next to their parked car. They calmly discuss the murder, expressing mild amazement that the victim was still breathing after a screwdriver was plunged into his exposed brain. The suspects then wash their hands and the hammer in a puddle and with a water bottle, and begin to laugh.

[The Stupidity of Crowds](#)

Sociopaths. But they exist. It’s why our ancestors were more cynical about the worth of any human being, and kicked out **all useless people**, depriving sociopaths of a place to hide and a crowd of clueless, needy people they could manipulate in order to get in power.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Genetics versus popular illusion

Jan 12th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Popular illusion: we're all the same. Race is a social construct. Class is an accident of history. Gender does not influence thinking. Individuals all have the potential to be whatever they want to be.

Hard reality: we're all widely different. Race represents evolutionary plateaus. Class occurs because smarter people tend to prosper when they work. Gender influences outlook and intellect, and emotion is an intellectual process. Individuals are 80% determined by genetics and 20% by experience, which means that we cannot be whatever we want to be, but we can get slightly better than the last generation.

Exhibit A:

A survey of numerous African populations in Kenya and Cameroon found a striking amount of diversity in a gene responsible for sensing bitter tastes.

"If they have more genetic diversity, there's more variation in their ability to taste," says Sarah Tishkoff, a geneticist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, who presented the findings at a recent conference.

Europeans and Asians typically have only one of two forms of a gene called TAS2R38, which detects a bitter-tasting compound called PTC and similar chemicals in vegetables such as broccoli and Brussels sprouts.

[NewScientist](#)

So race isn't a social construct, but it's a collection of genes, and the more "diverse" a group is the less it has evolved from its original environment in Africa.

Exhibit B:

New research published today will bring prenatal testing for autism significantly closer, prompting experts to call for a national debate about the consequences of screening for the disorder in the womb and allowing women to terminate babies with the condition.

The breakthrough study by Cambridge University's autism research centre has followed 235 children from birth to the age of eight. It found that high levels of testosterone in the amniotic fluid of pregnant women was linked to autistic traits, such as a lack of sociability and verbal skills, in their children by the time they are eight.

[The Guardian](#)

Angry, warlike moms produce kids who have single-minded focus. This is useful if you need to churn out a generation that will dispassionately kill your enemy.

Let's summarize...

Popular illusion: we are whoever we construe ourselves to be.

Hard reality: we are what nature makes us.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Democratic governments use punishment as revenue

Jan 12th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The economy is in the toilet. So do yourself a favor and ease up on the accelerator.

That's the indirect message of a recent study by two economists, who found that when government revenues dry up, police write more speeding tickets. After analyzing 14 years of data in North Carolina, the pair found that for every 1 percent drop in government revenue, the number of traffic tickets issued per capita increases by 30 percent the following year.

Wagner said the study reinforced a theory held universally by economists: Incentives matter.

"If local governments are somehow involved in the revenue that gets generated, there's an incentive to get more revenue," Wagner said.

[The Charlotte Observer](#)

It works like this: democratic governments cannot face unpopular truths.

So they create an illusion, take a vote, and are short the money to both do the job they're supposed to and put up with all the entitlements, bureaucracy, nepotism, etc.

So they invent a solution: blame someone else, and take money from them. Suddenly a mom 5 mph over the line becomes a "speeder," and we can make her pay for it.

As the budget gets tighter, departments stonewall on new acquisitions, which locks them up unless they can generate revenue. So back to that blamed group, from whom we take more money, and justify it with moral pretense. TA-DA!

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

"An unrealistic belief in equality"

Jan 11th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

It seems that whenever Israel responds to violent overtures from groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, leaders of the international community are quick to assign equal condemnation to Israelis and Palestinians regardless of whether one is legitimately acting in self-defense.

Whether it is due to a latent anti-Semitism, the desire to avoid inflaming fundamentalist Arab passions, **or simply an unrealistic belief in equality**, world leaders are focusing too much on buzzwords.

{ snip }

It does not make sense to demand one technologically or militarily superior belligerent to refrain from fighting to their full potential, simply because they are able to enact "disproportionate" damage on a weaker foe.

[CSM](#)

When someone first told me, "the only people crying for equality are those who can't keep up," I thought it was crass, cruel, primitive and horrible of them to say that.

Now I see it's true. Our society conspires to find this mythical "equality" and enforce it on all of us, but it only benefits those who cannot keep up.

It's insane to ask a combatant with more firepower to limit themselves in the name of fairness. They are fighting for survival. "Fairness" becomes some concept designed to salvage the unequal from the equal.

An *unrealistic expectation of equality* pervades all that we do here in Modernity, Inc., but it's starting to become clear how much it holds us back. How much money we could put into winners that we put into losers. How much time we waste. How much it exhausts us all when we should be enjoying life.

Maybe we should wage war on "equality," that delusional but flattering notion, instead.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Everyone wants to flee failing school system

Jan 10th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Charter schools, which are publicly financed but independently run, were conceived as a way to improve academic performance. But for immigrant families, they have also become havens where their children are shielded from the American youth culture that pervades large district schools.

"The good news is that immigrant kids are learning English better and faster than ever before in U.S. history," said Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, the co-director of immigration studies at New York University and co-author of "Learning a New Land — Immigrant Students in American Society" (Harvard Press, 2008). "But they're assimilating to a society that parents see as very threatening and frightening. It's anti-authority, anti-studying. It's materialistic."

[NYT](#)

The over-politicized, dumbed-down school system now supports lowest common denominator behavior. It does provide NVA-style "civic education" however. So parents of all types are fleeing it because it is both dysfunctional and bad mental reprogramming.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Modernity assaults the female form

Jan 9th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

I was reading one of my favorite sources of insight on the Gender Wars — which, like the Ethnic Wars and Culture Wars, are brought on by modernity's attempt to one-size-fits-all us so that we can have absolute rights as interchangeable parts:

The classic hourglass figure made famous by Sophia Loren and Marilyn Monroe appears to have had its day.

According to anthropologist Elizabeth Cashdan, high-powered working women are less likely to have the classic shape of a tiny waist with wide hips and large bosom due to the stress levels associated with their jobs.

Instead, women who work to support their families probably carry a touch more fat than they would like around their stomachs, rather than their hips, says Professor Cashdan.

The move away from the Hollywood siren of yesteryear towards the more angular attractions of the likes of Keira Knightley is attributed to androgens, a type of hormone that includes testosterone.

These hormones help women become physically stronger and more able to withstand stress — attributes that are needed to hold down high-powered jobs.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Hippies — crypto-modernists — and corporate leaders agree:

If everyone looked the same and acted the same, it would be much easier for business and the Nanny-Authoritarian state to control them.

Masculinize women. Feminize men. Now they're nearly identical. They're "equal," which is how we'll sell it to the proles.

Treating a baby boy like a girl and vice versa can change the way their brains work, new research suggests.

By tickling a baby female rat's tummy for hours on end, the team from the University of Wisconsin managed to make the DNA clusters in its brain become more like a male's.

The research, reported in the New Scientist, challenges the long-accepted belief that the physical differences between a male and female brain are genetic.

[The Express](#)

(Here moderns show no appreciation for polycausality, as usual. Suppose the difference is genetic, AND ALSO can be modified after birth, much like our size is fixed but if we lift a lot of weights, our bones get sturdier? That didn't occur to them. It never does.)

It really is for appearance, though, because modern society doesn't work so well — it's just good at extracting profits.

But, as far as I'm concerned, this idea that you have to recover from birth in a matter of days is part of the same cultural phenomena that says the ideal woman should have the body of an

elegant 14-year-old boy plus breasts. She should be lean, firm, strong and invulnerable. She should only be momentarily detained by an event such as giving birth.

[The Independent](#)

This sounds like the behavior of people who are paranoid, defensive, isolated and aware of just how judgmental the rest of their society can be — because they, too, are destabilized.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Sudden lack of modern historical good guys

Jan 9th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

We move from illusion to illusion, seeking the absolute that will make us safe and make life seem to be, by The Rules, exclusive of that which threatens us.

Some 1,800 corpses that authorities believe to be German civilians killed during World War II have been discovered in the Polish city of Malbork, daily Bild reported Wednesday.

"They are the remains of women, men and children," public prosecutor Waldemar Zduniak told the paper. "A portion of the corpses display bullet wounds."

The first skeletons were uncovered in October in Malbork, which before World War II was part of Germany and known as Marienburg.

[The Local](#)

Seems like this thing is cropping up more and more, now that a new generation feels no doubt from guilt about the era — it was so long ago:

For over 50 years, the inhabitants of Treuenbrietzen, a small eastern German town, kept quiet about a World War II massacre that happened in the final days of the war. And many today still have no wish to revisit the past.

The long-forgotten slaughter of some 1,000 German civilians occurred after Russian Red Army soldiers occupied the town, some 25 miles south-west of Berlin, in April 1945.

Christoph Lange, a spokesman for the Potsdam prosecutor said an official request for information about the massacre was forwarded to Russian authorities in November. "It's our last chance to find those responsible. We've already gone through all the relevant German documents," said Lange.

Even his grandmother, who lived through the events, "refused to discuss it," the mayor said.

According to witnesses, the massacre took place two days later, possibly because a Soviet officer had been shot dead in the town. Men were gathered together, taken to nearby woods, and shot. A number of women were also raped and killed.

[The Local](#)

What they taught us in school: to make the world safe for democracy, America, Britain, the Soviets and the remnants of conquered Europeans came together to defeat the Germans.

The more likely truth: facing the possibility of declining prestige, America and Russia like two stumbling drunks decided to support each other and use their superior numbers to crush those who threatened modern society.

This is not a defense of the Nazis — we all know what horrors they wrought — but it's an anti-defense of the "good guys," including the USA and UK and USSR, who turned out to be just like the Nazis, only fake. Internment camps. Nuclear bombings. Massacres. Starvation of POWs. These are the "good guys"?

The enemy is modernity itself.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Good liberal crusade goes down in flames

Jan 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

So, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that OLPC is now cutting its workforce in half, and slashing salaries for remaining employees. Negroponte blames the economy, but that seems like an especially weak excuse, given just how strongly small, inexpensive mini-laptops (netbooks) are selling these days. Clearly, there's tremendous demand out there for super cheap, small laptops. The problem is that Negroponte decided from the beginning that his product was only for kids in developing countries, and left a massive market underserved (the rather weak give one, get one program was hardly serving the market).

[TechDirt](#)

No one really gives a darn about developing countries.

They pretend to because it makes them look good.

Whether Negroponte just failed it, or drank the kool-aid, remains open to interpretation.

The fact is that Asus beat him to the market, built a better product, and is going to continue to roll over his sad carcass on their way to world domination.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Our fiat cash economy is a Ponzi scheme

Jan 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Joseph Stiglitz: We had the tech bubble, followed by the housing bubble. But once we fix the recent mess, what will replace these bubbles as the engine for the economy?

Feldstein: What will replace the consumer spending bubble?

(Both men): We run the risk of the economy becoming depend on constant stimulus to replace these bubbles.

Stiglitz: I worry that after two years of stimulus, that the economy won't be going on its own, and then what will we do?

[OITS](#)

Our economy is dashing about, looking for distractions to inflate its value, so we don't realize that most people in jobs could be replaced by Perl scripts, and that very little of what we do is actually productive — it's moving money around, converting it into different forms, selling each other dreams. Pay it forward, the mandatory version. Without new investors into the Ponzi, whether clueless immigrants or globalized partners or new bubbles, we're all going to see the naked truth about how little this giant crock is worth.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

The End of White America

Jan 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The Election of Barack Obama is just the most startling manifestation of a larger trend: the gradual erosion of “whiteness” as the touchstone of what it means to be American. If the end of white America is a cultural and demographic inevitability, what will the new mainstream look like—and how will white Americans fit into it? What will it mean to be white when whiteness is no longer the norm? And will a post-white America be less racially divided—or more so?

[The Atlantic](#)

Worthwhile read.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#).

White people hardwired to prefer their own kind

Jan 8th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The Nanny State found something else to whine about, making great profit for those who sell media and creating damage the rest of you pay for:

“This study, and a lot of research in social psychology, suggests that there are still really a lot of negative associations with blacks,” said Kerry Kawakami, associate professor of psychology at York University in Toronto, Ontario, and lead author of the study. “People are willing to tolerate racism and not stand up against it.”

The authors divided 120 non-black participants into the roles of “experiencers” and “forecasters.” The “experiencers” were placed in a room with a white person and a black person, who played out pre-arranged scenarios for the experiment. The scenarios began when the black role-player bumped the white role-player’s knee when leaving the room.

(The white person then made an ethnically-directed comment of mild to extreme severity.)

Experiencers reported little distress in all three scenarios, much less than the forecasters did in the moderate and severe situations.

Immediately afterwards, the participants were asked to choose either the black person or the white person as a partner for an anagram test. More than half of experiencers chose the white partner — regardless of the severity of the comment that person made earlier.

The study is consistent with decades of psychology research pointing to the same thing: People are really bad at predicting their own actions in socially sensitive situations.

[CNN](#)

Social situations require we tolerate everyone. Life requires we get things done, which means we cannot tolerate what everyone wants: we need to do what is right and worry about who is upset later. This is why all of modern life is hypocritical.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Robot armies

Jan 8th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

War is about the sacrifice of blood and treasure, and the American style of war is to substitute treasure for blood.

But now the Army stands on the threshold of one of the greatest transformations in war-fighting history, on the short list with steel and gunpowder. The Future Combat Systems program is aimed at developing an array of new vehicles and systems — including armed robots. The robots of past science fiction were governed by Isaac Asimov's Three Laws, which precluded bringing harm to humans. But the real robots of the future will be different. Within a decade, the Army will field armed robots with intellects that possess, as H.G. Wells put it, "minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic."

Let us dwell on "unsympathetic." These killers will be utterly without remorse or pity when confronting the enemy. That's something new. In 1947, military historian S.L.A. Marshall published "Men Against Fire," which documented the fundamental difference between real soldiers and movie soldiers: Most real soldiers will not shoot at the enemy. Most won't even discharge their weapons, and most of the rest do no more than spray bullets in the enemy's general direction. These findings remain controversial, but the hundreds of thousands of bullets expended in Iraq for every enemy combatant killed suggests that it's not too far off the mark.

Only a few troops, perhaps 1 percent, will actually direct aimed fire at the enemy with the intent to kill. These troops are treasured, and set apart, and called snipers.

Armed robots will all be snipers. Stone-cold killers, every one of them. They will aim with inhuman precision and fire without human hesitation. They will not need bonuses to enlist or housing for their families or expensive training ranges or retirement payments. Commanders will order them onto battlefields that would mean certain death for humans, knowing that the worst to come is a trip to the shop for repairs. The writing of condolence letters would become a lost art.

[WAPO](#)

That's awesome. I hope one major nation develops these and uses them to create a world empire. That would end the instability between nation-states and the problem of nuclear proliferation. It would also be one photogenically horrifying war.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Science](#).

Who designs the toys who show your kids what life is like

Jan 8th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Toys are symbols of what adult life will be like. What your kids see, they emulate.

Jack Ryan, the Yale-educated designer who popularized Barbie, was a "full-blown seventies-style swinger" with "a manic need for sexual gratification."

Ryan's friend, Stephen Gnass, confides to the author: "When Jack talked about creating Barbie . . . it was like listening to somebody talk about a sexual episode, almost like listening to a sexual pervert . . ." Ryan took calls at Mattel from a madam and patronized "high-class call girls to streetwalkers," including a "very thin and child-like" hooker.

[NY Post](#)

And how did they invent Barbie?

In the mid 1940's, the young ambitious duo Ruth and Elliot Handler, owned a company that made wooden picture frames. Elliot and his partner Harold Mattson built the samples and Ruth was in charge of marketing them. Elliot began to use the scraps of wood from picture frames to make doll furniture. This was the beginning of their toy business. It was in 1945 that Ruth and Elliot Handler joined with their close friend Harold Mattson to form a company that would be known for the most famous and successful doll ever created. This company would be named Mattel, MATT for Mattson, and EL for Elliot. Mattel continued to grow from a very profitable business into a corporate giant.

In the mid 1950's, while visiting Switzerland, Ruth Handler purchased a German Lilli doll. Lilli was a shapely, pretty fashion doll first made in 1955. She was originally fashioned after a famous cartoon character in the West German Newsletter, Bild. Lilli was made of hard plastic with molded on shoes and earrings. She was available in 11 ½" or 7" in heights. Her hair was long and pulled back into a ponytail. There was a large wardrobe available for this doll. Lilli is the doll that would inspire Ruth Handler to design the Barbie doll.

[Dolls4Play](#)

And how did that doll come about?

She was originally marketed to adults in bars and tobacco shops as a joke or gag gift. Many parents considered her not appropriate for children. Ariel Levy refers to her as a "sex doll" in *Female Chauvinist Pigs*. A German brochure from the 1950s states that Lilli was "always discreet," and that her wardrobe made her "the star of every bar." Although the doll was originally not designed as a children's toy, she eventually became popular with children.

[Wikipedia](#)

This is what you're giving your children, hoping they grow up to be something other than... hookers?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Ann Coulter summarizes Nietzsche

Jan 7th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Liberals always have to be the victims, particularly when they are oppressing others. Modern victims aren't victims because of what they have suffered; they are victims of convenience for the Left. There's no way to determine if an action is offensive by looking at the action. One must know who did it to whom, and whose side the most powerful people in America will take.

Playing the game of He Who Is Offended First Wins, the key to any political argument is to pretend to be insulted and register operatic anger. Liberals are the masters of finger-wagging indignation. They will wail about some perceived slight to a sacred feeling of theirs, frightening people who have never before witnessed the liberals' capacity to invoke synthetic outrage. Distracted by the crocodile tears of the liberal, Americans don't notice that these fake victims are attacking, advancing, and creating genuine victims.

Just as we're always told that schoolyard bullies are actually deeply insecure, liberals rationalize their own ferocious behavior by claiming to have been wounded somehow. What about the little guy our poor, insecure bully is beating the living daylights out of? How's his self-esteem coming along? That is the essence of liberals: They viciously attack everyone else, while wailing that they are the victims.

Liberals' infernal habit of accusing others of what they themselves are doing distracts attention from who is really being attacked. No one is victimized by a mouse: Real victims are those who are called the oppressors by the powerful.

Fake victims have become so crucial to liberal argument that you need a pathos-meter to follow politics in modern America. Every policy proposal is launched or opposed on the stories of victims.

[MSN](#)

Fairly concise, and accurate depiction of not just liberals, but the psychology of a civilization that knows it has drifted from reality to social reality ([Crowdism](#)) and so has become neurotic: passive aggression, to compensate for cognitive dissonance which at any minute can be shown to be false by the wrong words from others.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Organic food is for the oblivious

Jan 7th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

California Liquid Fertilizer has been spiking its fertilizer with ammonium sulfate for the last several years, affecting the organic status of many farms, including organic behemoth Earthbound Farms.

[Consumerist](#)

Organic food in theory means that nothing other than pure, natural ingredients go into the food.

But if they're fertilizing it with anything other than pure cow excrement, fish meal, biochar and bat guano, it's probably got what most people call "chemicals" — industrially refined ingredients.

Keep paying \$4 a tomato, suckers. This society is dishonest and since it doesn't take into account context, will gleefully declare any poop-covered tomato an organic one.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Religious teens are less sexually screwed-up

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The real difference is their more conservative and religious home and social environment. As she notes, when you compare both groups in this study with teens at large, the behavioral differences are striking. Here are just a few:

- These teens generally have less risky sex, i.e., fewer sexual partners.
- These teens are less likely to have a teenage pregnancy, or to have friends who use drugs.
- These teens have less premarital vaginal sex.
- When these teens lose their virginity they tend to do so at age 21 — compared to 17 for the typical American teen.
- And very much overlooked, one out of four of these teens do in fact keep the pledge to remain chaste — amid much cheap ridicule and just about zero support outside their homes or churches.

[WSJ](#)

So the big media hit piece on religious teens was wrong because it compared pledge-taking religious teens to other religious teens, found a minor statistical difference, and hyped it into an “ironic” story.

How responsible.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Liberal site DailyKos tries to censor flood of leftist anti-Semitism

Jan 6th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Holy mackerel.

[DailyKos Anti-Semitism](#)

Popular left-wing/liberal (conflatable terms) blog DailyKos has been dealing with a flood of leftist posts mentioning ZOG, Zionist conspiracies, Kennedy assassinations, the whole gig.

Here's one gem:

In doing so, it incurred beyond the border previously agreed in 1949 Armistice treaty to take advantage of the animosity between Israel and the numerous opponents to commence the Six-Day War that covered a significant portion of gains (Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank, Gaza) and staked East Jerusalem in the process that culminate their victory with celebratory weeps of nationalistic joy. It thus emerged as a major power and a formidable challenger of existing Arabic powers that will decide the fate of the world, beginning with November 22, 1963 coup d'etat in CIA-MOSSAD coordinated assassination of President Kennedy which unnaturally led to the hasty re-evaluation of American foreign policy for adjution that align with the interests of Israeli state for total compatibility in irreversibly entangled alliance.

[DailyKos](#)

What?

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Cold War II

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

The Russians want Ukraine back. Strategy: starve and humiliate them into attacking. Hey, it worked against the Japanese for the USA, and against the Germans for the UK.

Gazprom shut off Ukraine's gas supply last Thursday after saying it had missed \$2 billion in payments. It acknowledged that Ukraine may have paid part of that amount, but said that still leaves Kiev \$614 million in debt. Ukraine denied owing the money and is currently meeting its domestic needs with supplies from storage facilities.

Russia is the world's biggest producer of natural gas and supplies Europe with more than 40 percent of its imports — mainly via the pipelines through Ukraine.

Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece and Germany did not blame either side in the dispute for the cuts — only the dispute itself.

[CNN](#)

Conveniently in the midst of winter, this gives all sides a pretense under which they can do something stupid and retributive.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

DNA, like strings, can entangle over distance

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Scientists are reporting evidence that contrary to our current beliefs about what is possible, intact double-stranded DNA has the “amazing” ability to recognize similarities in other DNA strands from a distance. Somehow they are able to identify one another, and the tiny bits of genetic material tend to congregate with similar DNA. The recognition of similar sequences in DNA's chemical subunits, occurs in a way unrecognized by science. There is no known reason why the DNA is able to combine the way it does, and from a current theoretical standpoint this feat should be chemically impossible.

[Daily Planet](#)

More to this universe than meets our (materialistic, individualistic, fearful) eyes.

Posted in: [Science](#).

More politically correct madness

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Ministers are considering plans to force companies into publishing in-depth details of their employee's salaries, ordered by gender.

In a move intended to eradicate the gender pay gap once and for all, the government is considering plans to shame companies into paying both male and female employees fairly.

Should the plans be approved, private companies will be required to publish annual figures specifying the number of male and female employees in each of their different pay grades. A 'pay inequalities' league table would then be developed from the results, designed to name and shame the companies with the largest gender pay gap.

[Money](#)

Thus completely ignoring individual traits and abilities.

Someone can be female AND incompetent, but this doesn't convey that.

Someone can be female AND 85% competent, so still a good worker, but maybe not as valuable as someone male AND 95% competent.

But this ignores that.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Why hipsters are wrong

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

It seems the underlying argument is that food and palates have evolved over the past 10 years. People now seek a sophisticated, cleaner, more wholesome dining experience as opposed to the caveman-like proportions of sizzling beef and pork, dripping in sticky barbecue sauce and deep-fried accompaniments served up at the shack.

And yet, three months after opening, the 200-plus seat restaurant continues to pack its tables, night after night.

[The Times](#)

The hipsters, opinion industry workers, critics and Nanny State finger-wagging naggers will tell you that we have “moved on” and “Progressed” and are now “enlightened” and don’t need or like certain things.

I have the opposite viewpoint:

There is nothing new under the sun.

We are as we always have been. Some things will always be tasty, others will always be true, and most of these “primitive” opinions and food options exist because they’re a good adaptation to reality.

Spend a long day working hard — not typing opinions into some nitwit culture magazine — and you’ll appreciate real food(tm).

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Another civil rights debacle: criminal morons provoke police, get accidentally shot

Jan 6th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Grant was a butcher at Farmer Joe's Marketplace in Oakland's Dimond district, family members said. They said he loved to play basketball and video games and hang out with friends. He had been in some trouble, they said, but was doing better in recent months in an effort to be a good father.

According to sources, Grant had a prison record. Details were unavailable Sunday.

A source also revealed Sunday that BART police had been on edge before Grant's shooting because two guns had been recovered in separate incidents along the rail line in the hour before the shooting.

In one of the incidents, a teenage boy with a semiautomatic pistol had fled from police and jumped off the West Oakland Station platform, breaking several bones while landing. In another, the source said, a revolver was recovered after a fight at the Embarcadero Station in San Francisco.

The officer who shot Grant appears to try to put cuffs on him before drawing his weapon and firing. In the video, Grant appears to struggle with the officers, though it is unclear exactly what he was doing.

BART officials declined to say whether the officer was carrying a Taser – a device that sends out two electrical probes and can incapacitate its target – when he shot Grant. The agency uses Tasers but does not have enough of the expensive devices to give one to every officer.

"It is, without a doubt, the most unconscionable shooting I have ever seen," said Burris, who has won several damage awards against Bay Area police departments and worked on Rodney King's civil suit against the city of Los Angeles. "A price has to be paid. Accountability has to occur."

[SFG](#)

I've respun this article to show context. Criminal moron engages in stupid behavior while others are engaging in stupid behavior, putting under-equipped officers on edge, and an accident happens. Community screams about racism when they really want money.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

You are afraid of life itself

Jan 6th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

But some parents are ditching fairytales, believing they are politically incorrect or 'too dark' to read to children, a survey has found.

One in four mothers has abandoned the likes of Cinderella and Rapunzel in favour of The Gruffalo or The Very Hungry Caterpillar, written in 1969 by Eric Carle.

One in ten parents even said Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs should be re-titled – because 'the dwarf reference is not PC'.

Rapunzel is considered 'too dark' and Cinderella outdated, because she is forced to do the housework.

The poll of 3,000 British parents, carried out by TheBabyWebsite.com, revealed 66 per cent believe traditional fairytales have stronger morality messages than modern equivalents.

[The Daily Mail](#)

Morality requires having good and bad options in life. Political correctness wants to make every option good, so even a crack-addicted homeless garbageman who votes Republican feels OK... well maybe not that last part.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

The Overweight Runner Gives Tips For a Healthy Diet)

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Frank Azzurro](#).

During the summer, even in the cold New England ocean water, I begin looking forward to swimming in the ocean as often as I could (once a week). Mixing up activity with some basketball and weekly swimming greatly helped my desire to stay active, but some good old fashioned strength lifting is something I could also benefit from in the future. When the summer faded last year and it became a bit cooler outside, it was all the more reason to stay outside and run as I wouldn't overheat as quickly. I realized that I was once again running 4-5 miles almost every time I went out for a run, even though my appearance still dictates I have a long way to go before I'm in great shape.

The lesson here is that everything is a process and our quick fix society simply doesn't work. As time has passed throughout the past year of finally building up to more intense activities, I've realized the goal is the activity itself, not to look good so I can one day become a model. Our bodies are hard wired to burn calories via more rigorous activity than sitting on a couch and pushing buttons on a remote control.

Exercising, being patient, and building up to a variety of activities also helped me reflect on my diet (ironically, I watch my diet more carefully when I'm practicing a good workout regimen, which means I'm taking in less calories while burning more off). Treating your body well by refueling with the appropriate food is a life philosophy, it's not a trend that you can pick up, lose 25 pounds, then go back to your regular routine of TV and junk food. The more days that pass where I desire a nice, long run, no matter how cold it is outside, or a salad with a variety of veggies instead of a fried this-or-that, the more it shocks me that people would actually want plastic surgery or a pill to reverse their natural weaknesses, as if this is going to help them become better and stronger. We all have temptations, especially in this society, but it's fairly simple to avoid them. Here are some tips on what to eat and some advice on how to avoid what not to eat:

EAT:

Veggies

Dark greens, such as Romaine lettuce, spinach, broccoli.

You can make the broccoli and spinach tasty by sauteing it with a little olive oil, garlic (or garlic powder), and adding lemon or some diced onion.

Also, celery, peppers, artichokes, and carrots (great health benefit). Any salad can be made tasty with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Stay away from packaged salad dressings as most include [high fructose corn syrup](#), which is just a bad idea in general.

Fruit

This includes tomatoes, olives, and anything you can find at the supermarket that qualifies as fruit (preferably organic, though I guess that goes without saying these days).

Some good ideas to mix things up and keep yourself interested in fruit include mango, cantaloupe, bananas, and pears.

Berries and nuts (just not peanuts or cashews), which I guess can be considered a subcategory of fruit, also need to be eaten as they provide a great health benefit. A personal favorite of mine is Triple Berry Juice at Trader Joe's, which is not overly sweet and is 100% natural.

Fish

Just eat lots of it. Wild salmon (though it has a relatively high fat content, the Omega-3 benefit is key here) and haddock are easy to prepare, and tuna thrown into a salad of mixed greens makes it all the more tasty. Halibut, octopus, squid, and sashimi are also good for you.

Meat

Our bodies are hard wired to process fresh meat. This is a fact that can't be denied; we're omnivores. So treat yourself to some grass-fed beef; if you're a vegetarian, try to eat some fish once in a while.

Note: This is NOT an excuse to eat loads of sausage, cold cuts (always a bad idea when it includes processed/mixed meat and nitrates), burgers from a local burger joint (which include bread, of course), or super-glazed BBQ steak tips. Eat meat as plainly as possible and with the least amount of processing. In other words: go to a butcher for your meat, freeze it till you cook it, and prepare it with only some spices, not heavy gravies or sauces that include sugar and salt and other bad things.

AVOID:

Sugar and salt are to be avoided. Salt just doesn't provide any health benefit; milled cane sugar comes from a grain and is greatly concentrated, which causes all sorts of problems internally after years of ingestion.

Breads and grains are easy ways to get calories, but these are items your body wouldn't be able to process in the raw, so why eat them at all? This is extremely difficult for most, but it is also the Achilles' Heel for most people who try to stay on diets free of unnecessary carbs.

Dairy is something nature only intends for us in infancy. Once we're able to eat solid foods, we should do so, and avoid milk for the rest of our lives. How we ever got to a point of drinking the milk of OTHER mammals after infancy is beyond me, but when you think of the huge industrial and governmental stakes in the industry (and all the money that changes hands), you can see how it's in their best interests to send the message that dairy is okay for you. It's not, and the fact that cow and sheep milk needs to be pasteurized and homogenized for consumption should be enough for you to stay away. In the first link below, you'll find some surprising facts about societies which are most affected by osteoporosis and whether or not dairy truly helps avoid such disorders.

LINKS:

Also check out the below links. Note that I still eat some cheese and occasionally some bread; it's extremely difficult to give these up for good. This is a lifestyle choice one must be willing to accept; it's not a diet you'll find in Oprah magazine. The main idea here is to eat what you would otherwise be able to eat raw in nature (yes, including eggs and meat, which were fine to eat raw for our ancestors). These items are simply unhealthy for you in any quantities, but slowly reducing those quantities and replacing them with roughage is the best path toward a more healthy life.

NotMilk.com – reasons to stay away from dairy

Earth360.com – the Paleo Diet

<http://www.tbkfitness.org/Diet1.html>

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Tagged: [diet](#) · [exercise](#)

Modern marriage is misdirected

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

A few neat stats from a UK article on marital breakups:

Two in five reported increased levels of happiness following their split – though just 29 per cent of men said they were happier, compared with 49 per cent of women.

The survey's revelations about British relationships included the finding that 17 per cent of marriages are entirely sexless, a potential trigger of infidelity, cited by two in five (38 per cent) people as key factor for divorce.

The other common reasons for splits were abuse (34 per cent) and boredom, cited by almost one in three (29 per cent) people.

And with 17 per cent of divorced men blaming financial problems for the end of their marriage, the credit crunch is putting extra pressure on relationships in trouble.

[Times Online](#)

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

London resembling Detroit

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

London lost more than a third of its residents in an exodus to the countryside during the last decade with 1.8 million immigrants pouring into the capital to replace them.

However, this net loss from internal migration was more than offset by 1.8 million international migrants who arrived in the city during this period – many eastern Europeans willing to undertake low-paid work.

[The Telegraph](#)

The original people leave, replaced by the cosmopolitan and stateless people who now take over.

Sad and pointless.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#).

What do property taxes pay for

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Support for property-tax rollbacks is building from Arizona to New York, fueled by angry homeowners in some locales who are seeing rising tax bills despite plunging home prices.

In Indiana, a cap on property taxes enacted last year became effective Jan. 1, and lawmakers are planning to vote this year on whether to put before voters a constitutional amendment that would cap taxes permanently at 1% of a property's value.

[WSJ](#)

One of the many ways you pay for pluralism is that local communities are encouraged to provide a vast array of services for people who in former times would have been turned away.

Infrastructure costs — hospitals, police, roads, public facilities, education — eat up most of this cost. And why are they so expensive?

It's a laundry list. Illegals come to mind for many. For others of us, however, the question is one of pluralism in general.

Communities are now expected to provide a diversity of services, even for homegrown diversity, and it costs a lot more. With pluralism comes a rise in disorder, which requires more infrastructure and services.

For government, when things were heading up and up, it seemed like a good bet to keep adding more government. Anti-drug cops, anti-drug lectures. Signs in Spanish. More facilities for different types of activities. Education: English as a second language, special education, and trendy new types of education.

Now people are seeing that we didn't have the money all along.

Posted in: [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Public education is no longer education

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

It's indoctrination, and parents who can afford to are fleeing to private schools or home-schooling:

The number of home-schooled kids hit 1.5 million in 2007, up 74% from when the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics started keeping track in 1999, and up 36% since 2003. The percentage of the school-age population that was home-schooled increased from 2.2% in 2003 to 2.9% in 2007. "There's no reason to believe it would not keep going up," says Gail Mulligan, a statistician at the center.

[USAT](#)

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

We want all criminals to be not guilty

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

More revisionist history — liberals want us to think that all screwed up behavior is OK, so we excuse their own personal screwed up behavior:

Pirates were the first people to rebel against this world. They mutinied against their tyrannical captains – and created a different way of working on the seas. Once they had a ship, the pirates elected their captains, and made all their decisions collectively. They shared their bounty out in what Rediker calls “one of the most egalitarian plans for the disposition of resources to be found anywhere in the eighteenth century.” They even took in escaped African slaves and lived with them as equals. The pirates showed “quite clearly – and subversively – that ships did not have to be run in the brutal and oppressive ways of the merchant service and the Royal navy.” This is why they were popular, despite being unproductive thieves.

As soon as the government was gone, mysterious European ships started appearing off the coast of Somalia, dumping vast barrels into the ocean.

Much of it can be traced back to European hospitals and factories, who seem to be passing it on to the Italian mafia to “dispose” of cheaply.

In a surreal telephone interview, one of the pirate leaders, Sugule Ali, said their motive was “to stop illegal fishing and dumping in our waters... We don’t consider ourselves sea bandits. We consider sea bandits [to be] those who illegally fish and dump in our seas and dump waste in our seas and carry weapons in our seas.”

[Huffinton](#)

Things aren’t perfect. So turn to screwed up behavior.

He fails to mention the reason Somalia became the world’s dumping ground: all attempts at government have failed. If you fail that big, you become a wasteland.

The correct response is not to praise the pirates (although anyone dumping nuclear waste can be shot).

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Liberals are hedonists not ideologues

Jan 5th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

This man goes from self-righteousness to groveling self-debasement in about four paragraphs:

We could never, however, drive an SUV, because they are unspeakably evil. I'm intimately familiar with liberal self-righteousness. I've been to the Unitarian Church. I've even flashed my own peacock feathers from time to time. I didn't eat meat in college, in part, I now think, just so I could say so.

My most recent major purchase prior to this car was actually an SUB, a sport utility bicycle, rigged out with massive panniers so I can haul everything from groceries to a 30-inch Weber grill around town without my car, thumbing my nose at the SUVs stuck in traffic. I ride my SUB to work every day — and to the neighborhood farmers' market, where I buy locally grown produce. In the summer, I cook my curry-cream squash soup (am I turning you on, Volvo drivers?) in a solar oven.

Signing off on my new SUV (There. See? I wrote it) was a shock. But when I climbed into the high cockpit, the cushy seats had a surprisingly analgesic effect on my conscience. The quiet of the cabin at highway speeds was gentle on my ears. And the view is great from up there, way above the tiny little cars.

Here is the dirty little secret about SUVs: They're horrible for everyone except the guy in the passenger seat. Then they are great. And what a deal! Too bad SUVs are killing the planet.

[Thalon](#)

Translation: I ride a bike and cook vegan goop in my solar oven so that I'm better than you. Until it's convenient and I need an SUV for, uh, the kids. And then I'm still better than you, because I can ironically admit it.

Can we admit now that secular humanism is Christian morality without the higher goal of God?

Can we admit now that secular humanism, liberalism, moralism, hipsterism, self-righteousness and egodrama are one and the same?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Cities destroy your brain

Jan 5th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

While the modern city might be a haven for playwrights, poets, and physicists, it's also a deeply unnatural and overwhelming place.

Now scientists have begun to examine how the city affects the brain, and the results are chastening. Just being in an urban environment, they have found, impairs our basic mental processes. After spending a few minutes on a crowded city street, the brain is less able to hold things in memory, and suffers from reduced self-control. While it's long been recognized that city life is exhausting — that's why Picasso left Paris — this new research suggests that cities actually dull our thinking, sometimes dramatically so.

A city is so overstuffed with stimuli that we need to constantly redirect our attention so that we aren't distracted by irrelevant things, like a flashing neon sign or the cellphone conversation of a nearby passenger on the bus. This sort of controlled perception — we are telling the mind what to pay attention to — takes energy and effort. The mind is like a powerful supercomputer, but the act of paying attention consumes much of its processing power.

Natural settings, in contrast, don't require the same amount of cognitive effort.

[Boston Globe](#)

Not surprising. Cities are utilitarian places; our minds don't work by deconstruction.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

10% of our population have souls

Jan 4th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

About 10 percent of the mature couples had the same chemical reactions when shown photographs of their loved ones as those just starting out.

Using brain scans, researchers at Stony Brook University in New York have discovered a small number of couples respond with as much passion after 20 years together as most people only do during the early throes of romance, Britain's Sunday Times newspaper reported.

"The findings go against the traditional view of romance — that it drops off sharply in the first decade — but we are sure it's real," said Arthur Aron, a psychologist at Stony Brook, told the Sunday Times.

[CNN](#)

You mean the MODERNIST view of romance, don't you?

This isn't incompatible with the view that 90% of humanity are opportunistic, parasitic monkeys, while 10% make the world continue to function.

Why not lose the 90% dead DNA load? They're clearly people without souls.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Race, genetics and morality: the new war over evolution

Jan 4th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Russian scientists showed in the 1990s that a strong selection pressure (picking out and breeding only the tamest fox pups in each generation) created what was — in behavior as well as body — essentially a new species in just 30 generations. That would correspond to about 750 years for humans. Humans may never have experienced such a strong selection pressure for such a long period, but they surely experienced many weaker selection pressures that lasted far longer, and for which some heritable personality traits were more adaptive than others. It stands to reason that local populations (not continent-wide “races”) adapted to local circumstances by a process known as “co-evolution” in which genes and cultural elements change over time and mutually influence each other. The best documented example of this process is the co-evolution of genetic mutations that maintain the ability to fully digest lactose in adulthood with the cultural innovation of keeping cattle and drinking their milk. This process has happened several times in the last 10,000 years, not to whole “races” but to tribes or larger groups that domesticated cattle.

Recent “sweeps” of the genome across human populations show that hundreds of genes have been changing during the last 5-10 millennia in response to local selection pressures. (See papers by Benjamin Voight, Scott Williamson, and Bruce Lahn). No new mental modules can be created from scratch in a few millennia, but slight tweaks to existing mechanisms can happen quickly, and small genetic changes can have big behavioral effects, as with those Russian foxes. We must therefore begin looking beyond the Pleistocene and turn our attention to the Holocene era as well — the last 10,000 years. This was the period after the spread of agriculture during which the pace of genetic change sped up in response to the enormous increase in the variety of ways that humans earned their living, formed larger coalitions, fought wars, and competed for resources and mates.

The protective “wall” is about to come crashing down, and all sorts of uncomfortable claims are going to pour in. Skin color has no moral significance, but traits that led to Darwinian success in one of the many new niches and occupations of Holocene life — traits such as collectivism, clannishness, aggressiveness, docility, or the ability to delay gratification — are often seen as virtues or vices. Virtues are acquired slowly, by practice within a cultural context, but the discovery that there might be ethnically-linked genetic variations in the ease with which people can acquire specific virtues is — and this is my prediction — going to be a “game changing” scientific event. (By “ethnic” I mean any group of people who believe they share common descent, actually do share common descent, and that descent involved at least 500 years of a sustained selection pressure, such as sheep herding, rice farming, exposure to malaria, or a caste-based social order, which favored some heritable behavioral predispositions and not others.)

I believe that the “Bell Curve” wars of the 1990s, over race differences in intelligence, will seem genteel and short-lived compared to the coming arguments over ethnic differences in moralized traits. I predict that this “war” will break out between 2012 and 2017.

[Edge](#)

On the left, people freak out because we mention race at all.

On the right, people freak out because we at this blog do not condemn any race or pick any race as superior.

However, we do have one radical position regarding the biggest “elephant in the room” of modern liberal democracy: we know from history that multiculturalism does not work.

Why does multiculturalism fail?

- Different abilities caused by different evolutionary paths equals constant infighting.
- People on the left use pity for disadvantaged groups to make themselves look more altruistic. People on the right sell fear. Either way, from either side, you get the weaker leaders not the honest ones.
- Culture is all that holds back commerce, in any age, from taking over a society. Multiculturalism obliterates that.
- Ethnicity (including race) is culture. If your ancestors develop a culture, it is because they adapted to it. This violates the taboo that says humans are above nature, not shaped by it.
- Without a group identity, people are forever casting about for invented identities, which produces “New Age” style thinking: Buddhist one week, Italian Mussolinist the next, gay porn star the next, Scientologist the next, etc.
- Each ethnicity has produced unique traits that are worth preserving.
- The genetics of hybridization produces one generation with hybrid vigor, and then every following generation careens downward to a lowest common denominator.

These are blasphemous truths that our society will not face.

Mr. Haidt’s article just resurrects the debate in another form.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Tagged: [biological determinism](#) · [eugenics](#) · [inherited morality](#) · [race](#)

People hide from modern society

Jan 4th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Thousands of rare dolphins and whales have been discovered living near a deep sea channel off the coast of East Timor.

The “hot spot” of marine animals contained many protected species including blue and beaked whales, short-finned pilot whales, melon headed whales and six types of dolphin.

In just one day, as many as 2,000 whales in eight separate pods – each one containing up to 400 mammals – were spotted over a 30-mile stretch of coast.

[The Telegraph](#)

Based on my experience with humanity, about 92 out of 100 people buy into the modern illusion. This potent combination of individualism, egoism, narcissism, faith in technology, moral self-righteousness (sorry, “Progressivism”), and negativity renders them unable to see anything other than their own neurotic confusion about values and, in their misery, a need for uplifting/profound/distracting entertainment and pharmaceutical products.

That remaining 8 out of 100 come from varied social origins, although very rarely poverty, and they are not fooled. They know modern society is a death trip. They know it has nowhere to go but down and that actually, it's a neurotic hell in which we live. They know that people are false and motivated by the basest of desires, yet are excellent at hiding it, and that most people want them to hide it so they can cruise on in oblivion and narcissistic hermetic sealing against reality.

In the dolphin world, that 8 out of 100 have realized that humanity is on a rampage as it races to destroy itself not with nuclear weapons but with overgrowth and disorganization, and so they've run out to the center of the ocean to get the hell away until the storm blows over.

Just like in the human world, those 8 out of 100 are living very quietly, trying to stay out of the public focus, earning a living and hiding from the disaster around them, because they know it will eventually blow over, and then they can start a new non-failing civilization.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

American society peaked in the 1960s

Jan 4th, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Future historians will note that American society peaked in the late 1960s. Culturally, this is a foregone conclusion. We listen to our parents' music and call it "classic rock," a canon that can be approached but never surpassed. When we think of art, we think of Warhol and Rothko. Our top-selling cultural products have names like "Star Wars" and "Star Trek"—nostalgic Baby Boomer dreams that one day man will dance amongst the heavenly spheres, whereas in reality we have come crashing down, Icarus-like, in fiery debris. After the sun-bright Baby Boomer generation flared into supernova, it collapsed into a black hole.

We knew all this long ago. We were called the "slacker" generation. But how could we not be, after Free Love turned to AIDS, we saw Peace commodified and sold for junk bonds, and realized the calls for "revolution" were nothing more than the mewling of infants begging to be indulged? Our coming-of-age movies were "Reality Bites" and "Fight Club." Our famed irony and sarcasm were not a sign that we value nothing: They were self-defense in a world where nothing is valued. This is the world the Baby Boomers, the so-called flower-children, have left us: A world poisoned by me-firstism, by NIMBYism, by I-got-mine-ism. Our parents' generation has rebutted the hard work and sacrifice of our grandparents with short-term thinking and situational morality justified by Excel spreadsheets.

We grow into middle age not surrounded by prosperity and security, but by our doubts and fears. Even as the rich have gotten richer, we have seen our standard of living fall. The middle class is barely reproducing itself, bifurcated into those barely treading water and those on an endless paper chase after useless honors. Our hopes have been dashed, our dreams sold for firewood to keep warm and hold back the wolves for one more night.

[CME](#)

All true, but he doesn't look into the source: egotist of the baby boomers, something the NIMBY generation has faithfully replicated. Good thinking.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

A rumor-based information society

Jan 4th, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

The bottle cap hoax illustrates a phenomenon that may become more common as trust in old institutions like newspapers erodes and the power of propelling news – true and false – shifts to less formal networks of knowledge like the Internet and e-mail.

“Now,” Adair says, “not only is that rumor making an end run around the media, it has a certain credibility because of who’s sending it” – namely, the friends and relatives who pass along chain e-mails. In other words, you may not trust the St. Petersburg Times, but you still trust Uncle Al not to steer you wrong.

“Once these large institutions are not trusted, then rumors have much more power,” says Nicholas DiFonzo, a professor of psychology at the Rochester Institute of Technology and the author of “The Water Cooler Effect.”

“As people trust the press less and less, the public will be influenced by rumors more and more,” he said.

[WVG](#)

We learned not to trust government.

Then we learned not to trust media.

We still trust Hollywood, because their propaganda pretends to be entertainment.

And we pretend to trust each other.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Branded "racist" for opposing new trailer park

Jan 3rd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

In America, poor white people go into trailer parks and dusky minorities are put into urban apartments. In the UK, poor white people go into rural apartments and dusky minorities are put into trailer parks. It's completely backward.

Thousands of residents in Stotfold (population 8,500) and surrounding villages, are now having to defend themselves against accusations of racism.

The 'damning evidence', as it turns out, is contained in council questionnaires, completed in good faith by the likes of the Huckles, to provide feedback on plans to build gipsy camps in the area.

Mr Masterton insisted Stotfold was 'too small to cope with the influx'. Mr Bowskill was worried about the added pressure on local services.

The Colliers, the Chalmers and the Huckles cited 'fear of crime'. Someone else thought one of the proposed sites was too near an old people's home.

In the eyes of Mid-Bedfordshire District Council (but no one else of sane mind) this amounted to outrageous racial discrimination.

[The Daily Mail](#)

It's ridiculous that we keep denying the obvious: people don't want you to move a ton of people who have not adapted to society, dusky or not, into their towns and neighborhoods.

It's the same in the USA. People, whether white or black or racist or not, do not want white people from trailer parks nearby. If a black man making \$150,000 a year decided he did not want white trailer park dwellers earning \$20,000 a year living near him, is it "racism" or just practicality?

And the bureaucrat who did all this — where does he live?

Mr Alderson, we discovered, lives in a big mews house at the end of a private drive in Biggleswade alongside a river.

The false elites act so they look good, at the expense of everyone. It's all about getting ahead.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Socialization](#).

Samuel Huntington: revealing globalism's darkest side

Jan 3rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

IN THE early 1990s America's opinion-makers competed to outdo each other in triumphalism. Economists argued that the "Washington consensus" would spread peace and prosperity around the world. Politicians debated whether the "peace dividend" should be used to create universal health care or be allowed to fructify in the pockets of the people or quite possibly both. Francis Fukuyama took the optimists' garland by declaring, in 1992, "the end of history" and the universal triumph of Western liberalism.

Samuel Huntington thought that all this was bunk. In "The Clash of Civilisations?" he presented a darker view. He argued that the old ideological divisions of the Cold War would be replaced not by universal harmony but by even older cultural divisions. The world was deeply divided between different civilisations. And far from being drawn together by globalisation, these different cultures were being drawn into conflict.

Huntington added another barb to his argument by suggesting that Western civilisation was in relative decline: the American power-mongers who thought that they were the architects of a new world order were more likely to find themselves the victims of cultural forces that they did not even know existed. The future was being forged in the mosques of Tehran and the planning commissions of Beijing rather than the cafés of Harvard Square. His original 1993 article, in *Foreign Affairs*, was translated into 26 languages and expanded into a best-selling book.

But he believed that it was vital to mix liberal idealism with a pessimism rooted in a conservative reading of history. He rejected the economic reductionism that drove the Washington consensus, and insisted instead on seeing people as products of culture rather than as profit-and-loss calculating machines. He also rejected the beguiling idea (some say it has beguiled *The Economist*) that all good things tend to go together—that free markets go hand in hand with pluralism, democracy and the American way. He felt that America was a living paradox: America's culture turned it into a universal civilisation but those values were in fact rooted in a unique set of circumstances.

[The Economist](#)

A great article on Huntington's impact: as a classical liberal, he was also that rarest of birds, the historically-informed (and philosophically-informed) analyst who doesn't allow himself to get caught up in a trend.

Posted in: [Globalism](#).

Allowing anonymous crowds to critique enhances ignorance

Jan 3rd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Insightful read between the lines from Marina Hyde:

Sydney Pollack's disturbing movie *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* exposes America's Depression-era dance marathons for the cheap, dehumanising spectacle they were. Half-dead with exhaustion, participants were subjected to ever-harsher judgements and elimination events, watched by huge crowds of people who, for obvious reasons, had little money and endless hours to kill.

As we lurch towards our own depression era, then, thank heavens for health minister Ben Bradshaw, who this week announced plans for patients to rate GPs on an NHS website, posting comments on everything from perceived competence to bedside manner.

We can dispense with the dance hall, thanks to the information age, and simply gather virtually to watch surgeries take a beating from people – anonymous people, naturally – who don't realise that not giving antibiotics to malingerers is actually excellent medical practice.

It is joined-up government, finding its image in virtually every department, a great daisy chain of stupidity, stringing together the cheapest and basest ideas to give people the illusion of empowerment.

[The Guardian](#)

It's hard to find words for how stupid the modern system is. "Illusion of empowerment" says it best: the crowd, who are defined by not wanting to invest themselves too much in government, love transparency, openness, rights, and other absolute universal concepts. They seem to protect us, even though these are guarantees on paper and nothing else.

In the same way, we as crowds seem to feel relaxed that our media is "watching out for us," even though they need to make a living too, so they're as much entertainment as news.

And we've seen on the internet how anonymous comments bring out the worst in people. Frustrated in daily life? Take it out on others with a comment. Or, just draw attention to your screen persona for being witty or cruel.

This issue goes far beyond comments on doctors, but it's a good introduction by way of example.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Love and happiness versus lust

Jan 3rd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Two recent studies reveal that a majority of American women are finding the holy grail of happiness more elusive. Researchers were startled to find that women now report less happiness than in the early 1970s; and where they once indicated greater levels of happiness and life satisfaction than men, that's now reversed.

{ snip }

There isn't a minute to spare: She must whisk her daughter to preschool, make a meeting in San Francisco, use her lunch hour to retrieve her daughter and a nanny and deposit them at home, then return to work until almost dark, whipsaw back home, throw together a quick dinner, hang out to play with her daughter, tuck her into bed, then crash — and, with luck, get sufficient sleep to do it all over again when her alarm rings the next morning.

[Alternet](#)

We have a culture war: the left says the individual is all; the right says that context, like culture and religion, are important. (As a reformed leftist, I have to say that my goals as a leftist — treat everyone fairly — are best accomplished through rightist means, especially since most people including those who you want to help have no idea what will help their situation and will often violently oppose the only change that will help.)

But I think we can all agree: the modern lifestyle is crazy, and not only bad for women, but for men also. People now work all of the time, and still don't have enough quality time for their families. In addition, they are usually so tired and burnt out that they reward themselves with little uplifts, like alcohol and television, that distract them further from reality.

What can we learn:

She said that most people think what they feel in the first flush of a relationship is love. It isn't. It's infatuation. You can only talk about loving somebody when you've lived with them for 10 years, with the smelly socks and the quarrels. Only then will you know what you mean when you say you love them.

[The Guardian](#)

Love and happiness are the opposite of infatuation.

Infatuation can be with money; with a person; with an idea. What differentiates it from love is depth. Infatuation is when something appears to be exactly as it describes itself, and so seems so self-sufficient you wish you could borrow that great simplicity from it.

Love means accepting something — a person, an ecotype, a country, a species, an idea — warts and all, and loving it for the properties which being more central to its core outshine the rest. Love and happiness, the opposites of infatuation, bring depth to life and help us avoid distracting ourselves from the obvious: the modern lifestyle is death.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Media sells bad news and inflates disasters

Jan 3rd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

77% of Americans believe that the US media is making the economic situation worse by projecting fear into people's minds.

{ snip }

- Household Income \$75k – more – 78% answered YES
- 85% of young adults (18-24 yrs old) answered YES

[ZDN](#)

Big surprise. Bad news sells. "Everything is going just fine" makes for boring newspaper. Back in the 1970s or so, people loved to read that in a newspaper. But panic, fear, terror, misery, compassion, bittersweet, are all the type of drama that sells.

This means however that when any disaster could possibly be occurring, it gets hyped to the gills, causing people to respond like a terrified mass, screaming through the nation causing others to panic as well. Remember when H5N1 (bird flu) was going to kill us all?

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

We will enforce individualism so we are all clones I mean equal

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

PC CAMPAIGNERS want to stop girls' toys from being made in pink because it forces them to become "little princesses".

They say that girls are becoming so hooked on pink they stop thinking for themselves.

[The Daily Star](#)

Hi, we're your parents' generation. We're so neurotic we want everyone to make every decision for themselves, whether necessary or not, so we'll all be sick together and face the same consequences. Misery loves company! Your life doesn't need a framework, you need to express yourself... and buy our products.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

Paul Krugman, snake oil salesman

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

How to sell snake oil: tell something that is part truth and mostly lie, that then gives the listener a simplistic answer.

Forty years ago the G.O.P. decided, in effect, to make itself the party of racial backlash.

"Government is not the solution to our problem," declared Ronald Reagan. "Government is the problem."

In 1981 Lee Atwater, the famed Republican political consultant, explained the evolution of the G.O.P.'s "Southern strategy," which originally focused on opposition to the Voting Rights Act but eventually took a more coded form: "You're getting so abstract now you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is blacks get hurt worse than whites." In other words, government is the problem because it takes your money and gives it to Those People.

[NYT](#)

Mr. Krugman thinks himself very slick and very educated. He brings peace and enlightenment and Progress to us all. Either that, or he's a lying snake oil salesman.

No multicultural nation has lasted. Why is that? Because when internal infighting, a necessary result of pluralism (which includes multiculturalism), divides a nation's wealth and energy, it no longer operates efficiently. It becomes a party for dividing up the spoils not making new wealth.

The Republicans and libertarians and anarchists are preaching a simple truth: whenever the going gets good, parasites of all kinds show up, and we want independence from them. A lack of independence from them is Soviet style socialism, and we know how well that worked.

I don't agree with everything the Republicans do — I'm an older form of liberal, and an older form of conservative, combined. But I think in this case Mr. Hipster Krugman is showing us how easily people are misled into thinking The Educated Opinion, when in fact that opinion has nothing to do with reality.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Socialization](#).

What killed off the Clovis people

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Tiny diamonds found in the soil are "strong evidence" a comet exploded on or above North America nearly 13,000 years ago, leading to the extinction of dozens of mammal species, according to a study.

The scientific report also suggests the cataclysm also reduced the population of the earliest people to inhabit the region and triggered a 1,300-year-long cold spell that stretched around the world.

The prehistoric humans known to have inhabited the continent at the time of the event — hunters and gatherers dubbed the Clovis culture — suffered a major decline in population in the aftermath, the scientists said.

The scientists studied layers of sediment dated to 12,900 years ago at six North American locations, including one directly on top of a Clovis site in Murray Springs, Arizona.

[CNN](#)

Interesting:

The controversial Solutrean hypothesis proposed in 1999 by Smithsonian archaeologist Dennis Stanford and colleague Bruce Bradley (Stanford and Bradley 2002), suggests that the Clovis people could have inherited technology from the Solutrean people who lived in southern Europe 21,000-15,000 years ago, and who created the first Stone Age artwork in present-day southern France.[16] The link is suggested by the similarity in technology between the projectile points of the Solutreans and those of the Clovis people. Such a theory would require that the Solutreans crossed via the edge of the pack ice in the North Atlantic Ocean that then extended to the Atlantic coast of France. They could have done this using survival skills similar to those of the modern Inuit people. Supporters of this hypothesis suggest that stone tools found at Cactus Hill (an early American site in Virginia), that are knapped in a style between Clovis and Solutrean. Other scholars such as Emerson F. Greenman and Remy Cottevielle-Giraudet have also suggested a Northern Atlantic point of entry, citing toolmaking similarities between Clovis and Solutrean-era artifacts.

Mitochondrial DNA analysis (see Map in Single-origin hypothesis) has found that some members of some native North American tribes have a maternal ancestry (called haplogroup X) (Schurr 2000) linked to the maternal ancestors of some present day individuals in western Asia and Europe, albeit distantly.

[Pedopedia](#)

So we have a European-influenced culture in North America.

It makes sense, given that if Siberians were mobile via boat or land, so were Europeans. We know they existed in China 2700 years ago, which means the routes there were probably explored long before.

And if you are a wandering group of hunters, how hard is it to range a few thousand miles? Even covering a mile or two a day, you go far.

Probably there were two groups of adventurers, European and Siberian, who came over first.

They were wiped out and replaced, as the pattern goes, with those who followed the path already forged.

These were the people who by the time the Europeans arrived, had degenerated into a third-world state of disorganization and corruption. The Aztecs should have been able to crush Hernan Cortes, but got caught up in internal politics and sacrificed. The North American Indians were so busy fighting each other they actually welcome the Europeans as allies. Clearly some mental degeneration had gone on.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Politics](#).

Same-sex schools encourage self-esteem

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Detroit has been at the forefront of a growing but controversial movement that aims to boost student achievement by splitting the sexes into different schools. Now Boston officials are fighting to open the state's first single-gender public schools in more than a generation.

Proponents say all-boy or all-girl schools allow some students to better focus on learning without the distraction of the opposite sex, enabling them to excel in areas where a gender gap in achievement typically exists. National standardized tests have long shown girls lagging in math and science, and boys in reading and writing.

"I would never have thought about joining a robotics team if I went to school somewhere else," said Amanda Johnson, 17, a senior. "Most of the time you see boy teams. And when there are girls, they usually make the trophies or design [team] T-shirts."

[The Boston Globe](#)

I have to admit being divided on this issue. The only question for me is one of pragmatics. I'd like to see kids socialized to be comfortable around the other gender, but I have seen how sexual tension — starting at age 10 or so — makes learning hard and distracts people with trying to look cool, etc.

The usual suspects interject a completely useless viewpoint:

Jacqueline Washington, president pro tem of the Michigan chapter of the ACLU and a former social worker in the Detroit public schools, said "Research says what works best for children is small class sizes, parental involvement, and good teaching."

How likely is that, Jacqueline? We can't afford small class sizes, most parents don't want to be involved, and we can't afford (apparently) to pay teachers enough to attract quality. Not only that, (apparently) we must burden teachers with a giant load of bureaucratic rules and controls, so that they have plenty of paperwork, five huge classes a day, and when they get home at night, another four hours of grading papers.

The only people signing up for teaching now are desperate.

In the 1970s and 1980s, you had the women seeking to supplement a busy husband's income. They say their role as sacred: guardians of education.

The more we've politicized education, put in bureaucracy, forced various forms of integration (the biggest one for me is mixing in special education kids with the general population, and not admitting that over half of our students now will not benefit from a high school education and it's questionable they'll benefit from a middle school one) and constraints, put teachers at risk for destruction at the hint of a sex suit or discrimination suit, etc. etc., the more we've started getting people who are teaching because they don't intend to grade papers after work and will be busy drinking.

So now education has self-selected the desperate and alcoholic instead of the hopeful and helpful. Good thinking! But that, too, is an unpopular truth.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Genetics shows biological origins of race and accuracy of self-reported ancestry

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

We studied human population structure using genotypes at 377 autosomal microsatellite loci in 1056 individuals from 52 populations. Within-population differences among individuals account for 93 to 95% of genetic variation; differences among major groups constitute only 3 to 5%. Nevertheless, without using prior information about the origins of individuals, we identified six main genetic clusters, five of which correspond to major geographic regions, and subclusters that often correspond to individual populations. General agreement of genetic and predefined populations suggests that self-reported ancestry can facilitate assessments of epidemiological risks but does not obviate the need to use genetic information in genetic association studies.

[Science Magazine](#)

There is not a single race gene. Nor are all people in a race identical, so they don't have identical genetic profiles. But there is an abstract profile of what genes they are or are not likely to have, and these genes correspond to an evolutionary history of a species leaving Africa and becoming diverse.

In other words, genetics mirrors physical appearance and that recapitulates the evolutionary journey we have taken since being monkeys. This journey is complicated by overlapping interbreeding through history, such as the tendency of all racial groups to send some representatives back to Africa where they became bred into the population. Modern Africans are not what ancient Africans were; the north coast of Africa is mostly Caucasian in descent. Africa is the origin and returning point of human diversity.

However, this genetic alignment shows us several things:

- Our environments shaped us, we adapted characteristics, and now have abilities as a result. However, this depends on where your ancestors went.
- When we interbreed between ecotypes (ethnicity, race, tribe) the offspring have an initial period of vigor, but then settle into a lowest common denominator which can be found in abundance across the world.
- It is impossible to claim one race is superior over another, because each race/tribe/ethnicity has adapted to the conditions to which its environment subjected itself. Some ethnicities appear to have chosen conditions of a challenging nature that have endowed them with additional abilities. However, none of these abilities are objectively superior, an assessment that would require we first define a purpose.

Interesting research. We're doing race-related topics this week in preparation for our first half-black president.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).
Tagged: [race](#)

Democracy is a religious not scientific concept

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

In the Christian tradition, because the world is created by God and is very good, it has the capacity to make God's invisible goodness visible. Nature, therefore, is sacramental. The Christian story also recounts how humankind is created in God's image, a being uniquely aware of itself. As a result, Christians are charged in a special way to embody God's love. Sacramentality is a responsibility, not a privilege. This is complicated by the fact that humankind lives in the history of sin and often fails to reflect God's love, taking away from the goodness of creation instead.

Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh describes a similar sacramental phenomenon partly contained in Tiep Hien, which can be described as "realizing" or making our convictions real in the world. We do not dwell or remain bound to the place of doctrines and ideas, instead we embody them, bringing them into lived experience.

Our democracy is similarly charged with being "sacramental." It was founded upon certain truths, among them the principles of freedom, equality and opportunity. These principles, however, lack meaning unless they are embodied or made present in the real world. The founding fathers, knowing that the members of our democracy would struggle with realizing its ideals, fashioned structures and prompts that would curb our propensity toward tyranny. Slavery, for example, not only failed to make present our nation's enlightened principles, it brought about their opposite: oppression. Only when we set out to secure freedom, equality and opportunity for blacks through amendment and legislation, was our nation once again acting sacramentally, making visible our nation's goodness, however imperfectly.

Unfortunately, we regularly fail to live up to our self-proclaimed democratic responsibility.

[The Kirwan Institute](#)

My job is to serve the Flying Spaghetti Monster-inspired principle that all humans have six toes.

The world is now divided into two groups: those with six toes, and those who are the anti-six-toe.

So I pick those that have six toes and write off the rest.

As a result, my belief in six-toed divinity is confirmed not challenged.

In the same way, democracy sees itself as proof of its own worth, yet it fails every time.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Imagine if sex were only for IQs over 120

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

I really enjoyed the article by this name, which is about Ashkenazi Jews and their higher average intelligence. Here's his most vivid metaphor:

Discussing "race" and intelligence is always a touchy subject and definitely not politically correct; but science should not be fettered by the chains of political correctness like a mangy circus lion. It must run free across the intellectual savanna, striking down the juvenile wildebeest of ignorance.

[SciBlog](#)

I threw this into the discussion to see if I could raise conversation about an important issue or two:

When it comes to differences between individuals, politics — the larger field of which political correctness is one manifestation — rules the day. Its requirement is simple: offend no one, especially not by mentioning differences between individuals, which makes people feel uneasy.

I think it's fairly obvious why Jews have higher IQs: they did, and do now, value education and intelligence more than being popular, being a football star, or ascribing to the moral but impractical constraints of a competing religion. This is selective breeding at its finest. Instead of "find a nice man" the dictum becomes "find a smart, capable, aggressive man," and society upbreeds.

By the same token, if we did reserve sex for people 120 IQ points and above, it's likely our society would begin again to produce leaders and scientists of great merit, instead of good augmentative researchers and actors behaving like presidents.

[SciBlog](#)

The fact of the matter is that Ashkenazi (subset of Jewish ethnicity, which is divided into Ashkenazi (Eastern European) and Sephardim (more like Basques) subtypes) Jews raised their intelligence by valuing smarts and having a clue, specifically an eye toward the professions, while everyone else was busy masturbating over whether or not God said to do this or that.

It's always easy to distract idiots by throwing in a flawed orthodoxy. They love it because they get to debate it and sound important.

The idiots of Europe united when Christianity came about and splintered the debate into 10,000 interlocked conversations, guaranteed to waste time in the name of the human ego until the society collapsed.

Jews, in the meantime, were smart enough to wipe this plague of neurotic thought from their heads, and focus first on material survival, so they rose while Europe fell.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).
Tagged: [eugenics](#) · [race](#)

Democrats unleash greatest corruption scandal of our time

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

Roland Burris, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's pick to fill President-elect Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat, will not be allowed on the Senate floor, according to the aides — one who is familiar with Senate Democratic leaders' plans, and the other an aide to the Senate Democratic leadership.

Democrats in the Senate have twice this week said they have the authority to refuse to accept anyone appointed by Blagojevich, who was arrested December 9, accused by federal authorities of corruption, including allegedly trying to sell Obama's seat for personal gain.

[CNN](#)

Dumb criminals turn on their own in an attempt to convince us they're innocent, but I think we're past that with Congress.

We know it's corrupt.

We also know that this is a sign of a dying empire. Where previous corruption was focused on a few incidents, it's now business as usual — legitimized corruption by lobbyists, or oligarchy.

Look forward to more updates as the USA spirals into third-world conditions.

Posted in: [Politics](#).

Philosophy becomes decadent when it loses sight of reality

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

An anonymous commenter asked this question on a philosophy blog. To my mind, it reveals exactly why philosophy is producing so few stars these days:

How do you define “correct” moral theory? Is there something more to it than internal consistency?

[Overcoming Bias](#)

People love to make philosophy into an inextricable muddle so they have an “educated” excuse to keep doing what they wanted to do anyway, which was please themselves (a moral “fapping”).

Correct moral theory is that which corresponds to reality.

Isn't that obvious? No, it's not: the textbook says moral theories are theories that are internally consistent, and it's all arbitrary, because with our heaters, TVs, cars, computers, video games and iStranger masturbation devices, reality is far, far away.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Another way first world nations die: weight gain kills breeding potential

Jan 2nd, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Before surgery, the morbidly obese men had significantly lower sexual function relative to that of a previously published reference control group of men before surgery, the investigators report.

After losing an average of two-thirds of their excess weight, men experienced significant improvements in sexual function, with the amount of weight loss predicting the degree of improvement.

"We estimate that a man who is morbidly obese has the same degree of sexual dysfunction as a nonobese man about 20 years older," the investigators report.

[MSN](#)

Nature designs more complex things to be fragile. This way, if they fail, they get replaced by simpler designs — a form of lowest common denominator where the design settles its disparate parts into the most basic interpretation it can find. This is why less-advanced populations are usually *more diverse*. They have more information but it is incompatible, so they end up creating ad hoc compromises in their phenotype and social outlook.

If any population gets fat, nature has at least one way of disabling them so that something dumber but more stable can take over. In essence, nature is always trying to breed us back into monkeys, because monkeys are very stable — even if they will never explore the stars.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Tagged: [devolution](#) · [eugenics](#) · [obesity](#)

Race hucksters and corruption overlap a lot

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

He urged people “not to hang or lynch the appointee as you try to castigate the appointer” and, after saying repeatedly that Burris would be the only African-American in the Senate, said that he believed no senator would want “to go on record to deny one African-American from being seated in the US Senate”.

Rush is a former Black Panther who trounced Barack Obama in the 2000 Democratic primary when the then state senator challenged him for his House of Representatives seat.

The grinning Burris was told by Blagojevich—who policed the press conference—that “you’re the senator”. He appeared clueless about the money he’d donated to the governor, which will only add to the taint of the appointment.

As he left the room, Blagojevich echoed Rush, saying: “Feel free to castigate the appointer but don’t lynch the appointee.”

[Telegraph](#)

Multiculturalism creates objects of pity which help clueless white people gain political status, briefly, while creating vast torrents of corruption.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#), [Politics](#).

UK poor feel politicians are anti-white, pro-immigrant

Jan 2nd, 2009
by [Steve Harris](#).

A study of attitudes to immigration published today has found a widespread sense of resentment, unfairness and disempowerment among white working-class communities in England.

The report found that some members of the white working-class feel 'betrayed' and believed politicians had washed their hands of them.

Communities Secretary Hazel Blears acknowledged that some white working-class people living on estates felt that no-one was speaking up for them, and called for greater efforts to listen and respond to their concerns.

Ms Blears warned that white people's concerns about the effects of immigration should not simply be branded 'racist', as this would simply alienate them even more.

People taking part in the focus groups said that when white people complained, they were told that the system was fair and their concerns were racist.

[The Daily Mail](#)

The poor alone are no longer the most pitied group.

The most pitied group is a symbol useful for manipulating people. "Well, I'm less self-centered than you... I didn't just give to charity, I gave to gay Eskimo charity."

Of course, this sets up a situation where white people are disadvantaged, and this makes them detest their government. Yet one of many faults of multiculturalism.

I think we should acknowledge that the end goal of multiculturalism is to breed everyone together and produce a uniform brown race, in order to eliminate racial conflict. It's like "peace at all costs": destroy the uniqueness of every place because in some places, racial conflict exists.

This typically neurotic thinking comes from our overfed and underchallenging modern time, where moving paper around generates money and impressing idiots makes you a celebrity.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#), [Globalism](#).

Fishocide

Jan 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

Pardon the goofy title. I keep trying to create words that did not previously exist in Google, but I'm sure someone got to this one first.

Despite the exploitation round its coasts, Britain, for instance, still landed 750,000 tonnes of Atlantic fish in 2006, two-thirds of what it caught in 1951; even cod is still being hauled from the north-east Atlantic, mostly by Norwegians and Russians. Some British fishing communities—Fraserburgh, for example—are in a sorry state, but others still prosper: the value of wet fish landed in Shetland, for example, rose from £21m in 1996 to £54m (\$33m-99m) in 2006. Earnings from fishing in Alaska, in whose waters about half of America's catch is taken, rose from less than \$800m in 2002 to nearly \$1.5 billion in 2007. And for the world as a whole, the catch in 2006 was over 93m tonnes, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, compared with just 19m in 1950 (see chart). Its value was almost \$90 billion.

The biggest ones have been the first to go. As a result, in over-exploited waters the fish tend to be smaller and younger. Among those caught in the Pacific, the average length of an English sole fell from about 34cm in the 1960s to 30cm in 2002, a Pacific barracuda from nearly 80cm in the 1950s to 65cm in 1970, a bocaccio from over 50cm in the 1970s to nearer 45cm in the 1990s. Whereas record-sized cod 2 metres long and up to 96kg (211lb) in weight were recorded in Massachusetts in the 19th century, and an average of 4.5kg per fish was common in living memory, a big cod is now a rarity in the north-west Atlantic. And when the big fish are gone, smaller varieties become the new catch. "Fishing down" the food web, as the practice is known, resulted in the average length of fish caught off the west coast of Newfoundland falling by a metre between 1957 and 2000, according to an article by Daniel Pauly and Reg Watson, of the University of British Columbia's Fisheries Centre, in *Scientific American* in July 2003.

When stocks of familiar fish are exhausted in familiar fishing grounds, man turns towards new fish in new places.

And when the big fish are gone, smaller varieties become the new catch. "Fishing down" the food web, as the practice is known, resulted in the average length of fish caught off the west coast of Newfoundland falling by a metre between 1957 and 2000, according to an article by Daniel Pauly and Reg Watson, of the University of British Columbia's Fisheries Centre, in *Scientific American* in July 2003.

Most fish-watchers, however, are uneasy. They see too many signs of overfishing, and too few of recovery.

Another is that, to maintain a balance, big "apex" fish may be as important as small. Many fish take years before they are mature enough to spawn: cod, three or four, sturgeon 20, orange roughy 32. And they may be long-lived: cod can survive to 30, if they are lucky, and sturgeon to 100. Kill the fish at the top and you may get an explosion of smaller ones below, gobbling up much more food than would be eaten by a few big fish of the same total weight. And big fish provide more and better-quality fry. Take the big and leave the young, a common principle of fisheries managers eager to rebuild stocks, may therefore be a mistake. If so, it is not their only one.

[The Economist](#)

A quick summary of a great in-depth article that points out the obvious: we're still catching fish, but if they're not the same as the others we caught, aren't we just deferring the disaster?

Posted in: [Conservation](#).

If you can't change reality, change the definition

Jan 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

An update is underway for the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, known as the DSM, which defines the emotional problems for which doctors prescribe drugs and insurance companies pay the treatment bills. Psychiatrists working on the new edition were required to sign a strict confidentiality agreement.

Critics contend that the American Psychiatric Assn. should allow outside observers to review the scientific debate behind new and revised diagnoses.

[LA Times](#)

Say a man is "insane."

What if "insane" were redefined to mean "anti-social"? A useful control mechanism.

Tell me this, psychologists: despite a century of psychology, we seem to be more neurotic than before. What are the great successes of psychology?

Oh... convincing people that something other than their decisions and attention span is to blame for their failings.

You mean it makes us lazy.

Well, no wonder they're redefining things... they're probably just covering their tracks.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Was the whole economy a Ponzi scheme?

Jan 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

"The financial system as a whole has had the characteristics of a Ponzi scheme if we look at it fundamentally," said Lee, who was very early in warning about deflation.

"By this I mean that we should think about the true value of assets as being derived from the future flow of goods and services that the assets can lay claim to or produce. If market prices of financial and real estate assets rise a lot but there is no increase in the ability of the economy to provide goods and services in the future, then the apparent increase in wealth is illusory."

That means that savings must rise, and expectations about the kind of growth and income that capital can safely command must fall. The process of everyone's figuring that out over the next year or so will be a continued hole in the side of the stock market and, despite the risks inherent in Treasury securities because of quantitative easing and fiscal stimulus, a boon to holders of government debt.

[IHT](#)

Once you introduce interest and loans, suddenly we make money by shuffling paper, not by generating value. If you can convince someone else that something is of value... they'll buy it at that value, and you pocket the difference. And if you're really savvy, you do it by taking out a loan, "enhancing" value, and then selling high, so that you can leverage money into ten or more times its value.

But there's a cost.

Society quickly becomes highly deceptive, every source of news a product, and every person explicitly charged to sell themselves and become larger than life egos.

But no one thought of that.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).

Commenting on an urban blog

Jan 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

I think every ethnic group likes to live near people who are similar in culture, customs, values, language and heritage.

Is it racism for a black person to want to live with black people?

Is it racism for a white person to want to live with white people?

These are the real questions this video brings up for me.

[Word On the Street](#)

Their question: *Can a black person be racist?*

My answer: let's deconstruct "racist." It can mean two things:

- Prefers to live in a nation composed of people similar in customs, values, culture, language and heritage.
- Prefers to live in a mixed nation where they can scorn, oppress, abuse, mock and vilify people of other races.

I think almost everyone, except people who get on a moral high horse for being "open-minded," is of type (a).

People who are of type (b) I think are sadists using race as their medium.

Posted in: [Darwinism](#).

Chad tells me what the human problem is

Jan 1st, 2009

by [Steve Harris](#).

it's human pride. that's the root cause of pretty much every problem in the world. economic crisis? pride. israel-palestine? pride. iraq? pride. sudan? pride. "pure" religion would do a lot to solve these problems, but that requires humility and grace – traits that are sorely lacking in most "world leaders".

[Bawstun](#)

While I think we all like the sound of "humility" and "grace," these words are so ill-defined (lack of cultural consensus) that they mean nothing.

And the reply, if they post it:

To Chad:

You think the human problem is pride?

I think the human problem is that we're willing to pander to each other by claiming to be egalitarian, when reality demands we be the exact opposite.

Madoff gave to charity. Bono gives to Africa. Obama talks about hope and change. Hamas talks about peace, while sending rockets. Israel talks about a one-state solution, while knowing that only a separate Jewish state will satisfy their needs.

I think the human problem is lies in order to manipulate each other.

Posted in: [Socialization](#).