

Introduction

Just because humans are capable of creating a democratic form of governance, occasionally, we should not assume that a democracy can be sustained any longer than for other forms of governance. I approach this subject mindful that humans are assembled by genes that have survived within the human gene pool for the last ½ million years of the Pleistocene epoch. As such, human behavior is adapted to a setting that disappeared 12,800 years ago. We are now like “fish out of water,” and just because human tribes survived millions of years is no guarantee that we will be able to manage human affairs during the present Holocene epoch. Democracy was supposed to be our winning ticket, the way to survive the rest of the Holocene, but the American version may crumble as quickly as it was created 240 years ago.

Anthropologists tell us that hunter-gatherer (HG) tribes are egalitarian. When a tribal decision needs to be made, such as whether to relocate, each male tribesman is allowed to speak. There will always be someone with a more insightful perspective and persuasive argument than any of the others. The group benefits from any decision arrived at in this manner. To me, this process seems like a good evolutionary adaptation. Since humans have probably lived in small HG tribes for millions of years, the concept of “equal voice” for group decisions must be genetically inscribed in our thinking.

Tribal Mentality

For millions of years our ancestors lived in small tribes. Everyone in the tribe knew everyone else, and the strength of the tribe required that inter-personal relationships were well-established and stable. Tribes competed, or as I prefer to say, tribal gene pools competed. Of course there was some intra-tribal competition, but the greater the threat from a neighboring tribe the greater reward there was for intra-tribal cooperation. Therefore, each tribe became a competing force on the stage of evolution, and members of each tribe had to be loyal to the imperative of tribal survival.

Because of the need for tribal members to quickly identify same-tribe versus other-tribe affiliation, tribal cultures diverged in ways that were otherwise unnecessary. Differences evolved in dress, language, beliefs, rituals, religion – in every aspect that could distinguish members of one tribe from another. For the most part, relationships between members of the same tribe were supportive, whereas encounters with members of a neighboring tribe were unpredictable and often confrontational. The outcome of other tribe encounters would depend on which group outnumbered the other. If a single individual from the neighboring tribe was encountered by a group of home tribesmen, murder was a possibility. Mob murder is instinctive, and it is triggered by the encounter of someone who shows all the signs of belonging to another tribe.

The term “tribal mentality” has been recognized for more than a century as a hallmark of our heritage (Spencer, 1892). It was described as “intra-tribal amity and extra-tribal enmity.” It is so prevalent among known primitive tribes, as well as cultures throughout the world, that it should be on the list of “human universals” (Brown, 1991).

Tribes that failed to evolve a strong tribal mentality would have been at a disadvantage when they encountered another tribe, and competed with them for territory. Since this evolutionary dynamic has been at work for at least hundreds of thousands of years, we should view tribal mentality as an instinct that cannot be extinguished in as short a time as the Holocene epoch’s 10,000 years.

Super-Tribes Replace Small HG Tribes

The Holocene epoch is just the latest global warming event that has occurred every 120,000 years during the past ½ million years. Each warming lasts for about 10,000 years, typically. These warmings are not to be confused with the current man-made global warming, which is a much faster and greater warming than has ever occurred. When a climate warms, large areas of land become habitable. Grass and trees grow where glaciers once existed. The limit to human population density rises with each warming epoch. Small tribes can grow in population, and they can exist closer together.

The Holocene warming was good for everyone, except when the proximity of tribes aroused ancient enmities. The Holocene differed from previous warming epochs because herding and agriculture was discovered by at least one tribe, and this new lifestyle permitted an even greater population density than hunting and gathering. Perhaps tribal coalescence had occurred before, but with the advent of herding, and especially agriculture, the rewards for coalescence were greater than ever. As in the past, during the Holocene a larger tribe was usually more successful in warfare with a smaller tribe. In addition, during the Holocene, an agricultural tribe had to protect itself from marauding tribes desperate for agricultural food stores.

But if members of another tribe must be absorbed into a home tribe, imagine the mental stress produced by tribal mentality instincts! Picture a home tribesman faced with a new neighbor who looks different, dresses differently, speaks differently and worships differently. The new person could easily be hated before any meeting, and because the home tribe has agreed to welcome the small tribesmen there must be a feeling of resentment toward him. Some home tribesmen were better able to “bite their tongue” and not outwardly complain, and thus preserve harmony within the larger tribe. At least the appearance of harmony within a tribe would be helpful in repelling marauding tribesmen.

Origin or Political Correctness

The home tribe chief, and his buddies, had an interest in enforcing acceptance of the new tribal members. Their edicts are the beginnings of “political correctness.” A tension within the home tribe had to be kept below the surface in order for the imperative of tribal coalescence to render the larger tribe successful in subsequent inter-tribal conflicts. Tribal harmony was a somewhat superficial state. Resentments festered below a calm surface.

As more tribes saw the wisdom of becoming larger by coalescing with their neighbors, an arms race of sorts led to super-tribes. Super-tribes controlled larger land areas, and economy of scale favored those who could manage the larger numbers of people and larger land area. These changes enhanced security from external threats, but they created new internal threats.

Origin of Governance - A Theoretical Treatment

In this section I want to illustrate some of the challenges posed by the creation of super-tribes by imagining that our ancestors followed a rational approach to finding solutions. This is not the way it happened, but this idealistic approach will be helpful in identifying some of the challenges that had to be solved if the super-tribe was to be successful in fending off attacks by small tribes.

In a super-tribe, where the adult male population exceeds about 150 individuals (i.e., tribal population exceeding about 600 people), it is impossible for everyone to know everyone. The “Dunbar Number” of about 150 is the maximum number of people in a group that permits personal relationships between all members. Tribes this large place an uncomfortable demand upon its membership when it demands trust with strangers. For the first time in human history, people were expected to trust strangers as if they belonged to the same tribe – because the super-tribe was acting as if everyone was a fellow tribesman. The requirement to trust strangers created resentment of the super-tribe imperatives, and was an additional threat to internal security.

Misbehavior by an individual super-tribesman could not be punished in the small tribe manner. The tribal chief had to assume additional duties, and enlarge his staff to handle disputes and enforce punishment. The agricultural lifestyle placed new demands on the tribe. Storage of grain and other food was needed, and record keeping for rewarding the most productive farmers was required. Farmer’s markets were organized, and exchange methods had to be invented. Defense against marauders had to be organized, and their payment had to be arranged for. Farmers had to be taxed to pay for their protection. All of these new needs required the creation of governance.

Governance involves making rules that everyone agrees to abide by, identifying cheaters, and administering punishment of the guilty. These are the three branches of government. The larger the super-tribe, the larger are the number of governing issues that have to be dealt with, and the larger government has to be.

Creating rules, the legislative duty of governance, can’t be done in the old-fashioned, small tribe way. It’s simply not practical because there are too many people who would want to speak about each law under consideration. I can imagine how this was first discovered: a large meeting was called and only a few were allowed to speak. The shy tribesman, who in the small tribe setting would nevertheless have spoken, would in effect be silenced in the super-tribe. If he had something important to say it was overshadowed by the less shy blowhard. It is reasonable to assume that the quality of group consensus suffered.

Representative government would be a natural response to this shortcoming. Small groups, possibly resembling the long forgotten small tribe in size, would represent the opinions arrived at in a setting where everyone had a voice. The representative would meet with other representatives to formulate super-tribe laws. The same process could be used to arrive at all manner of decisions affecting the super-tribe.

Origin of Governance - The Way it Really Happened (Feudalism)

When farmers first noticed that they were a target for marauding tribes they probably at first agreed among themselves to protect each other. But a few farmers would be no match for a warrior-based marauding tribe. That's when a "strong man" who lived among the farmers, and wanted them to succeed, presented himself as a "king" with his warrior buddies serving as his standing army to protect the farmers, provided the farmers agreed to a tax that was sufficient to maintain the king and his army. This "protection racket" made sense to everyone involved. Consider the analogy: the farmer is to the king, as the farmer's cow is to the farmer. Each is useful to the other. This is called "feudalism."

The only problem with feudalism is that the arrangement can be abused. The king can raise taxes to an unreasonable rate, and what then can the farmer do? Human history is a repeating story of clever people taking advantage of "the man with a hoe." And don't believe that the farmer doesn't know this!

The first king may have been fair-minded, but his arrangement with the farmers created an opportunity for the unscrupulous opportunist who envied the king's position. We now refer to these people as sociopaths if they lack concern for group welfare, while succeeding in conveying an opposite impression to a population of individuals who have no personal experience with him. The sociopath was a constant threat to HG tribal stability, but they had a way of dealing with the sociopath who was too destabilizing: they killed him! Within the new super-tribes this cleansing of parasitic individuals did not occur.

The sociopath may in fact have been a more effective king than the kindly type of person. After all, a king with a fierce reputation will give pause to a marauding tribe that knows of the king's reputation. I wonder if the farmer ever came to a realization that he needed a sociopathic leader.

Feudalism was a temporary solution that lasted for more than a millennium in Europe and Asia. It took the form of kingdoms that taxed productive labor in exchange for protection. Such an arrangement has its vulnerabilities to stability. Sociopathic leaders are common, for the non-sociopaths are out-manuevered or killed if they get in the way of the sociopath's rise. The genes yield up a wide range of sociopathic phenotypes every generation, and each has a slightly different appeal to the farmer. One sub-type of sociopath is good at appealing to the commoner's resentment of civilization. The little man who works hard and suspects that he's being cheated by those in power is looking for someone, or something, to blame. This sociopathic leader who accuses the "governing elite" of abuse may create a following. But inevitably, each of these clever sociopaths change when they become king.

The thoughtful leader who urges reform of governance so that it's more responsive to the little man's needs has a smaller audience. Unlike the sociopath, who shouts his message to rouse the rabble, the thoughtful leader can only reason with the little man. Since the little man has little reasoning ability, the first leader is more persuasive, and always wins.

Origin of Democracy

Democracy is an attempt to recover the "equal voice" aspect of the HG setting. It's a rejection of the abuses of feudalism, and its tyrannical outgrowths, such as fascism.

The democracy experiment has made at least two appearances in history. The first democratic society might have been the Minoan, but we know so little about that 2nd Millennium BC civilization that we can't learn from their experience. The first one we know about is ancient Greece, which had cultural similarities to the Minoan and may in fact have been inspired by their memory (the Minoans were decimated by the volcanic eruption on Thera, in 1646 BC).

The Greek city states may have been a reaction to millennia of frustration with tyrannical oppression during the early Holocene. As always happens when humans are in charge of human affairs, the Greek democracy became flawed by the corrupting influence of the wrong people. Socrates was found "guilty of impiety, and for corrupting the youth." His questioning of everything was a threat to "group think" conformance, a leftover requirement for small tribes. Plato may have been motivated to question the underlying theory for democracy as a fair and stable governing principle due to its role in the death of his mentor, Socrates. This is described in the brilliant essay by Andrew Sullivan (2016). Plato foresaw that democracy undermines the notion that some people have better ideas than others. It's obvious to anyone who thinks that all men are not created equal, yet in a democracy everyone's vote is equal. The greatest apparent beneficiary of this fiction is

the person who votes with the least thought behind it and is made to feel equal to those who are smarter, or more educated, or who has more wealth and influence in the affairs of society. The “equality fiction” is a trick to keep the great numbers of *hoi poloi* content with the status quo.

The Commoner’s Rise to Power

Perhaps we can gain some insight into what happens to any experiment with democracy by inspecting our own experience, so far.

In 1930 Jose Ortega y Gasset published his book *Revolt of the Masses*. He argued that people were losing respect for academics, or anyone with intellectual expertise. He suspected that the readiness to discount a person with more knowledge had its origin in the growing wealth of the common man. If a person equates wealth or power to individual merit, then the newfound economic success of the common man must attest to the validity of his opinions. The common man was emboldened, and went further by suggesting that knowledge corrupts, and only the uneducated can be trusted for knowing Truth and being in charge of governance.

Roger Price wrote *The Great Roob Revolution* (1970) 40 years later. This book was an update on the growing boldness of ignorant people. He strengthened the case for explaining the certitude of the uneducated person by his observation that the marketplace was catering to him. Not only the marketplace of movies, music and TV, but the marketplace of ideas. New insults to the academic included terms like “egghead.”

My book *Genetic Enslavement* (2014) includes a couple chapters updating this phenomenon. My interest in the subject was inspired by the possible role the new Roob class might have in pushing Western Civilization over the edge to inevitable collapse. I speculate that the Roob’s belief in the worth of his ideas is added to by living in a democracy; the reason is subtle: since society gives him a vote with equal value to all others then this must mean that his opinions have equal value.

A Roob differs somewhat from a rube. Whereas a rube behaves badly in public for lack of knowing better, a Roob delights in throwing his weight around as he intentionally flaunts his coarseness. The Roob knows that he can’t be put back in his place because there are so many of him, and he has re-fashioned all aspects of culture to his unsophisticated taste. He feels comfortable in his dominance of American culture, and has no intention of feeling shame or apologizing to anyone. Anti-intellectualism is the subject of many books, most notably *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, by Hofstadter (1969). Robert Sheaffer, in *Resentment Against Achievement: Understanding the Assault Upon Ability* (1988), wrote “Throughout recorded human history the ebb and flow of the love of achievement and the resentment against its successes have been major forces behind the rise and fall of civilizations and empires. Achievement-oriented values like tolerance, liberty, and the freedom of the individual to work hard and enjoy the fruits of his labor provide the motivation necessary for a civilization to grow and flourish.”

The Roob votes, and this is why I’ve devoted a few paragraphs to describe him. His vote, as can be imagined, is not nuanced or influenced by erudite policy philosophies. His vote is emotion-based, and it reflects whatever makes him feel good. This means that the Roob’s vote is rooted in instincts that evolved during thousands of generations of life in small HG tribes, and his resentment for being dis-respected by a ruling elite during a few generations of super-tribe governance. Any politician who wants his vote will have to pander to the Roob’s feeling of inferiority and resentments. Probably no one seeking votes shares the Roob’s feelings on this matter, so the politician who can fake it better will win their vote.

Trump

Donald Trump is a “city slicker” who claims to be wealthy, and has a demonstrated history of disdain for the little man. How ironic that he became the little man’s hero during the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump is a salesman with experience manipulating others. A good salesman is able to read his mark, and adjust his persona for maximum his persuasive influence on the hapless victim. Some people are “born salesmen” and Trump must be one of them.

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is one of the tools used by persuasive salesmen. Although NLP practitioners claim to be unaware of the neuropsychology underlying their techniques, it should be obvious to any neuropsychologist. For example, NLP asks the salesman to give careful attention to his mark’s word usage. There are three categories, as illustrated by the following: “That sounds right to me.” “I see what you mean.” “I feel that you’re right.” Sound, sight and feeling are

the three sensory modalities, and they are processed by the three posterior lobes of the brain (temporal, parietal and occipital). People tend to rely more heavily on one of those modalities for perceiving the world, and the modality they favor is revealed by their choice of adjectives. So when a salesman notices that his mark is a “feeling” sort of man, he will shift his speech by invoking more feeling adjectives. For the mark, this increases his comfort level with the salesman.

The salesman has a larger arsenal of tricks besides NLP. If the mark gestures a lot, the salesman will ramp up his gesturing. If the mark has a simple vocabulary, the salesman will limit his vocabulary. If the mark swears a lot, the salesman will use vulgar profanity. But more important than this superficial mimicking is the salesman’s need to understand his mark’s underlying frustrations.

Everyone is familiar with the shrinkage of the American middle class during the past several decades. Large corporations took advantage of weakening unions, and suppressed worker wage growth while raising salaries and benefits for company executives. International corporations moved manufacturing overseas, to countries with low-wages and fewer regulations (safety, environmental, hours, etc.). Factory workers didn’t have the high technology skills that emerging jobs required, so they couldn’t maintain the same income level. The government made things worse by entering into treaties that overlooked the American worker (NAFTA is the standard example). Affirmative Action laws favored minorities, which further disadvantaged the white worker. It became apparent that the federal government was playing a role in worsening the plight of the American white worker. The recession of 2008 worsened things for nearly everyone, but especially those whose jobs were already precarious. The Tea Party may have been partly in response to a black man becoming president. Visions of more affirmative action preferences for black people and other minorities provided a basis for mistrusting the federal government. If taxation shrank, so would federal benefits to minorities, and maybe the forgotten worker would have more income left over to live on. The Tea Party was comprised of a “forgotten white majority” who viewed the government as run by elites who were more interested in helping others (immigrants, homosexuals, Muslims, disabled) than the workers who made America great during past decades.

Either Trump understood this, or during his campaigning he figured out what to say, and how to talk, for producing the greatest applause. No one disputes that he’s a narcissist, and applause is perhaps the most powerful reward for such a person. The Trump following had origins so misunderstood by elites, people with education and influence over the American society, that the elites discounted Trump as a buffoon – somewhat resembling the way Hitler was discounted as a buffoon prior to his rise to power in 1933. The elites would say, in various ways, how could anyone take Trump’s run for the presidency seriously when he did things that in past campaigns had immediately disqualified candidates? But Trump’s message resonated with the Roob who resented being ignored and made fun of by elites. The Roob is sensitive about his status in society; he knows that others, with more education, or better jobs, look down on him. That’s why the Roob is quick to proclaim that “I’m as good as you!” and by voting for Trump the Roob finally had a way to make himself heard.

Other Factors Undermining Democracy

I hate to bring this up, but since no one else does, and since it’s relevant to any consideration of how enduring a democracy can be, here goes: Half of Americans have below average IQ!

For anyone who spends their entire work life among highly educated work associates, as I have done (employed by Caltech for 34 years), it is easy to believe that everyone brings a high level of intelligence and critical thinking skills to their assessment of important matters: “On the one hand this, on the other hand that.” All of my colleagues were able to suspend judgement as alternative ideas competed with each other in our deliberations. Even when we came to a position, we viewed it as provisionally correct. In other words, nuance and a minimal amount of bias was just an automatic way of thinking for us. Even after I published a paper on a scientific subject I was open to an alternative conclusion. Everything, including my own findings, deserved skeptical reconsideration. This extended to newspaper articles, TV, news, and most certainly other people’s statements of fact and opinions. I would sometimes be puzzled by a less informed person expressing himself with an excess of certitude, but that was a reminder that other people approached important questions differently.

When the internet came into existence I brought the same habit of skepticism to everything that was presented as true on web pages. The new internet age puts too much “information” into the public domain. People who browse the internet without a habit of skepticism can “fall into the rabbit hole.” These people risk entering a realm of intellectual chaos and confusion. At worst, they may be sucked into cults that normal people have never heard of.

Half a century ago the TV Evening News was viewed by ABC, NBC and CBS as a business “loss leader.” The FCC also viewed the major networks as having a social responsibility to present national and international news without political bias. Major city newspapers were similar in keeping opinions in their editorial section. Editors for both TV news and newspapers were conscientious in judging the factual basis for truth, as well as newsworthiness. By the end of the 20th Century this cultural tradition was changing. Corporations that owned TV networks shifted emphasis from public service to shareholder profit. At the same time, the internet was beginning to compete with TV news and newspapers. The end result is the gradual disappearance of information-based and editorially-crafted evening news programs, and in their stead Fox News. A younger generation is getting much of their news from Facebook, or Yahoo. People live in different “bubbles,” with different facts, yet they are asked to vote for the same set of candidates. Can a democracy survive under these conditions?

The present environment with an ocean of mis-information places a greater burden than ever upon everyone to be cautious, and deliberate, in forming an opinion. The person with an IQ of 85 is less likely than the person with an IQ of 115 to bring the same amount of judgement to assessments of what's on the internet or TV news. There are the same number of people with IQ less than 85 as there are above 115, and the disparity of thinking skill is even greater for these two populations. Yet, they both have the same voting power. This doesn't make sense! Democracy's equal voting voice is different from the HG tribe spending an hour in a big tent taking turns giving opinions and later arriving at a consensus. Those in the tent who didn't understand what was said were too ashamed to object, and look foolish; in a democracy the voting booth invites making that mark regardless of how much is understood, because nobody knows how you voted and you don't have to defend your vote in front of more knowledgeable people.

If voters were vetted with simple questions, such as "How many branches of government are there?", and if their vote was assigned a value based on their answers, the prospects for democracy's survival might be improved. But such a change would never be voted for where half of everyone has a below average intelligence. Besides, such a proposal sounds "elitist" - which it is; and the Roobs of America are already wary of elitist tricks.

Has Hitler Returned?

Sometimes while waiting in a grocery checkout line I wonder if the person next to me is basically the same person who cheered Hitler in 1933. Could just anyone in America today behave as the Germans did some 80 years ago? After all, at that time the Germans were the most educated country in the world, and they had a long history of cultural contributions, in such fields as music, philosophy, literature and science.

The German people felt humiliated by their loss of The World War, as it was called then. The Treaty of Versailles was designed to prevent the Germans from rising from the ashes to threaten Europe again. Inflation, joblessness and an economy that could not reconstruct itself added to humiliation. Hitler claimed that Germany still could have won the war when the German government surrendered. By this means he endeavored to discredit the ruling German elites. It was also obvious that those elites didn't endure the same insufferable standard of living as the average German. It's understandable that following the war's end resentments and discontent grew during the decade and longer.

My father led a bicycling trip of American high schoolers through Germany in 1937. He wrote back to a local newspaper how stoic the Germans were in their hardship. A German family was welcoming when a bicycle breakdown stranded the group far from their intended Youth Hostel. People can be simultaneously kind, and clueless. My father wrote that “Herr Hitler is a smiling individual, contrary to American press reports. This I know to be true because yesterday I was in his presence for 30 minutes while he was reviewing 10,000 of his fervent, exultant German admirers at his residence at, or near, Berchtesgaden. . . . Also, he is shorter than we popularly suppose.” The “fervent exultant” admirers were clueless about what would happen to them a few years later.

Many Germans of the Nazi era saw Hitler making Germany great again. The businessman saw improvement, because factories were being constructed, government contracts were creating new work, and workers were being hired (for making tanks, bombers and innovative new weapons). It was tempting for the businessman, and worker alike, to overlook Hitler's hate-filled speeches, his Brownshirt storm troopers trashing of Jewish businesses, and the Kristallnacht (that occurred one

year after my father's visit). Hitler's party went by the name National Socialist German Workers Party, so its appeal was aimed at discontented workers with hope for "socialist" help.

Historians of the Nazi era cite a phenomenon called "alignment." After Hitler consolidated power with the 1933 Enabling Act, giving him power to enact legislation that had formerly resided with the Reichstag, critics gradually accepted him. They would explain his excesses as just theatrics. Even some Jews would discount his rants about Jews. "Give him a chance" to improve our lot. There are two reasons leaders can get away with such abuse of their followers. 1) Tribes thrive and survive inter-tribal warfare when their internal workings are harmonious, 2) Strong leaders won't tolerate critics who might undermine their rule. Compare the likely fates of tribes consisting of individuals who accepted the inevitable, regardless of how unfair that inevitable condition is, and who got on with life and contributed to the tribe's welfare, with tribes consisting of individuals who remained divided after takeover by a strong leader. Tribes of the former type will be victorious over the latter type, assuming other conditions of tribal strength were similar. We are descendants of the first type of tribe. We therefore "conform" to whatever has become inevitable for our tribe. "Conformance" is a technical term used by sociobiologists to describe this trait.

I view Trump as playing a similar role in America today. Probably the business community views Trump in the same way the Nazi era business community viewed Hitler. If Trump can implement the policies he campaigned on then probably the economy would be stimulated in the short term, without regard for the inevitable longer-term indebtedness and corporate over-reach that would result. Trump's outrageous behavior, which no person would accept among their friends, is excused as just attention-getting theatrics. Trump voters said he would never do some of the things he threatened to do. "Now that he's elected" they would say, "just give him a chance." Indeed, some liberals are saying the same thing: "Just give him a chance" - as if he will become a normal human, and abandon his sociopathic ways. Some liberals are going further, and crediting Trump with drawing attention to issues that liberals had neglected (too much PC, trade agreements that hurt workers, etc), and blaming themselves for Trump's rise. This is the same "conformance" that occurred after Hitler secured power. An article by Shawn Hamilton (2016) describes this, using the current terminology for conformance: "alignment." Even liberal TV commentators are "aligning." As both conservatives and some spineless liberals "align," American culture will coarsen, intolerance for others will grow ugly, neighbor will hate neighbor, snitching to authorities could become common - as happened in Nazi Germany. Trump's criticisms of intellectuals, and especially journalists, is designed to inoculate him from thoughtful criticism. Free thinkers should be on notice: book burning could once again become common, and my books will belong to the category that's thrown on the bonfire.

In spite of these comparisons of Trump with Hitler, it's my sense that these two sociopaths are fundamentally different. Hitler was an ideologue, and remained true to long-held beliefs. Trump is not an ideologue; he is mostly a narcissist who seeks applause. In theory, therefore, if Trump pursues strategies that maximize applause, he may actually do some good in the short-term. He might actually persuade Congress to invest in infrastructure spending, and this job stimulus might have other beneficial effects. He may actually preserve some health care provisions in Obama's Affordable Care Act, because the masses will applaud him for that.

However, Trump seems oblivious to long-term consequences, especially if they don't affect him. So he may allow himself to ally with Republicans who want to "modernize" Medicare (privatize it with vouchers), de-regulate the banking system (repeal Dodd-Frank), eviscerate the EPA, withdraw from climate change agreements, appoint Supreme Court justices who think outlawing abortion is legal, and generally take America backwards for a couple generations.

A Disintegration Scenario

America is like a cookie poised to crumble. How might this happen?

Recall the oft-cited description of America being a bi-coastal country: The New York/Washington DC region and the West Coast have a vibrant business relationship, dominated by liberal politics. Businessmen who fly back-and-forth derisively refer to the vast land in-between as "fly-over" country. People living in the fly-over region have heard the terminology, and some have described their vote for Trump as a fly-over revolt. This illustrates the growing divide between the Two Americas.

People in the West Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington are beginning to talk about secession. For decades there has been discussion of a more limited secession of Northern California, Oregon and Washington to form a new country called "Cascadia." Southern California has recovered from the Birch Society movement that painted the political map conservative for a while, so now essentially all of California is liberal, and the new Cascadia would include Southern California. Even Hawaii might be included in a secession, because that state is possibly the most liberal in the nation. Conservatives have always championed local determination, so secession is an ultimate expression of this sentiment. Conservatives would probably welcome the Cascadian breakaway. Having lived in California for most of my life, and in spite of having grown up as a farm boy in Michigan, I would favor the proposed secession.

If a major secession like Cascadia did occur, there would be pressure for the East Coast to do the same. However, the political establishment in Washington, D.C. would object because they wouldn't want to lose the power they now enjoy by presiding over almost an entire continent. New York City might consider a new form of secession, that of a city from a country – somewhat resembling Singapore in its relationship to their region.

The entire secession process would be driven by the mutual resentment of people who embrace diversity and those who abhor it. One faction wants to march forward, and the other wants to march backward. One is open-minded, and the other is closed-minded. Each faction has ancestors who had different reactions to the past 10,000 years of tribal coalescence leading to super-tribes, and eventually civilizations.

While Cascadia pursues a space program for colonizing Mars, the redneck southeastern states will celebrate NASCAR racing, cotton plantations, and they will embrace the Confederate Flag as they attempt to re-institute slavery. The Two Americas will become two countries, with trade agreements and border check-points.

Summary and Conclusion

Humans may not be capable of any form of governance. This is due to their Pleistocene inheritance, instincts that were adapted to small HG tribal life for at least a half million years. The last 11,700 years of Holocene warming allowed invention of farming and other new lifestyles, and this is too short a time for our primitive instincts to have been replaced with newer ones that are better adapted to a civilized way of life. A minority of humans feel comfortable being civilized, but a majority is best described by Freud's famous terminology: "discontent with civilization."

Given that most people have a subconscious longing for "going back" to their primitive origins, to life in a small HG tribe, the prospects are dim that a winning place can be found for those of us who prefer to "move forward" to an evermore civilized society.

The *hoi poloi's* simple-minded appeal to unsophisticated things, and their re-moulding of our culture to their unsophisticated and vulgar taste, means that they cannot be persuaded to move forward. For them, democracy was a disappointment, because those in charge of governance ignored them. They are gullible, and a sophisticated sociopathic salesman, like Trump, can arouse their hopes for something resembling a backwards move, a retreat from civilization.

America is now on a course of retreat. Our dis-assembling will begin in earnest in 2017. After World War II America helped preserve global peace by restraining dictators. This era will start to fade in 2017, as the world begins a return to the 19th Century, and earlier ones, with incessant wars waged by dictators whose only interest in peace is unchallenged rule.

Those of us alive now, adults who experienced the second half of the 20th Century, are the lucky ones. Conditions may never improve, and even though our standard of living may remain high for a few more decades, being on the rise, with hope for the future, is always better than being on the decline with futures foreclosed.

Time will tell. At my age of 77 I won't know what time will tell. But it still concerns me, and I'm upset.

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

"Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want - and deserve to get it good and hard!" H. L. Mencken

"Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide." John Adams, letter to John Taylor, 1814.

"All the noonday brightness of human genius is destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of Man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins..." Bertrand Russell, "A Free Man's Worship," 1903

A civilization has few friends and many enemies! It is the subject of a war waged by the genes. A civilization favors some genes, and puts others at a disadvantage. Individuals are tools for waging this war. Some people appear to be tools that endeavor to destroy civilization, just as other others are unwitting generators and maintainers of civilization. Depending on a person's attitudes and behaviors, he is either a friend, a bystander, or an enemy of civilization. B. Gary, 1995.12.30