

[Below is an excerpt on human nature and the impossibility of equality that was taken from an early chapter. It was felt that it was repetitive and veered off the point. - Robert Von Stricker-Beresford]

Some may contest my view of human nature but this view suggests that it's the circumstances, not the people, who cause – or rather affect – this negative behaviour. Though I certainly believe circumstances play a major role in our decisions, I don't believe they play the only role. But say I were to concede this point. Say, I were to agree and suggest that human beings are fundamentally good, or, if not good then benign, and that we have somehow managed to totally overcome our animal natures, and that biologists and some psychologists are wrong about us and we're really wonderful if only the world wasn't so cruel (the gnostic belief).<sup>1</sup> Well, then human beings would still be put into a conflictual setting at some point. Unfortunately, there is something called the second law of thermodynamics. There have been numerous attempts to disprove entropy, none have succeeded. I understand there are many people who would be inclined to hope for it to be disproved in the future, but such hope in the (as far as we know) impossible doesn't help us now (and can be very dangerous). As it stands now, as I write this, as you read this, it is scientific fact: energy always moves from a concentrated state to a dissipated state. What this means is that, as far as we know, at the end of the universe, everything will be one uniform temperature, and that means there won't be anything like human beings. Of course that isn't particularly relevant to us Canadians of the twenty-first century, as this will happen in millions or billions of years. But it *is* relevant. It constrains everything we do. For us, the second law of thermodynamics means that we consume more than we produce: always. It may appear that we are producing more than we consume at any given time, for example there might be more food in existence right now than what is necessary to feed every person living on this planet right now (not to suggest that this food would be getting into everyone's hands, don't get me wrong). But, if that's true, it is a state of affairs that cannot last. What this means is that the abundance necessary for happy circumstances that keep us supposedly innocent is not forever, in fact it is impossible for more than

---

<sup>1</sup> Who created society? People...We are of this world as much as any other creature or thing.

brief periods of time (in terms of the age of the universe). Further, these brief periods have their own costs that probably can't be perceived during this abundance. Then we have to make sure that the resources we need are sustainable (and some are and some aren't, with sustainable being a relative term, as nothing is sustainable forever in the face of entropy) but the thing about that is that sustainability is a difficult thing to manage (just look at all the societies that have collapsed from destroying their own resources throughout human history) and it also does not promise abundance of the kind necessary for the circumstances of human benignity. As animals, all of us need certain things, and our instincts help us to realize these needs. They come into conflict except in the greatest periods of abundance (and then there are other problems, as exhibited by the cliché “money can't buy happiness,” which could easily be turned into an axiom against utopianism, “abundance can't provide happiness”).

If it's circumstances alone that cause human beings to be at odds with one another; we, as a whole species, cannot hope for the briefest period of totally positive circumstances. We have not figured out how to create these positive circumstances not because of a lack of ingenuity but because they're impossible. Even if we ever reached a state of abundance that satisfied all our biological needs (which is impossible except for only the briefest moments) we would still have mental anguish/suffering. We do not know enough about human beings to honestly predict a future society without mental anguish. Even if we miraculously had what we physically need for total equality, that wouldn't remove all our mental issues (though it might remove many of them...the point is we don't know that it would or wouldn't and so we can't honestly predict that it would). What this means is that human beings are either “conflictual” naturally, or somebody will die at some point when it comes down to me and you, and the last piece of bread. Given everything else as perfect (if that were possible), a view of human beings as utterly good or benign would have you and I giving each other the last piece of bread when the inevitable takes place. If this is conceivable to You, I'd like to understand how. Everything I know about us as a species suggests that most of us (certainly not all) would take the last piece of bread for ourselves, regardless of whatever else might be perfect about the world.

Those who resist this urge would have to be very very good at repressing (or denying, or both) their instincts. And then they'd die. And then they'd have somehow managed to prove that humans are fundamentally good or benign? That's a long way to go for a cause. "Don't you consider it a stupidity characteristic of the human race that a man who has only one life should be willing to lose it for an idea?" So says Andre Malraux.

Further, if circumstances are the only thing that matters (and humans are a blank slate, or benign, or good) then how did these negative circumstances come about?<sup>2</sup> If they were created by the world then it's hard to see how it matters what way humans are in the abstract (i.e. in some perfect place that is not of this world). If the world is all bad, and human beings good, how can this goodness ever matter when the only circumstance we have ever known is the 'bad' world? We will always have bad circumstances, if the world is to blame. If humans are to blame (if we are all complicit, at least partially) then how does one maintain human beings are good? The 'bad apples' explanation doesn't fly here, because it flies in the face of views of human beings that blame circumstances. The situational and social psychology suggest that the 'bad apples' theory is a cop out by authorities trying to deflect blame onto scapegoats. What this means is that there are few, if any, 'bad apples.' But if there are few, if any, bad apples, but human beings are complicit in these corrupting institutions, how exactly are human beings benign and/or good? QED.

Human beings are animals with some inherited characteristics (such as biological instincts) and some learned behaviours (again, in who-knows-what proportions), in this sense we are neither good nor bad in the abstract, neither cruel or benign in the abstract. We are just animals. In practice is where the goodness or badness makes its appearance, determined in some incomprehensible way by

---

<sup>2</sup> The key to this notion of oppression, as I see it, is that there is something in humans that is being oppressed. We have been shaped by our community in such a way that we submit to oppression (unless, because we are a postie, we can see through this oppression!). Something (or many things) inherent in our humanness has been suppressed by society (and other traits that are either inherent or socially constructed are emphasized, such as the will/need to dominate) and it is necessary to rediscover this quality (or qualities) in order to achieve justice (we can see where the emancipation comes in here). Some posties appear to go even further, though, by emphasizing the social construction of any such "instincts." This results in a Rousseauian view of humans as a near-blank state. Here Marx (and Maslow, and Inglehart) was right, humans have basic biological (or "economic") needs that cannot be ignored. These necessarily inform our behaviour (I don't know to what extent). We also inherit genes. I.e. we are not blank canvases that society paints in a way it sees fit.

both our genes (instincts) and our circumstances (learned behaviours, constrained choices, etc).<sup>3</sup> Our instincts will never make us wholly good or bad in the abstract (though they might help us do good things, or bad things), and our circumstances can never be so perfect as to turn us into wholly good or evil beings in the abstract.

---

<sup>3</sup> Translator's Note: Our moral fabric is being eroded by the destruction of the language when the ignorant pronounce it et cetera.