

**A Short Monograph On
The Human Experience**

By

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A Reproductive and Evolutionary Approach

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The Prologue: -

To the educated reader, one of the most striking things about this monograph will be the almost total absence of scholarly references. There are two reasons for this.

First, I am not a scholar and can make no pretence to erudition. Second I believe much of the content is self-evident.

This monograph is an attempt to provide an evolutionary setting, which may help ordinary men and women of average intelligence like me, to make some kind of sense of the human experience.

The reader should note the monograph does not ask the question “what is the meaning of Life?” A question to which there is no answer. It addresses the immediate issues of the outcomes of our daily lives, in the context of an evolving universe born of the chaos that followed the big bang and, out of which, inexplicably, we have order.

That is to say we appear to have an ordered universe that is so well structured, that it can be investigated in a rational manner, and is amenable to the logic associated with the notion of cause and effect. A notion, which is so well trusted, that it has become the foundation of modern scientific progress.

What I am suggesting is; that inherent in the chaos is a process which produces some kind of order, that the process is undeniable, and that it is there for all to observe.

While in the context of consciousness the process is not purposive, the move from chaos to order is observable and in the context of evolution it has undeniably led to the development of consciousness.

The inexplicable development of sentience in Flora, consciousness in Fauna, and self-consciousness in Man out of an inanimate and unconscious universe, is an evolutionary fact. We stand before the process astounded and dumb with wonder.

In respect of sentience in Flora, consciousness in Fauna, and self-consciousness in Man, there is a singular outcome. By that I mean that in Flora, Fauna and Man, there is a common biological outcome: a reproductive and evolutionary process that presents as a Primary Biological imperative; namely the reproduction of the next generation.

The Primary Biological Imperative: -

The primary biological imperative of every species is reproduction. No matter the species, be it plankton or plant, bird or butterfly, microbe or man, the primary biological imperative is the reproduction the next generation.

Mankind can set aside the reproductive process by act of will: for example, Priests and Nuns, and others who choose celibacy. However, even they cannot set aside the reproductive process entirely. It is this that brings one to note the psychological reproductive processes that play a significant part in the daily of life of all societies.

The Reproductive Psychological Process: -

In many species it is self evident that once reproductive capacity ceases, death follows shortly thereafter. However this is not true of mankind. Those who forswear biological reproduction, those who do not, and also those, whose biological capacity has ceased, remain in reproductive mode at the psychological level until the end of their lives.

At the level of the psyche they reproduce more like unto themselves. For example, the Preacher wishes to "reproduce" more Christians, the Conservative leader more Tories, the Labour leader more Socialists, the Cosa Nostra God Fathers more "Soldiers". In all these cases their functionality is to produce people who think like themselves so that their beliefs and values; be they good or evil, may be "reproduced," and carried forward to the next generation. Witting or unwittingly psychologically we all play a part in reproducing community.

The psychological "reproduction" of others in communal form, implies the passing on of values. It is this fact that brings us to consider the moral implications of the reproductive process.

The Moral Implications of the reproductive process: -

The above implies the grouping of human beings who have a collective value system that reflects the moral values of family, community and nation. It is self evident that when nations, communities and families cease to produce individuals who share their values, these groupings begin to fragment and dissolve. In other words commonly held moral values are the cement of society.

In this context the value of personal and individual dimension should not be overlooked; it is our individual relationships with the group, with others, which make life worthwhile. It is our relationships with others that provide our lives with content, and significance. Without relationships, our lives lose their content, dissolve, and fizzle out. In a sentence, it is our relationships in the setting of the group that make life a worthwhile experience.

The further implication is that such groups have shared notions of good and evil, and a common belief that goodness is creative and that evil is destructive. If the groups are to survive and develop, the reproduction of individuals who have commonly shared values is a social imperative from which they cannot escape.

The communication of a common morality implies an educative process. It is this that brings us to the educational process.

The Educational Process: -

In times past the great religions were the vehicles of moral education. As Emile Durkheim put it "Religion is the worship of society". Today the influence of religion is in decline. The myths that generated belief are ceasing to be accepted. However, the moral values that they carried remain and the eternal choice of doing good or evil is forever with us.

It is self evident that no society, particularly a pluralist one, can escape the absolute imperative of moral education. At the conscious and subconscious level it must have primary place in the home, in the school and in the community; In a word society must fall in love with Virtue and particularly with the ethical Quartet of Truth, Justice, Love., and Hope

In a world in which the great religions are dying, which is increasingly cosmopolitan and pluralistic, moral education in school and home is the most appropriate means of educating the population and must become the primary instruments if society is not to fall into the abyss

The lesson that has to be both taught and learned is this; goodness is creative, evil is destructive. The price of goodness can be terrifying. Often we must choose it not only to our own hurt, but also, to the hurt of those we love. Not with standing, we must not fail to pay the price of doing the right thing. We must choose it. If we do not, evil will win. In a word, Mankind must" fall in love" with Spirituality: he must fall in love with Virtue.

The need to "fall in love" with virtue may be brought into sharper focus by way of illustration. A few decades ago photographers laid store by a "Great Negative." One, they said, could not have a "Great Positive" i.e. a "Great Photograph," without a "Great Negative."

Similarly, when it comes to virtue we cannot understand or appreciate it fully unless we take account of the great negatives, which when applied, make life a positive and worthwhile experience.

By way of example:

- No lying, means every one shall have the truth.
- No Stealing, means every one shall have what is theirs.
- No Violence, means every one shall go about without fear,
- No Avarice, means that the poor and the bowed down shall not be crushed and ground down by grinding greed.
- No False Witness means no one shall be wrongfully imprisoned.

It is the great moral Negatives, the "No's," which make life a Positive experience.

Virtue is not merely an intellectual or cerebral concept. Its absence, presence and practice is something that impinges on us all.

So to do good or to do evil is a question to which there is only one answer. One thing is sure we will die having done one, or the other, or more usually, both. Our life is rather like a river. There are the back eddies, but what matters is the general direction of its moral flow. Hopefully, for most, it will be such that we that we will leave this world the better of our being in it. It is the notion of our passing that brings me to consider the significance our death.

The Significance of Death: -

Death is everywhere. Through death all species, live and move and have their being. Every species lives through it and by it. For example, the bird lives by the death of the worm, the goat by the death of the plant, and man by the death of all he eats; not only by the death of the plants which he kills, but also through and blood and guts on the fish mongers slab and the butcher's abattoir floor. Vicariously whether we like it or not we are all killers. Our day-to-day survival is a bloody affair. It is through killing alone that we live and move and have our being.

Reproduction (life) is dependent upon death. Through death every creature of the planet has "Life" The necessity of our own death is self-evident. We live in a finite world. The prospect of immortality for each and every generation would soon exhaust the resources of the planet. Our death is essential feature of the reproductive process.

It is our last, albeit enforced, contribution to the reproductive and life giving process. Through it we not only make way for others; we make way for Life! That is, we make way for the diversity and development that is inherent in the reproductive and evolutionary process.

The outcome of our death is Life. The sheer worth-while-ness and significance of our lives lies in the fact that our immediate descendants and those beyond our ken will stand upon our shoulders and lay hands on worlds and wonders that are beyond our wildest dreams. The effect of our mortality is to bestow upon them riches we know not of.

While this is a heroic, but nonetheless a valid posture. The ugly, nasty, rotten truth is that our bestowal, however rich, also occurs in the contexts of good, evil and suffering, which will be a substantial, feature in the lives our descendants for millennia to come. By way of coming to terms with the negative aspects of our "bestowal" the following two sections are an attempt to see them in a positive although painful light. I will firstly address the good and evil and then the issue of suffering

The Evolutionary Implications of Good and Evil: -

Given that we appear to be the only species on the planet that can conceptualise both notions. It is self evident that good and evil are opposite sides of the same coin that is called Life.

It is a coin that is thrust into our hands at birth. Our capacity for good and evil is part of our moral DNA. That is to say it is "a given" and is an inherent feature of every human heart. Short of suicide, we have no means of returning the coin. We are condemned forever to continually choose between both.

Our capacity for evil cannot be removed from our persona because it is part of all our beings. There is the sense in which the experience of doing bad things in our formative, and even later, years is necessary for the comprehension of the value of goodness.

Moreover the experience of regret, remorse and guilt, along with our desire for forgiveness, to put things right, and to restore relationships, are all essential features of the human experience which contribute to making us into morally mature human beings.

In this sense our "wickedness" is an essential feature of the human experience. This acknowledged; it is the choice of the good that makes us maturely human.

Accepting, that generally evil is destructive and goodness is constructive and the choice of evil and the doing of bad things is a "no-brainer;" the issue of moral stature is thrust upon us. Human consciousness is such, that we cannot escape the almost daily choice between good and evil; multitudes, if not all, feel the allure of higher things such as truth, justice, love and compassion. Most of us want them not only for ourselves, but also for our fellow men, and our children's children..

In short, in moral terms, the moral evolutionary choice between good and evil has a positive outcome. I am suggesting that we may have an explanation. I seek to persuade that in moral terms, life's moral evolutionary insistence that we choose between good and evil has, in an evolutionary context, a positive outcome. That is, it pushes us toward moral stature and, that once this is understood, their existence ceases to be a mystery and becomes in the evolutionary sense, if not acceptable at least "understandable".

The Evidence for the existence of the push to moral stature is presented in the epilogue at the end of this monograph.

The Evolutionary Implications of Suffering: -

Across all species physical suffering is a naturally occurring physiological event. It is part of the reproductive and evolutionary process. In the struggle against disease it acts as an evolutionary agent.

We have all suffered in varying degrees and have personal experience of the process. In the historical stream of evolutionary time, we are contributing to that process and will remain part of it until we die. By contributing to the enhancement of human immune systems our unwitting participation ensures the survival of our species for millennia to come. It is our "contribution" to the futurity of Mankind.

Thus, taking the wider view, suffering carries all species forward. It would appear that in respect of Biological Life, suffering is part of the evolutionary process and, in spite of being "press ganged" into it from birth, it ensures the survival of Mankind, albeit, at a terrible price

The Reproductive/Evolutionary Process: -

While talk of the emergence of:-

- Consciousness,
- Primary Biological Function,
- Reproductive Psychological Processes,
- Moral Implications,
- Educational Processes,
- The Significance of Death,
- The Evolutionary Implications of, Good, Evil and Suffering;
may make some kind of sense, the ultimate criticism, is this: -

How can one escape the verdict that the reproductive process is entirely circular and its purpose is exhausted in its function and everything is absurd? This question is important because we not only have to place mankind in the context of the immediate here and now, but also in the context of its future existence in numerous millennia to come in which; good, evil and suffering play a evolutionary role.

Mankind's Verdict: -

There is one irrefutable fact; Mankind rejects the verdict of absurdity. He rejects it out of hand and gives no reason. While, intellectually he has no alternative but accept the logic, irrationally, he rejects it, and is borne forward by his irrational and inexplicable will to live.

Given; man's intellectual inability to make sense of an inexplicable universe, that the context of his life is one of absurdity, that he spends his entire life in the society of others, and he is borne forward by his will to live; the question of his social posture arises.

In spite of living in an irrational universe he "resolves" this question by almost unconsciously taking on board, the notion of "directionality." A notion which is which is inherent in the evolutionary process.

Here I want to suggest that the idea of "circularity of function" is not sound and that what we have in the reproductive process is not "circularity" but "spirality". We have a rising spiral of consciousness; we have directionality, we have the ascent of Consciousness. More, we have the "Ascent of Man."

The development of consciousness in the human species is the leading edge of the evolutionary process. On this planet the evolution of the human mind is its greatest achievement and it is as yet unfinished. Directionality is evident but the destination is both undisclosed and unknown. Not with standing evolutionary directionality cannot be denied.

Given that mankind is not only self conscious but also conscious of others and that in spite of the irrationality that lies at the heart of his universe, the biological, psychological, moral, educational and mortal directionality of his life is one which in the widest sense: - nurtures the reproductive process, sustains and passes on the gift of life, and to does so in the context of those immediate moral imperatives that are peculiarly the province of humanity. It appears, as we shall see in the epilogue, that the reproductive and moral direction of his life is to leave the world better of his being in it, and that at his altruistic best, his moral direction is one in which he gives his utmost for this world's highest.

At personal level, given the irrationality which lies a the heart of his universe the most thoughtful thing he can do, is to enjoy life as much as possible, and do so within those moral boundaries which have due regard to the welfare of humanity and the planet.

Conclusion: -

This monograph set out to provide a setting in which men and women of ordinary intelligence like me could make some working sense, however imperfect, of the human experience.

Hopefully, in the midst of the literal blood, guts, and suffering of daily life within a predatory system and absurd Universe, it may have gone a little way to providing:

- A sense of our unwitting biological, social and morals roles in the evolutionary stream of time
- An evolutionary understanding of the issues of good, evil and suffering, which suggests that every one has an understandable role in the biological evolution of mankind kind.
- A sense that having due regard to the welfare and well-being of humanity, there some thing to be said for enjoying life as much as possible within moral boundaries

And finally in the following epilogue to provide an note hope which suggests that in the midst of the absurdity and awfulness of the of the human experience there is hope of a better world for our children and our children's children

Either this monograph will convince or it will not. Each of us will make up our own mind. However, it is my conviction that we are on our own: that we must stand up, be mature, and taking responsibility for ourselves, our actions, and our world; embrace the notion that we may, after all, have a role and place in the historical evolution of the Planet and Man.

Mankind finds himself thrust out on a great adventure. Like all Adventurers he has the thrill of moving into the unknown. Hopefully in spite of the fallings, failings, faltering, and adversities that lie before him, it will be enriching experience.

Epilogue: - Hope – The Dawn of Humanist Man

Given all what I have said I am obliged to finally ask the question what is current nature of our place in the historical evolution of Man?

In the past 150 years some thing new has appeared on the Mankind's moral horizon that to the best of my knowledge has only previously occurred isolated pockets in embryonic form.

In, America, Europe, the Near East, India, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. All round the world, millions want to be a part of a new moral Phenomenon and are prepared to accept the moral demand that it makes on each and every one of them.

I refer, to the arrival of Democracy, and the new moral demand which mankind increasing accepts all around the globe. It is surely some thing entirely new in human history, for men and women to say to their neighbour, as they increasingly have done over the past 150 years:

“I may disagree profoundly with your political proposals, but I will defend to the death your right to put them forward and, should I be part of a substantial minority, I will not resort to arms, but will seek bring my own proposals into being by moral suasion alone.”

In short I am suggesting: - that in the context of political ethics mankind is morally evolving in the face of corruption, that we have moral evolution right across the globe, and that there are grounds for hope. Hope, of a better world. The stuttering Arab Spring which began in 2011 may serve to prove the point.

Nor is Political democracy the only context of moral evolution. In the face of world wide avarice, do we not already see mankind wrestling with, and hear talk of: - Ethical Banking, Ethical Trade, Ethical Investment, and Financial Regulation? Indeed some politicians even dare dream of Ethical Foreign policies! – A new dawn indeed!

Should you share this moral interpretation of our times they will say of us; “they are Dreamers”, and yet, are not we humans at our best, when our reach has exceeded our grasp? When we feel the allure of higher things? When we, as it were stand, on our ethical and moral tip toes, straining after the impossible? Straining, to change the present and create a future where increasingly truth, justice, love, compassion, hope, and virtue reign ?

The Dawn of Humanist Man: -

Religious Man, Socialist man, Communist man, and Capitalist man have failed us. The hour of Ethical man: of Humanist man, is dawning. Across the Globe Humanist

men and women sense an increasing restlessness with the received religions and political templates for life and living that have gone before.

They hear the murmuring, indeed the increasing clamour in the nations of the world for more mutually acceptable patterns of conduct which are spiritually, ethically and intellectually more robust. They see the glimmer of a new, albeit distant, dawn for Man kind. I short I am seeking to persuade that the Era of Ethical Man is coming, and, that it is an inevitable feature of our moral evolution.

Of course if you accept this stuff, like me, you are a Dreamer. How ever, those who would accuse us of being Dreamers are in some difficulty. One cannot go past the historical facts of the past 150 years. Wilberforce dreamt of abolishing slavery, Lord Shaftsbury, "The Children's Friend", dreamt of abolishing child labour, Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of an Independent India, Nelson Mandela of abolishing Apartheid. Martin Luther King dreamt of Civil rights for all, irrespective of Colour, Class or Creed.

If we are dreamers let us hasten to plead guilty, for we are in illustrious company. Yesterdays Dreamers changed today's world. It is for us to change tomorrow's. Moreover through the alchemy of history we might under go a change of name, and one day people will look back and call us Visionaries.

There is, it seems, something to be said for Dreamers. As long as we are around there is hope for the world.

George Mossman August 2011.