

COVID-19, CLIMATE CHAOS, IMPERIALISM, ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION, SOCIAL POLARIZATION & FAILING DEMOCRACY

These are, I suppose, the basic fissure points in the powder keg that is the United States of America, with much of it applying to lots of other countries as well.

New variants, insufficient vaccine uptake, very understandable distrust of authorities, media, and pharmaceutical corporations, along with all kinds of combinations of hippies, libertarians, right-wingers, and others that are often described as "skeptics," ensure that Covid-19 will be a problem in this society for a good while. More importantly, the failure of the supposed leader of the free world to step up to the plate and head up a vaccine distribution program that would actually cover the globe - as all the epidemiologists continually explain is necessary to beat any global pandemic - ensures the next variant.



Believe This

All morning, doing the hard, root-wrestling work of turning a yard from the wild to a gardener's will, I heard a bird singing from a hidden, though not distant, perch; a song of swift, syncopated syllables sounding like, *Can you believe this, believe this, believe? Can you believe this, believe this, believe?* And all morning, I did believe. All morning, between break-even bouts with the unwanted, I wanted to see that bird, and looked up so I might later recognize it in a guide, and know and call its name, but even more, I wanted to join its church. For all morning, and many a time in my life, I have wondered who, beyond this plot I work, has called the order of being, that givers of food are deemed lesser than are the receivers. All morning, muscling my will against that of the wild, to claim a place in the bounty of earth, seed, root, sun and rain, I offered my labor as a kind of grace, and gave thanks even for the aching in my body, which reached beyond this work and this gift of struggle.

Richard Levine



It is not noted enough that in the US system of alleged democracy, the Senate is the least democratic of the two federal legislative bodies,

which is why the more progressive legislation tends to die there first. Whereas the passage of the full Build Back Better bill might have put the US on some kind of footing to begin to slow down our descent into climate catastrophe, the failure of the bill to pass ensures there will be no leadership coming from Washington, DC to move the country in the direction of no longer competing with China to be the world's #1 polluter. And of course, even if Build Back Better had passed, the next round of what they still call Thousand-Year Floods, unprecedented heat waves, droughts, and fires is guaranteed, in 2022.

While the Congress is gridlocked when it comes to doing anything about climate chaos or child poverty, there is no gridlock when it comes to military spending, and yet another of the world's biggest military budgets was passed. A routine expenditure that far outstrips the allegedly massive Build Back Better initiative, spending another annual \$800 billion on what they erroneously call "defense" barely makes the news. The fact that there is unanimity among the vast majority of Congresspeople to vote in favor of this bill, that no one seems to even want to think about trying to hold it up in order to get other things passed, as they so often do with other spending programs, isn't newsworthy either, of course.

The poor countries of the world are deeper in debt now than at any time since 2001, and this is also true of so many people in the US, drowning in debt, and now cut off from the aid many were receiving during the pandemic. The cost of housing has skyrocketed in the past year, and the numbers of people living on the streets has mushroomed. The growth of service sector labor union activity notwithstanding, 2022 looks set to be another dismal year for the American working class.

But along with economic stratification, social polarization also looks set to continue. As the working class continues its descent into deeper poverty and uncertainty, the liberal media and the liberal politicians will ignore this broad state of affairs, and focus primarily on how certain marginalized sectors of society are being affected, inadvertently (or intentionally?) driving so many others into the welcoming arms of the right.

For their part, the right will blame the sorry state of affairs for the American working class on those very marginalized groups that the liberals are always talking about, thus ensuring that their supporters continue to believe their cause is just - a vicious feedback loop amplified immeasurably by social media algorithms and other actors, human or not, bent on causing division and discord. Yes, including Russians. Why would they not engage in the same kinds of efforts to sow division and rebellion in other societies, the way the CIA has done for so long, in Russia, in China, in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and everywhere else?

The failure of the Voting Rights Act will presumably mean an already undemocratic, corrupted, money-driven, militarized democracy will become more undemocratic as we go. With the changes going on in various state governments around how they do elections, the possibility for an end to the American experiment with representative democracy may be a real prospect soon enough.

In conclusion, the near future looks bleak (though not nearly as bleak as the more distant future). On the other hand, history shows that massive, ecumenical, militant, highly-motivated, well-organized social movements can accomplish just about anything.

Now would be a good time for such a movement to get off the ground quickly.



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Four Types of Intelligence:

1. Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

This is the measure of your level of comprehension. You need IQ to solve maths, memorize things, and recall lessons.

2. Emotional Quotient (EQ)

This is the measure of your ability to maintain peace with others, keep to time, be responsible, be honest, respect boundaries, be humble, genuine and considerate.

3. Social Quotient (SQ)

Social Quotient (SQ): this is the measure of your ability to build a network of friends and maintain it over a long period of time.

4. Adversity Quotient (AQ)

The Adversity Quotient (AQ): The measure of your ability to go through a rough patch in life, and come out of it without losing your mind.

When faced with troubles, AQ determines who will give up, who will abandon their family, and who will consider suicide.

People that have higher EQ and SQ tend to go further in life than those with a high IQ but low EQ and SQ. Most schools capitalize on improving IQ levels while EQ and SQ are played down.

Your EQ represents your Character, while your SQ represents your Charisma. Give in to habits that will improve these three Qs, especially your EQ and SQ.

To become multifaceted human beings children need to be exposed to more than Academics.

Develop their IQ, as well as their EQ, SQ and AQ.

Do not prepare the road for your children. Prepare your children for the road.



WE'RE JUST A CONFUSED SPECIES IN AN AWKWARD TRANSITION PHASE

Really, when it comes right down to it, things are a mess because humans are in a very awkward and confusing stage in our development as a species.

Our giant brains evolved faster than we could adjust to, and now we're these scared little apex predators stumbling around the earth with massive prefrontal cortices overlaying a bunch of deep primordial conditioning. A rapidly developed capacity for language and abstract thought strapped on top of a fear response that our distant evolutionary ancestors developed to help them run away from long-extinct monsters with big sharp teeth.

This sudden change has left us in a transition stage where we haven't yet gotten the hang of the immense power which now erupts from within our skulls and gives us the ability to shape our world to our will. Like how the ancient mammalian ancestors of whales probably looked awkward when they first began reentering the sea, before they got the hang of swimming and their nostrils moved to a location more conducive to breathing in the water.

It's left us at this weird, uncomfortable stage where we have the intelligence to do amazing things, but haven't yet developed the wisdom to use this newfound capacity in a harmonious way.

We now have the ability to conquer our own ecosystems using technology, but we lack the wisdom not to do so.

We have the intelligence to invent nuclear weapons, but we lack the wisdom not to build them.

We have the ability to plan for our individual futures, but we lack the wisdom to make sure our species as a whole has a future.

We have the ability to think abstract thoughts, but lack the wisdom to refrain from building identities out of them.

We have the ability to ask questions, but lack the wisdom to deeply question our own true nature and whether the world is really as it seems.

The ability to write vast tomes of philosophy that contain not one line telling us how to be content on the planet we were born on.

The ability to construct entire belief systems that are completely useless for learning to live in harmony with what is.

The ability to discover spirituality only to use it for vapid escapism and tyrannical psychological domination.

The ability to research human psychology only to use it to convince people to buy junk they don't need and support wars they don't want and vote for politicians they don't like.

The ability to invent mass media only to use it to promote and normalize a status quo that is killing us all.

The ability to invent something as transcendental as music only to popularize songs about owning stuff and getting money.

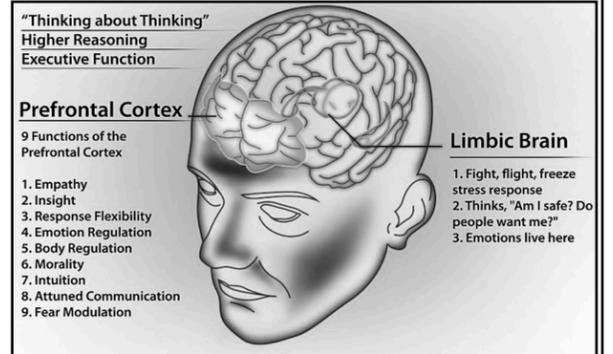
The ability to technologically link billions of minds on the internet only to spend all our time arguing about nonsense.

The ability to tell stories only to spend our energy using storytelling to manipulate and control each other.

The ability to intimately appreciate beauty and mystery with a profound depth and complexity only to spend our entire lives frantically doing anything but that.

We have the ability to do all these things skillfully and harmoniously; we just haven't quite gotten the hang of it yet.

It's like when you got your first bike for your birthday and you knew it could make you go a lot faster than you normally can, but it took a lot of practice before you went from training wheels and painful falls to swiftly breezing through the neighborhood. These giant prefrontal cortices we got on our birthday give us so much potential,



and we've been bumbling around on training wheels and taking nasty spills when we try to take them off.

I'm sure the early evolutionary ancestors of birds were awkward as hell too before they finally got the hang of flying. They would have looked ridiculous, and it wouldn't have been immediately clear from an outsider's perspective exactly what nature was going for there. Like biological baby scribbles.

The only difference is that the awkward evolutionary transition phases of birds and whales did not involve giant neural networks which make childbirth painful and could easily lead to the death of all terrestrial life.

The birth of a human baby is difficult due to the size of our enormous, rapidly evolved brains relative to our more slowly evolved pelvic bones. The birth of a sane humanity will be difficult for similar reasons.

I do believe we have the ability to make the jump from this awkward transition phase to become a truly conscious species. But it looks like if we do make it, it's going to be by the skin of our omnivore teeth.

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