

Introduction

On the precipice of economic disintegration and a collective psychological transformation, the world is shedding its skin of old customs, forms of morality, religiosity, and social interaction. Radiating from the circumference of this dimly glowing, global melting pot can be felt the anxious frenzy and frightened anticipation of a transformative birthing process. The immense scale of this global reorientation threatens to eviscerate traditional culture, dismantle the familial structure, and plunge the world into an abyss of cultural darkness dominated by mass media monopolies. Accelerating globalization, new technological renovations will anticipate future human realities merged with computer-brain interface,¹ genetic alteration,² and a virtual paradise of escapism. All of these maladies are symptomatic of nihilistic despair, called into being through a collective projection of masochistic, self-loathing. As a worldwide epidemic, the fundamental erosion of transcendent value and cultural rootedness will further sever communities from categorical human qualities, stifle creativity, and hamper emotional expression.

Nihilism of the West Spreads Globally

“What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; "why?" finds no answer.”³ Nietzsche foresaw that the arrival of nihilism within the Western cultural milieu and its permeation throughout intellectual elite circles would disastrously impinge on the imagination and strength necessary for heroic

¹ Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *Duchamp's Trans/Formers*, Trans: I. McLeod, (Venice, CA: The Lapis Press, 1990).

² Virilio, Paul, *Open Sky*, Trans: Julie Rose, (London: Verso Books, 1997).

³ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*, Ed & Trans: Walter Kaufmann, (New York and London, 1990), p. 13.

achievement and social stability. In the West, the prevalence of psychotropic drugs and diversionary media spectacles demonstrate that the pacifying agents of consumerism and hedonistic indulgence cannot compensate for religious devotion and determinative, individual accomplishment. Globalization, as a contingent outgrowth of nihilistic sentiment, sacrifices all that is qualitative, distinct, and noble in favor of that which is base, collective, mediocre, and multicultural.

Undeniably, as global per capita has tripled in the last 50 years, the material benefits and domestic settings for world citizens have greatly increased due to the effects of global trade.⁴ From a purely humanistic perspective, widespread distribution of health services, education, and technological capabilities are encouraging residuals of the modern scientific epoch. Despite these apparent advancements pertaining to the general state of man, the existential condition of human beings, especially in the Western world, is in no way automatically fulfilled through these external benefits. The existential plane of being-in-the-world, which is fundamentally one of personal, spiritual development, cannot be enhanced by increased lifespan or access to material goods. The Biblical admonishment against over-indulgence reminds its readers, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”⁵ Contrary to the logic of globalization, much of the traditional understanding of character and community, expressed in all major religious systems, is threatened by the guiding pathos of valuing quantity over quality. José Ortega y Gasset brilliantly commented on the hazardous exposure to the “appearance of superabundance, of excess of riches, of superfluity... [T]he security seemingly offered by progress demoralized the average man, inspiring him

⁴ Schäfer, Andreas, “Reflections on Technology,” [Issued by: National Academy of Engineers], (Clouser House: Winter 2006).

⁵ Mark 8:36 Douay-Rheims.

with a confidence which is false, vicious, and atrophying.”⁶ Global metropolises now house swarming populations of soulless, existentially-vagrant human beings, dominated by the coldness of a technocratic society. Shall the morphing of human creatures into biological androids be hailed as a sign of progress?

Plato conceived of a community or individual as having achieved equilibrium when, “Moderation stretches throughout the whole, from top to bottom of the entire scale.”⁷ Moderation is abandoned in a society which encourages shallow self-indulgence and endless consumption of material goods. With an ideology thoroughly saturated in radically egalitarian, culturally Marxist premises,⁸ the fuel of globalization runs on a blatantly materialistic, reductionist interpretation of the human condition, corrupting family life and the pursuit of individual excellence in most of the Western world. Unfortunately, the modernization of the world has coincided with an increased global suicide rate of 60% over the past 45 years.⁹ These traits of cultural decay, moral decadence, jaded youth generations, and an apathetic populous are not symptomatic of progress. Europe has lost its will to live, thrive, and reproduce; according to demographic projections, by 2100, Europe’s population will be reduced to half of its current number due to abortion and the abolition of the family unit.¹⁰ In every sector of society, places of worship, intellectual pursuits, knowledge of foreign language or culture, and general manners have been displaced by dull forms of entertainment and hedonistic pursuits.

⁶ Ortega y Gasset, Jose, *Revolt Against the Masses*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), p. 70.

⁷ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, Trans: Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 110.

⁸ Buchanan, Patrick, *Where the Right Went Wrong: How Neoconservatives Subverted the Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency*, (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2005), p. 178-211.

⁹ “World Health Organization Suicide Statistics” International Suicide Statistics, <http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-statistics.html> (accessed 12 December 2010).

¹⁰ Buchanan, *Where the Right Went Wrong*, p. 108.

Alarmingly, globalization now allows for these disastrously corrosive Western cultural values to innocuously blend with the influx of material affluence flooding into poorer countries. The prevalence of internet pornography, rampant consumerism, and mindless entertainment now races across the world, unleashing its vile toxicity and cultural destructiveness into poorer areas of Latin America, Southeast Asia, and parts of Africa.¹¹

The Death of the Soul and Rise of Multicultural, Mechanical Man

No longer can Europeans find secure homage in a place of worship or established family structure, because in large part, these institutions have been disowned and have fallen into disrepair. Upon tracing back the genealogy of such pathological infirmity and moral corruption, the logic of globalization reveals itself to be one of conformity and disgust with individualistic, life-affirming activities. In support of this thesis, the observation could be posited that the West, and much of the rest of the industrialized world, resembles a return to the collective ideal of primitivism. Psychologically speaking, this state of communalism incorporating every person is an esteemed “equal”, represents a return to the tribal setting in which a patriarch, or big government apparatus, reigns as overlord of the caste of servant tribesmen. Meditating on the possibility of this future transition, Aldous Huxley remarked;

As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase... In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and the radio, it will help to reconcile [global citizens] to the servitude which is their fate.¹²

¹¹ Hedges, Christopher, *Empire of Illusion*, (Los Angeles: Nation Books, 2010), p. 85.

¹² Huxley, Aldous, *Brave New World*, (New York: Haper & Brothers, 1969), p. xvi.

These all-pervasive, infantile cultural modalities threaten the autonomous character development necessary to breed individuals of excellence and virtue. Allan Bloom stated in his masterpiece *The Closing of the American Mind*; “Creativity and personality were intended to be terms of distinction... The leveling of the distinctions through familiarity merely encourages self-satisfaction.”¹³ What is the price wrought by transnational, multicultural values, consumerism, and apathetic self-satisfaction? Quite simply, it is the negation of the human soul, and more disturbingly, the inability to look at reality through a metaphysical, rational, religious, or cultural framework.

In the distant past, Medieval Catholic social structure formed a cohesive organic social unit “willed by God” whereby every person had a distinctive role and purpose.¹⁴ Notably, members of this type of society had very little freedom and could not develop their rational faculties, but their existential predicament was not one of alienation. A distinct sense of self-awareness apart from the community was not available to the average European until the Italian Renaissance, whereby, the moneyed-class birthed egocentric human beings who could realize themselves outside of strict theocratic and occupational roles.¹⁵ Classical liberal thought is dependent on the concept of man and woman positing themselves as the means and ends for the fulfillment of rational self-interest. To consider modern Western society’s overly materialistic, irrational will-to-power as self-interested is false; rather, this motivation has become pathological and sadistic.

Engendered by the blessing of material affluence and hard work, the freedom to be a self-determining agent is the most precious aspect of modernity, but has developed

¹³ Bloom, Allan, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1987), p. 183.

¹⁴ Evola, Julius, *Men Among the Ruins*, (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2002), p. 138.

¹⁵ Fromm, Erich, *Escape From Freedom*, (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1972), pp. 112-126.

into a sorely abused privilege. Erich Fromm, the great German psychologist commented extensively on man's escape from freedom; that is to say, the individual's inability to act independently of authority when given the chance. Historically, when freed from economic servitude, Fromm postulated that man often chooses to submit to external forms of authority, as in fascism, or drown in escapism.¹⁶ The falling away from religious devotion, abandonment of the mountains and river valleys, and detachment from communal participation has left Western man with a gnawing sense of insecurity and isolation which material acquisition cannot alleviate. From this infertile soil, sprouts the devaluation of character, because no goal or orientation can be posited from a cultural sewer of nihilism that despises rationality and condemns self-interest.

Once traditional values and spiritual striving have been removed from a population's reservoir of consciousness, its people become passive slaves to the guiding superstructure of technocracy. Heidegger's explication of "the will to will" foreshadowed a technological pathology that willed itself forward without a determinative goal, dominating and calcifying the inner life of its citizens.¹⁷ Likewise, family autonomy and parental authority in overseeing the natural development of children is co-opted by the hegemonic and hypnotic power of mass media and public education.

Distinction based on class, creed, ethnicity and gender are unproductive and prejudicial; distinction based on moral and intellectual traits are essential for a vibrant society. A civilization, like that of the Roman Empire, which stops making such distinctions, internally decays. The mindless, plebian-like servitude inherent in mass

¹⁶ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, pp. 149-154.

¹⁷ Heidegger, Martin, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), pp. 154-213.

democracy, and defeat of localism and republicanism, now evident in the United States and the European Union, breeds a system of plutocracy and corruption. Despite superficial undertones of individualism, the context of the American political discourse, expressed prominently by the Obama Administration, indicates that man exists to serve society, not that society should serve to cultivate the individual. Importantly, Plato assumed that those who cannot master themselves should obey others in a position of virtue.¹⁸ Today, the exact opposite is evident in the Western world where sport and porn stars constitute the pinnacle archetypal images of hedonistic achievement. Just as there exists within a person's soul a hierarchy of competing drives, so too, within a healthy society there exists a hierarchy of competitive needs and ambitions which serve not only to feed and clothe man, but also to intellectually and artistically inspire his life goals. When nations become interested in economically supporting or policing other nations, this shallow moralism disguised as compassionate global stewardship is an expression of boredom or duplicity.

Contrary to any collective model, the differentiated type of human being makes legitimate culture and celebration possible for the rest of society through creative achievement and bold deeds, displayed supremely by men like Goethe and da Vinci. Only under conditions of self-mastery and individuation can a global society call itself a civilization. Self-love, not blind immersion into collectivism, as Eric Fromm pointed out, is the basis for all cultural virility as constituted by, "The affirmation of my own life, happiness, growth, freedom, is rooted in the presence of the basic readiness and ability for such an affirmation."¹⁹ The utterly mechanical nature involved with industrial

¹⁸ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, Trans: Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

¹⁹ Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, p. 115.

automation and highly technical, inorganic occupational and cultural communication kills individual curiosity through its overwhelming luminosity. Technology and science, serving as gateways for the culmination of nihilism, although useful in their own hemisphere of society, have so convinced man of his smallness relative to the universe that any rebellion against such a mechanized force becomes blasphemous.

The model for the global village, which is being prepared in the name of multiculturalism and diversity, embodies a social hive of like-minded automatons who have sacrificed their spiritual, ethnic, and intellectual properties for the good of collective agglomeration. Furthermore, the psycho-analytical formulation of a social persona, which is a sense of identity that is defined by society's collective projection unto a person's self, is now the only form of identity definitively recognized by global culture. Assertion of individuality, which encompasses the acceptance of one's spiritual and personal differentiation from the mass, has absolutely no significance in such a world typified by superficiality. In this brave new world of hyper-collectivity, self-confidence becomes entirely contingent on what others think about one's self, not the result of achievement and devotion to higher ideals.

As Kant indicated, nature is antagonistic,²⁰ therefore it requires that communities and individuals grow or perish. More familiarly, Ayn Rand noted that "...so long as men have to make choices, there is no escape from moral values".²¹ The vacuity and utter complacency of the industrialized world is rooted in its negation and denial of uniqueness relative to an entirely conformist and mediocre environment. When man is irrational, the

²⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, Trans: Ted Humphrey, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983), p. 34.

²¹ Oeikoff, Leonard, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*, [Quote: Ayn Rand] (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. 278.

goal he pursues is independent of any fundamental evaluation, and therefore can have no greater meaning outside itself.

The Destructive Nature of Mass Society

The free-enterprise system liberated man from the travails of hard economic labor, but Madison Avenue has convinced man to submit to a new form of slavery from which there is no escape. Although living in opulence and unbelievable convenience, much of the industrialized world is depressed, unsatisfied, and restless. The social critic Walter Benjamin, although an avowed Marxist, once wisely concluded, “Mankind's “self-alienation” has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order.”²² Although Benjamin was a critic from the left, his understanding of bourgeois complacency led him to conclude that the lack of available outlets for personal expression in Central European societies depreciated individual character and emaciated self-expression.

Where there is total equality and stagnation of consciousness, there can be no freedom because of the lack of antagonism to motivate moral decisions or exercise intellectual faculties. Quality and difference should be derived from the fundamental acknowledgement that people are profoundly unequal morally, psychologically, and intellectually. Globalization denies the need for creativity because it defers to the shrine of unification, through submission and weakness, under the name of false compassion and conformity.

²² Wolin, Richard, *Walter Benjamin, an Aesthetic of Redemption*, [Quote: Walter Benjamin], (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 184.

The Future to Come: Post-human

Two Western literary figures that embody the transition from the modern to the postmodern are Fyodor Dostoevsky and Friedrich Nietzsche. Referring to an ideological revolution that produced a mysterious fire, which alludes to the alchemical power of psychological knowledge, one of Dostoevsky's characters exclaims the "fire is in the minds of men, not in the roofs of buildings".²³ Likewise, Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead" announced a psychological transmutation which was preparing Europe for internal catastrophe and discord.²⁴ Dostoevsky saw the dangers of progress and shallow materialism, while soon after, Nietzsche felt the coming tide of atheism approaching.

In the modern epoch of globalization, by examining man's psychology in a similar manner to that of Dostoevsky's and Nietzsche's prognosis, it is possible to extrapolate future trends by examining current events. If any metaphysical myth were to accurately conceptualize the new, global civilization it would be embodied in the Vedic-inspired Kali Yuga myth, whereby degeneration of spiritual expression folds into solidified, lower grades of matter;²⁵ metaphorically and hypothetically, the trend of human affairs is spiraling downwards toward the cybernetic merger of computer and brain. The West is exhausted, sick, and disorderly, having lost confidence and the ability of self-assertion, its leaders can only mouth words of "unity", "multiculturalism", and "diversity". To use the Greek expression, genuine communal arrangements are only emboldened by individual "holons".²⁶ In other words, this term applies to persons who are self-willed, spiritually, and psychologically matured human beings that collaborate

²³ Billington, James H., *Fire in the Minds of Men*, (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1999), p. 5.

²⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 17.

²⁵ Geunon, Rene, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2006), p. 119.

²⁶ Wilber, Ken, *A Brief History of Everything*, (New York: Shambhala, 2001), p. 277.

for a common end. In contradistinction to an authentic community, the typical global citizen embodies a neurotic, broken shard of pottery that must be glued together with other inauthentic souls to create a feeling of security. Hence, the arrival of digital social networks amplifies impersonal, stupefied communication and provides the bricks and mortar for the construction of the global village. Heidegger expressed his despair during a time in which base materialism and nihilism were less attenuated; “There is no longer any goal in through which all the forces of the historical existence of peoples can cohere and in the direction of which they can develop...”²⁷ Is not globalization the ultimate sing of psychological disintegration, when nations look to obliterate their own autonomy and citizens will no longer distinctively acknowledge and commemorate their ancestral heritage?

The global perfusion of televisions, iPods, cell phones, e-mail attachments, the prevalence of Wi-Fi, and other technological advancements would not be harmful to the human condition if these instruments were responsibly utilized for rational and creative expression. Technologies, and the message of the medium, do not exist within a vacuum; these structural forms act as a magnifying conduit for the form of lifestyle and society that was responsible for their production. Unfortunately, developed in a Western idiom of nihilism, these modalities encourage material envy, uniformity, and cosmetic masochism at the expense of life-imbued harmony and action. If mankind’s self-hatred, expressed in the will-to-nothingness of global communitarianism, has reached such an aggravated peak of sense-infatuated indulgence and escapism, as is evident today, a future, post-human Atlantis will be populated by docile humanoid-robots, kneeling before the circus of a cyber-purgatory of distraction and complete artificiality.

²⁷ Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche, Volumes I and II*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1987), p. xiii.