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# Post Pandemic — Post-Human Monoculture?

“Less a prediction, more a current observation.”

**W**e are becoming familiar with our developing societal culture. It is particularly evident in cities, but is ubiquitous in the Western world. Our towns and cities have become “human zoos,” crowded *monocultures*, not unlike beehives or termite colonies, with a single species living within an environment manufactured by that species, and subject to species-specific pandemics.

Our social culture is marked by political correctness, by mounting confusion and blurring of sexual identity and male/female rôles, female demands for equality with males, societal disregard for family, and by racial and cultural tensions. It is also marked by a continuing reduction in male potency and female fertility, and by an apparent rising tide of sexual uncertainty, and mental instability.

These various issues have not gone unnoticed by various political groups and parties who show little interest in rooting out the causes, focusing instead on treatment or ratification, i.e., turning the previously illegal into the presently admirable, rewriting dictionaries to suit, censoring the now-unacceptable, and ‘amending’ the sex of unfortunate individuals at will. This used to be known in military circles as “situating the appreciation;” i.e. “adjusting” the social environment to accommodate emerging issues, so they are no longer regarded as issues, while referring to previous codes of conduct, moralisms, spiritual guides,

etc., as ‘old-fashioned,’ and ‘outdated:’ a long-established political ploy for deflecting criticism.

Political correctness abhors free speech and public debate about these emerging societal behaviours, while social media is used as a propaganda platform to publicise and applaud the new “normality” and “correctness” of it all...

**W**e know that we modern humans originated in hostile environments such as southeast Africa, in constant fear of predation and deprivation, and that we were consequently aggressive as a species, to survive. Groups of early humans were doubtless in conflict with other groups, killing and stealing food and females. And that infanticide was not uncommon.

To overcome an inherently high infant mortality rate, we evolved a remarkable ability to breed, based on pair bonding for life between one man and one woman, monogamy. The man and woman were thus complementary, with an essential need and facility for work-sharing, the woman gathering food while continually bearing, protecting and nurturing their offspring. Meanwhile the man, having established an encampment to protect his woman and children, would periodically go hunting with other men in the group, operating in a predominantly-male team. Such families would have grouped together, both for self-protection and to have sufficient resources to be self-sufficient. How big would such groups be? We do not know, but it seems likely to be fewer than hundreds of men, women and children, and very likely much less—perhaps only a few extended families per group. That is sufficient basis upon which to predicate some of our various human instincts, with which each of us is born today.

We are wary of people not of our group or neighbourhood, and we identify strangers by their unfamiliar face, speech, garb, colour, behaviour, etc...Were we not born with this instinct, we would not have survived in the past. Con-

versely, we cautiously accept strangers who speak in precisely the same way as we do, largely regardless of garb, colour or behaviour – suggesting that the instinct is for ‘stranger-danger.’ We are instinctively wary of certain colour combinations, notably black and yellow, the warning colour of certain poisonous frogs, snakes and stinging insects...

Our distant forebears evolved a way of bringing up their children that resulted in capable, rational adults despite (or, more likely, because of) the generally hostile environment, able to survive and produce capable rational adults in their turn—and so on, down the unbroken chain of genetic inheritance. Offspring that were not rational and capable would not have survived to breed in their turn... And, of course, there are the basic procreative instincts: young men are attracted to young women, and vice versa. Were it not so, none of us would be here today.

So, it is reasonable to suggest that many of the contemporary burgeoning phenomena: sexual dysphoria, homosexuality, equality, mental instability, etc; may not be genetic in origin. Also, that racial/cultural, even neighbourhood tensions are to be expected, along with violence, as these may indeed be genetic in origin. And if someone has the nerve to clamber over the fence into your beautifully manicured garden? Beware: territorial imperative!

The only way to stop humans behaving in these instinctively-human ways is to stop them from being human ...Apart, that is, from repeated education, continual policing, etc; and, oh yes, political correctness. And these suppress, but do not eliminate—we are born, it seems, inherent hunter-gatherers...

So, what is going on in our contemporary social culture? Human social behaviour that has existed as the basis of human society for at least 60,000 years, and possibly up to some two million years, is suddenly (instantaneously, in evolutionary timescales) to be set aside. Male-female pair bonding is no longer the exclusive basis for marriage. Females are worker/hunters, like males, even taking physical combat roles in the armed forces. Females no longer suckle and

nurture their offspring. Males no longer protect their female and their joint offspring. Regardless of their fundamental biology, males and females want to ‘interchange:’ even want to be neuter (sic).

And, while each of these disparate phenomena may be attributed to some spurious causal explanation, there appears to be no explanation for their sudden, simultaneous, coordinated appearance...After 60,000 years of prehistory, over 6,000 years of history, and countless generations with little or none of these bizarre human behaviours? Our ancestors would doubtless have been horrified. Many of our fighting men who gave their lives in WWII to “protect our way of life” - as they had known it the 1920s and 30s - would have been dismayed.

Meanwhile, even more incredible, the bulk of contemporary humans accept such practices as appropriate, even desirable, and so do not question, but applaud? Something is very clearly up! And happening on a grand, world-wide human monocultural scale. But what?

**T**here are examples of social creatures that might give us a clue, notably the Hymenoptera (ants, bees, and wasps) and the Isoptera (termites). These are the “eusocial<sup>1</sup> insects.” (Naked mole-rats, strange cold-blooded mammals from E.Africa, are eusocial, too, but in much smaller numbers.) Eusociality, the highest level of organisation of sociality, is defined by the following characteristics:

1. Cooperative brood care (including care of offspring from other individuals),
2. Overlapping generations within a colony of adults, and
3. A division of labour into reproductive and non-reproductive groups.

The division of labour creates specialised behavioural groups or castes. Eusociality is distinguished from all other social systems because individuals of at

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<sup>1</sup>Eusocial: (from Greek εὖ *eu* "good" and *social*). Denoting social organisms in which a single female or caste produces the offspring and non-reproductive individuals cooperate in caring for the young.

least one caste usually lose the ability to perform at least one behaviour characteristic of individuals in another caste. So honeybee workers, all female, do not reproduce, leaving that task to the queen who lays all the eggs. Some workers look after the brood, while others go out and look for food. Some ants become very large and strong, to act as soldiers, protecting worker ants. These soldiers can no longer feed themselves, so are fed by workers. So, there are physiological as well as behavioural changes in the development of castes.

E.O. Wilson, an American naturalist, biologist and writer, suggested at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that we humans may be eusocial apes, a proposition that has been hotly contested. However, if we were to consider that humans in their cities were in *transition towards* eusociality, that could go some way towards explaining some of the puzzling contemporary social issues and behaviours that we observe.

Ants, bees and termites did not transition from individual to eusocial in an instant. Termites emerged from the group of cockroaches some 150 million years ago, while ants and other eusocial Hymenoptera, including bees, appeared some 50 million years later. The transition would have taken very many generations, suggesting a potential myriad of intra-transitional states, and natural selection to weed out the less effective states in the progressive development of the 'super-organism.'

Consider, for humans as potential eusocial organisms in transition:

- A. Both male and female human fertility has been dropping, with the rate of female fertility drop being described as 'alarming.' Could this be the visible signs of a transition to eusociality, where most workers do not breed?

- B. Is female demand for equality, and to adopt male rôles, a transition towards all humans being workers and away from females bearing and nurturing?
- C. Is rising homosexuality, similarly, a transitional state in the move towards a non-breeding condition?
- D. Similarly, is sexual dysphoria symptomatic of the same transition, but presenting in a different manner?
- E. Generation Z reaches adulthood in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Statistically, and worldwide, ‘Gen Z’ appears markedly different from previous generations: it tends to drink less, be more risk-averse compared to millennials...and has been characterised as “anxious and depressed.”
- F. Many more mothers than previously both work and give their babies and youngsters to nurseries and schools to look after. Boarding schools, residential colleges and universities have been popular for many years. Are we seeing a transitional state towards the development of a social ‘caste’ of brood carers, *in loco parentis*.
- G. It might seem unlikely that human society will evolve a single ‘queen,’ but, could we be moving towards a caste of women child bearers?
- H. Alternatively, we may have already developed a ‘caste’ of *non*-child-bearing women — post-menopausal women. Humans are, after all, the only land-based mammal where females go through the menopause. No other ape, no other simian — only humans. And many of our most powerful recent leaders are post-menopausal women...
- I. We have overlapping generations within our monocultures, largely due to our longevity and early adulthood. Since humans typically live into their eighties, there is plenty of opportunity for overlapping generations to function alongside each other—as required by the definitions of eusociality above.

There is, however, another vital aspect to consider. All successful eusocial cultures have a powerful, *social communication system*, essential to coordinate the complex division of labour among workers, soldiers, reproductives, etc. society-wide.

With ants, which are blind, communication is based largely on chemical markers, trails left by ants as they move. Their communication system is sophisticated, as it can accommodate both routine coordination of activities and emergencies, such as attacks by other ants, or termites—which have a similarly-effective communication system based on pheromones, as do naked mole-rats and honeybees.

Honeybees are well known for their “waggle dance,” a sophisticated communication ‘language’ that gives other bees information about the direction and distance to flowers that have nectar or pollen, or both.

We humans have individual speech, scent and body language...but we have no innate social communication system; we are, essentially, alone within our minds as *homo sapiens*. This, surely, is the mark of self-awareness. And has been for, perhaps, the last two million years. The ability to be ‘alone with your thoughts,’ may be essential to mental organisation, stability, rationality, creativity, originality and, most certainly, to individuality.

Some 6,000 years ago we developed writing, to communicate between each other remotely, enabling the remote receiver to mouth the written word. It was “coded speech;” effective, but largely person-to-person and slow.

So, we recently turned to technology, developed the Internet, email, messaging etc., but it was not enough. We went one major step further, and introduced worldwide social media, in an attempt to connect everyone to everyone. At last, we appear to have an instant, global colony-wide communication system to match, or even exceed, that of the eusocial insects and the naked mole

rats. Had we found the missing element needed to become E.O. Wilson's eusocial apes?

We have found colony-wide instant communication. And we love it. Especially the young, who are psychologically-welded, addicted, to their smart-phones, such that they are no longer ever alone in their own minds. There has even been talk of implanting smart-phones surgically, and it may be feasible.

Think of it. Generations of young people permanently on line—together with hundreds, thousands, even millions of others. The cacophony... No more silence... No more introspection... No more learning—"look it up on line!" No need for individual thought—someone is bound to have thought of it before... Could this inhuman "never being alone," affect the developing mind, which evolved to accommodate introspection, and only a handful of immediate human friends and colleagues, together with a much wider variety of flora and fauna all being sensed in 3-D by sight, sound, smell and touch in parallel?

Mm...this is not new. The writers of Star-trek, The Next Generation, First Contact, etc., have already envisaged such a society: the Borg, with their hive-mind - the Borg Collective - and the Borg Queen. The Borg (from 'cyborg') are humanoid, injected with nanoprobes and surgically augmented with cybernetic fitments, either when assimilated into the Collective, or from birth. Borg babies are tended by Borg workers in a creche. Borg have no sense of individuality: "we are Borg." They are instructed what to do, when to do it, and how. They are emotionless.

The Borg are fiction of course. But could this be the outcome of human ape eusocial development, especially in the light of our contemporary obsession with technology? With the full integration of global communications, 5G mobiles and beyond, the Internet of Things, we are well on the way to a global human collective, a monoculture on the grand scale, no longer confined to cities and towns. But then, we are well on the way to being a global monoculture anyway, considering the rate at which we are diminishing other lifeforms on our



shared planet...And, we have not had any world wars recently to interrupt our runaway social evolution and return it to an earlier “old fashioned” human condition...

**M**ay we, then, already be in a post-human era, without realising it? Curiously, we are pushing further and faster into this non-human monocultural society, seeing it as ‘modern,’ ‘fashionable,’ ‘admirable,’ etc., while meantime overriding the rule of law, eagerly accepting mob behaviour in place of democracy, seeking post-human *equality* in place of human *complementarity* of male and female...

Have we, perhaps, undergone such an effective global brainwashing, so that we now see the unnatural as natural, the insane as sane, our human biology as largely irrelevant? You know, I think we may have...

**B**ut, the global pandemic has given us pause for thought. One thought has to be that all this talk of post-human eusociality is *arrant nonsense!* How could such a phenomenon have come about, worldwide? And besides, we are not insects, we are Great Apes, *homo sapiens*, wise man. Surely above that sort of thing; were we not, after all, “fashioned after God”?

It is puzzling. How could such a thing happen, and none of us really notice what has been going on?

The key to unlocking the puzzle may be *crowding*. We know from research that crowding affects the behaviour of animals in different ways, often making some more aggressive, while changing the reproductive patterns of others. But, crowding also results in changing group behaviour. Consider the following from the abstract of a research paper into the crowding behaviour of desert locusts. (Insects again, but bear with...)

***“...Crowding solitary-reared adults ... caused them to behave similarly to crowd-reared insects, with their becoming much more act-***

*ive and moving towards rather than away from a stimulus group of locusts.... Responsiveness to crowding was greatest in young adults. ...*

*...Such an effect is consistent with the idea that females, through their previous experience of crowding, are effectively predicting the probability that their offspring will emerge into a high-density population, and predisposing their hatchlings' behaviour accordingly.”.....Reference 1*

Of course, we cannot relate desert locusts to human behaviour. But it is an indication of the possible and the relevance of crowding. And if we look at the recent history of mankind, we find human behaviour in cities earning the soubriquet of “Human Zoo” from Desmond Morris. Is that the result of human *crowding* within their self-imposed city prison-without-bars (at least, of the iron kind)?.....Reference 2

We humans have been creating crowded conditions in our cities for centuries: we have, however, recently increased the sense of crowding *many hundred-fold* with the introduction of social media. In addition, that is, to our recent continuous, frenetic sharing and repetition of near-instantaneous world news by every possible means—radio, tv, internet, social media, satellite communication, but decreasingly by newspaper—speed is, apparently, everything in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We are addicted to instantaneous world news of disasters, tensions and political debacles—all relevant to our sense of crowding on a shrinking planet. And, not unlike the desert locusts above, this behaviour is at its most intense in the young, who “plug themselves in” to social media so that they are interconnected with hundreds, thousands, even millions of other like-minded souls...yet correspondingly-less with their immediate physical contacts. Is it any wonder our youngsters feel crowded, even while being alone?

Could it be crowding that turned cockroaches into eusocial termites, solitary bees into eusocial honeybees, etc., so evolving “the highest level of organisation of sociality”? In the case of insects, it seems highly possible, as there would have been so very many individuals at the outset that eusociality may have been a naturally evolved solution to the most efficient and effective way of sustaining the group by work-sharing between castes: some collected food for all; some looked after the young for all; some undertook essential work within the group, cleaning, regulating temperature, defending against would-be intruders, undertaking dead bodies, etc., etc. Having a single queen to lay all the eggs/bear all the young, left all the workers free to work all of the time, instead of taking time off to mate, develop fertilised eggs and to bear/hatch offspring.

We humans living in cities have already organised much of the (eusocial?) work sharing: we have effective food collection and distribution systems and waste disposal. We have energy supply systems, water and sanitation systems, undertakers, etc., already. We do not, however, have a queen producing all our offspring, so our “workers” take time off to mate and produce offspring. With that exception, we seem to be moving quite well toward eusociality, but it is that exception that presents a stumbling block.

Many of we humans may still regard ourselves as individuals – within a very large crowd, maybe, but individuals nonetheless. Would a solitary bee fit into a honeybee hive? No. The honeybees would attack and kill it. Similarly a cockroach in a termite mound. And a solitary ant in a social anthill... Which suggests that, on the road to eusociality, we humans may expect our young to (eu)socialise more readily, and that – once (eu)socialised – they would at least disregard those older and less (eu)socialised than themselves, and at worst “dispose of them.”

That is what we see. Whereas previously older people were respected, venerated and experienced, today they are deemed “past it,” “racist” (that old political labelling trick again), and fit only to be ‘parked’ in retirement and nursing

homes. Films from the 1940 - 1980s may be shown on tv, but with a warning that “the language and attitudes from a previous era may offend,” clearly suggesting that parents and grandparents are ‘old and outdated.’ For the same reason, heroes and champions from national history are decried and denigrated. Their statues are threatened or damaged while the police are either “conveniently absent” or instructed not to act “for fear of causing offence.” (Sic.) There is an absence of the Rule of Law; there is the presence of mob rule, and within the mob there are no individuals—“we are Borg.”

The young and (eu)socialised see everything good in these behaviours, nothing bad. Meanwhile older folks, still individuals in their own minds, are horrified, but powerless to oppose the tyranny of the masses, while politicians go along with the masses for fear of losing their votes. Politicians who seek to curb the perceived excesses of social media are largely ignored— it is, after all, the essential accelerant of global (eu)socialisation.

**W**e are, it seems, well on with the transition towards a eusocial post-human society. In retrospect, the transition has been going on for hundreds of years, but with continual interruptions for wars, plagues, famine, migrations, etc., which have tended to temporarily reverse the process, after which it has picked up again. We are currently enjoying a prolonged period of relative peace since the end of WWII, some 75 years ago—which may be highly relevant... But now, this latest pandemic gives pause for thought...

Until recently, prior to WWII, it appears that most people thought of themselves as individuals: members of the armed forces, or some local club or society, perhaps, but basically individuals. We would observe the relevant association rules, when appropriate. We could be trained to do things in a group or team, such as kill an enemy, that we would not do as an individual, and we were aware that we might behave deplorably as part of a mob on the rampage, but

somehow that “would not be our fault.” In any event, we would try not to be caught up in mob behaviour.

So, we remained individuals, who took time to “think things through,” to “have their own opinion,” “to raise an objection,” “to choose to act, or NOT to act,” “to consider right from wrong,” “to try to discuss things rationally and politely,” As individuals, we might not always be sure of ourselves, and we could be ashamed of some our actions or behaviours after the event; although, we might choose not to admit it...Our differing individualities made democracy work.

None of those ideas, or concepts is appropriate in a contemporary eusocial post-human society. Anyone showing individuality would be silenced, probably by force. Of course, that is not unique to eusocial society—that would be true for any mob. But, in a eusocial society there would be no-one, no individual, to originate an objection. In a eusocial society there are no individuals; no thinking, no considering, just acting as directed by the collective.

**S**o, we come to the crunch question. The Pandemic, having given us the opportunity to pause, think, and see what has been happening to us, enables us to consider. Do we want to sacrifice our humanity, our individuality in exchange for living in an efficient, effective, post-human eusocial global monoculture? If we do, then do nothing, as that is where we are heading, and seemingly at breakneck speed, too.

If, by any chance, we do not want that, but would prefer to remain as *homo sapiens*, the individual, the wise ape/man, then we appear to have very little time to do anything about it, as the eusocial society is already here, bar the odd pandemic, global war and some further biological evolution needed to enhance collective efficiency.

It is not evident that we could do anything about it—it may be already be too late. Would the members of a eusocial group, all identical in thought and

activity, have any feeling to break out of that mould? Unlikely. Does the eusocial termite seek to be an individual cockroach, or the honeybee wonder if she would ‘like to be a bumble?’ No, those would be the thoughts of an individual, and could not be conceived by a eusocial group entity, caste, or worker in the collective.

So, would our current governments seek to break out, having already exhibited many of the hallmarks of eusociality? Unlikely in any democracy as things have already gone too far... But, if it were possible to disconnect ourselves say, as a nation, then we might have a chance. To disconnect, we would have to give up social media forthwith—not the internet as such, but certainly social media, which is binding us ever more tightly into a global monoculture, and accelerating our transition into eusociality at an extraordinary rate.

And it would help were we to overcome our obsession with instant global news. We do not need it, much of it is gossip, innuendo, and disaster concerning remote people and things about which we know nothing and should, in reality, have little interest. It serve only to fill our minds with overwhelming, irrelevant, crowd-affirming junk—we do not need it, and it tends to upset older folks, who feel misplaced empathy with remote disasters. Reading of such things in yesterday’s newspapers is more—much more—than is needed.

Further, we need to dismantle our major city monocultures: not the structures, but the concentrations of people living in densely populated areas. See Reference 2. And we need to spread out, and at the same time let the natural world interleave with ours, as it always should have. In many respects, we need to ‘row back’ some of our later advances, and return ourselves to more enlightened times. And our various social groups, spread out across the nation, would best avoid too much inter-group travel.

The Pandemic has shown us that we can do more from home using digital communications than we had thought possible. And the way to minimise future Pandemics is to separate and mutually isolate physically—not just at the indi-

vidual level, but at village, town and city levels, too. Besides, travel by automobile and by air is a major contributor to global warming - as the Pandemic also showed, when Lockdown greatly reduced greenhouse gas emissions. How soon we forget...

Most of all, perhaps, we need to slow down, to have time to think, to consider, to enjoy, to be part of the natural world instead of separate from it, to be... individuals. The mark of the eusocial creature is that it works itself to death, like the honeybee and the businessman in the city.

And we need to undo the social brainwashing that sees our young people fully occupied 24/7 with social media, keeping up with changing fashion, changing music, raves, festivals, etc., so that they have no time to be alone in their minds, no time to immerse themselves in a good read, no time for classics, no time for wandering idly through woods, listening to the dawn chorus, fishing-without-catching, or lying lazily in the long summer grass listening to the bees buzzing... Our young people will be fearful of going out into the town, countryside, camping, on holiday, etc., on their own without their umbilical smart phones...they will fear being lost, disconnected from the collective...

Young people will find the change difficult: undoing brainwashing always is. They are unaccustomed to being on their own physically and mentally. They are unaccustomed to being individuals. And they are unaccustomed to thinking—they have never had the time...They will need help and understanding.

**S**o, these strange social behaviours that we observe, and seem to accept without reason or question, may have been brought about, not by genetic inheritance, not by Freudian childhood influences, not by any other source, but by crowding. We might not have thought that crowding could have any long term effects on us as individuals, but it seems that it can have quite major effects on us as a changing species, moving us inexorably towards a more

efficient, more effective eusocial future. One that I, for one, want nothing of...

But then:

## *I, Human*

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