

The Amoral Human Fate

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Abstract

In this examination of fate, human nature is defined within natural selection, whereas humans have an innate tendency to seek advantageous stimuli. The evolutionary tendency toward energy efficiency in metabolic processes creates a propensity to take the easiest possible route to survival. Given money is the primary technological medium in fulfilling physiological needs, the natural drive for energy efficiency expresses itself through the inducement to obey the wealthy. Given the wealthy are deeply invested in perpetuating the crises facing humanity, most of humanity is complicit in these crises. Human dependence on capitalism particularly shapes man's behavior and perpetuates itself through all aspects of life, especially through the technology we base life around. These crises will persist until a convergence of interests results from the elites' inaccessibility of labor. This inaccessibility of labor could either be circumstantial of the crises disproportionately harming the working class, or through a coordinated resistance by the working class. Alternatively, if physiological independence from the international ruling class is established through the local institutionalization of needs-based care, the ruling class can be delegitimized, thus crises can be averted. Regardless, human nature can be understood through a Machiavellian perspective, providing that those who exercise power without moral consideration will survive regardless of if these crises are averted. Society is at a greater risk than the species itself. Even if our standard of living cannot remain at this rate, humanity as a species will live on regardless of how we act.

Keywords: buffer zone, divine command theory, natural selection, petty bourgeoisie, secularization, scarcity, superstructure

The Amoral Human Fate

Humanity is facing the intersecting crises of climate change and war—two societal ills exacerbating each other. Climate change exacerbates war by increasing demand for scarce resources, where wealthy imperial entities like the United States are induced toward invading foreign territories for control of natural resources. Resources made scarce by climate change include energy for cooling, freshwater for hydration, and arable land safe from extreme weather. The IPCC reports that “intensification of rainy events increase their consequences on land degradation” and that “future warming is also projected to lead . . . a potential increase in energy demand for cooling” (2023, p. 1820; p. 1063). As the world’s most powerful military, with \$852.2 billion approved for the Department of Defense in 2025 federal budget, the U.S. military plays a large role in shaping the human fate (United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, 2024).

War exacerbates climate change through greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and weapon utilization. As the “largest institutional fossil fuel user [and] world’s single largest greenhouse gas emitter,” the military is deeply complicit in threatening the ecological viability of our environment (Crawford, 2022, pp. 5–6). According to the Congressional Research Service of 2019, the Pentagon “consumes more energy than any other federal agency—77% of the entire federal government’s energy consumption” (Greenley, p. 4). When ranked among countries by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions:

The US military is the 47th largest emitter of GHG in the world, if only taking into account the emission from [military] fuel usage. . . . these emissions are not counted as a part of aggregate US emissions following an exemption granted in negotiating the [1997]

Kyoto Protocol . . . This gap was to be rectified by the Paris Accord, from which the USA, famously, [had] withdrawn (Belcher et al., 2019).

The U.S. never ended up ratifying the Kyoto Protocol but kept the exemption going forward. Since 2021, the United States has re-entered the 2015 Paris Accord, which nullifies the military exemption but “left military emissions reporting voluntary” (Weir, 2021). If reported, it must be categorized alongside civilian fuel use in the 1.A.5 “category marked ‘nonspecified’” (Kehrt, 2022). Resulting are inconsistencies in how those emissions are reported and obscurity in their origin from military operations.

From the 1953 U.S. coup of the emerging Persian nationalist-democracy of Iran to appropriate of the National Iranian Oil Company, to the 1980s US sale of “\$200 million worth of weaponry” to oppressive Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to secure the development of an oil pipeline for Bechtel Corporation, the United States regularly finances authoritarianism abroad if it enhances U.S. economic power (Kinzer, 2006, p. 201; p. 287). With \$413,326,416 in Pentagon contracts to private militia company Constellis Holdings LLC (fka Blackwater) in 2023 alone, Pentagon privatization of operations clears the path for absolute military autonomy, minimizing liability of an otherwise highly regulated sector (Federal Procurement Data System, 2024). Given the historical importance of energy as a “critical enabler for the armed forces,” energy scarcity resultant of climate change will likely exacerbate conflict, where wealthy nations seek to fulfill their energy demand by subordinating weaker populations (Morisetti, 2012, p. 1).

Both societal ills are exacerbated by the overarching issue of wealth inequality, whereas the authoritative discretion in allocating labor and value has been consolidated by an oligarchy who see potential for profit in both destructive vices. The highly interventionist and volatile ruling class are a liability for the rest of the world, their actions harming the poorest, while

leaving themselves unscathed and autonomous. In “The Essence of Conservatism,” Kirk describes several principles essential to resisting the “leveling” and “destructive impulse” those who intend to commit to large-scale social re-orderings. Humans have contradicted Russell Kirk’s second and fifth principles of conservatism: we have empowered a very small class of people who apply their understandings in such large, unfettered sweeps that authority has become much more centralized and uniform. Kirk believes power is best highly balanced in a diverse system. He is against “the uniformity of” both state autocracy by “tyranny” or commercial autocracy by “oligarchy,” advancing that “variety and diversity are the characteristics of a high civilization . . . [while] centralization is ordinarily a sign of social decadence” (2007). Some conservative critics refer to this centralization as a central flaw of modernity, describing the level of centralization as “high modernism,” or an unfettered level of confidence is placed in science and technology (Scott, 2020).

In one of many examples of the negligence of our ruling class’ investment, only one year of fuel use by 23 of the richest people is equivalent to “300 years’ worth of emissions for the average person in the world” (Corbett, 2024). Their fallible value judgements leave power and social ordering quite unbalanced, such unfettered empowerment of a handful of people is often at the detriment of the majority. The co-optation of public, religious, and otherwise non-commercial institutions by commercial ones leaves them further unchecked. Yet, Vanguard alone has invested \$155B+ in oil companies and \$80B+ in arms manufacturers.

Vanguard is one example of an institutional profiteers of the destructive status quo, but they still need public legitimacy to make these investments. Vanguard’s holdings are a composite of over 50 million individual investors and several millions more indirectly invest through retirement accounts (Vanguard Corporate, 2023). Not only do individual elite actors shape global

crises in their authority, but institutions regular people put their faith in do just as well. In Phillips' examination of the ten largest asset management firms, he reveals that they collectively invest \$410B in 10 oil companies, \$14B in 6 coal companies, and \$245B in 10 arms manufacturers (Phillips, 2024, pp. 164–169). In a more direct example of complicity, the Department of Defense is the second largest employer in the world, with over 2,600,000 employees (Defense Manpower Data Center, 2024).

How can we account for the widespread legitimization of false moral authorities and the disconnect of the political economy's allocation of value and public values? How can human nature explain why we are complicit in our own sabotage? This paper considers the extent to which *Homo sapiens* may survive these crises we face. Throughout the text, 'humanity' refers to *H. sapiens* as a species, using only a biological conception. By synthesis of several scientific analyses of human nature and philosophical diagnoses of the human condition, we can evaluate our species' fate in navigating these crises.

Humans are intrinsically motivated to pursue stimuli that promote survival, greatly prioritizing energy efficiency in the process. Humans have a growing physiological dependence on the very corporations that profit from climate change and war. Given our innate propensity toward energy efficiency, humans will take the easiest pathways toward goals, known as 'the path of least resistance,' meeting physiological needs in subservience to the ruling class who provide income and market access (NeuroLaunch, 2024). Even though our politicoeconomic system induces greed and selfishness rather than morality and ecological consideration, *H. sapiens* will survive through the foreseeable future, as those who amorally exercise their power will continue to survive. Past sheer survival, the crises we face will only be mitigated once there is a convergence of interest between elites and those most impacted. Any interest convergence

with global elite will be the result of the diminished accessibility of labor leading to the discomfort and inconvenience of the lower portion of the upper social strata. However, convergence may occur without participation from global elite. We can avoid exacerbations of climate change and war by establishing independence from central institutions in our physiological fulfillment—this change is dependent on convergence with local elite. Local interest convergence may be the result of more-centralized institutions no longer being to the benefit of those in servitude. In either case, crisis mitigation requires people in the upper echelon of social hierarchies to act against injustice. Aside from what *should* happen, we must consider what *will* happen through interdisciplinary analysis of human nature.

Darwin and Natural Selection

Evolution, as the “processes of formation and adaptation in the biological species,” can best explain why humans are comfortably dependent on the perpetrators of destruction (Stevenson et al., 2018, p. 246). Darwin demonstrated the mechanism of trait inheritance; in *The Origin of Species* (1859), he posits that we live within a variegated gene pool where parents pass traits to their offspring. The natural capability of species for population increase is met with a scarcity of resources, thus organisms of the same species compete to survive and reproduce. Those with the best traits for their environment will have the best success in attaining resources and reproducing, passing on their traits to offspring.

We have no natural essence or purpose other than that which are biologically driven toward. Our environments greatly shape what natural stimuli we seek. Not only do we have an evolutionary propensity toward seeking food, water, but we also seek cooperative social bonds in ways conducive to our survival. Natural selection greatly prefers paths toward energy conservation, leading us to pursue convenient, low-risk paths to sustenance in all places in life.

As examined in a later section, this biological drive may only be bypassed when survival is greatly secure. Otherwise, the path of least resistance prevails.

Darwin demonstrated the natural behavioral tendency toward survival in *The Expression of the Emotions in Animals and Man* that “animal behavior is just as innate as physiological features” (Stevenson, 2017, p. 266). Behaviorist B. F. Skinner furthered the nurture element of Darwin’s theory by providing that “the environment ‘shapes’ or ‘selects’ behavior, rewarding or ‘reinforcing’ some behaviors so that they tend to be repeated” (Stevenson, 2017, p. 264). The 1992 research in *The Adapted Mind* influentially established that behavior is shaped by “evolved psychological mechanisms . . . selected for over many generations . . . it is . . . merely adaptive behavior . . . what leads to better survival and reproduction in *present* circumstances” (Stevenson, 2017, p. 273). Thus, Darwin’s theory proved the intrinsic nature of survivalist behavior.

Energy Efficiency: Physics, Chemistry, Biology

From physics to sociology, science has well-demonstrated the natural propensity toward energy conservation. Newton’s research in physics, published in an 1867 entry of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, contributed to the formulation of the first law of thermodynamics and the law of conservation of energy, which state that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but only transformed from one form to another (Serway et al., 2021). Building on these principles, biochemist P. Mitchell proposed his chemiosmotic hypothesis in 1961, winning a Nobel Prize in 1978 for his demonstrations of the ATP synthesis mechanism. The hypothesis emphasized the mechanical efficiency of cells’ conversion of nutrients (glucose) into ATP (major source of energy for cellular reactions). Mitchell demonstrated how protons are pushed into an outer membrane of the mitochondria when glucose is broken down, creating

potential energy through diffusion when a high concentration of protons is trapped immediately outside of the mitochondria. The efficient mechanism is that the energy cannot be released until the ATP synthase protein is present to facilitate re-entry into the inner membrane, which is otherwise impermeable by positively charged particles. Energy from the diffusion itself is used to create ATP; thus, the potential energy is only released when ATP is needed. Mitchell proved how cells minimize energy waste by using this electrochemical proton gradient to conserve energy. By using the differences in charge, the energy threshold for molecular change and chemical reactions is greatly reduced.

Further, Wallace proved that multicellular life was only made possible by the exchange of genes between single-cell eukaryotes. Multicellular life was made possible by the consolidation of genetic pathways for life-preserving (metabolic) chemical reactions, until “one genetic and metabolic combination was sufficiently energetically efficient to permit the advent of multicellularity” (Wallace 2010). Thus, human life was made possible by energy efficiency within the eukaryotic cell structure. Wallace continued their research in 2013, advancing the broader claim that natural selection continues to select for energy efficiency. In their publication “Bioenergetics in human evolution and disease,” Wallace provides that “one of the more important actions of natural selection is enrichment for the more energy-efficient individuals among organisms attempting to exploit the same energy resource” (Wallace, 2013).

Biology holds a plethora of evolutionary evidence of selective pressures greatly favoring energy conservation. We evolved to have two legs, rather than four, because it minimizes energy expenditure when compared to similar ancestors of *H. sapiens*. (Rodman & McHenry, 1980). Paleanthropologist D. Lieberman further demonstrated how the overall biomechanics of human legs—including large gluteus size—have evolved to increase running endurance, making

running very energy-efficient to enable long-distance travel for nutrient discovery. But modern survival is not about travelling long distances, it is more about tool use—whether computers, money, weapons, or otherwise. Modern productivity is only so high because of the vast variety of tools we have developed (Bramble & Lieberman, 2004). Tool use has been evolutionarily conditioned—the development of early humans’ tool use was selectively advantageous because it reduced the required energy expenditure of resource exploitation, particularly in early humans’ use of stone tools. Money, as a tool, has replaced bartering systems by standardizing the medium of value, decreasing the effort required to satisfy the conditions of a trade for food and other metabolic needs. Not only do humans physiologically adapt to conserve energy, but we behaviorally adapt to the same end. In William James’ landmark study on *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), he demonstrated how habitual behavior is shaped along lines of least resistance, particularly that they “require minimal conscious effort” (NeuroLaunch, 2024).

Not That Different After All: Divine Command Theory and The Autonomy of Techniques

To understand why much of humanity is complicit, it’s important to consider that most of human activity and the guiding organization of morality has been shaped by religious dogma—a faith-based knowledge with a lower burden of justification than the newer scientific methodology and standards in academic work. Based on fossil evidence, humans have been around for 300,000 years. But humanity did not have the population, interconnectedness, and autonomy in our environment as we did once religion was prevalent.

Given the great influence of religion on human activity, the sense of inevitability in hierarchies may be influenced by divine command theory (DCT), which defers all moral judgement to God as the sole legitimate moral authority. DCT holds that people should be obedient to and trusting of God’s will; they should be humble, voluntary servants to God. In the

dominant religion of Christianity, “God forbids Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil . . . the moral is apparently that we should be humble before God rather than seek intellectual insight into the reasons for suffering” (Stevenson et al., 2017, pp. 124–125).

Although Christianity discourages dissent in its moral conception of reality, we must understand that the “status quo” cognitive bias that supports existing authority is not a fault of religion, which merely reinforced it, but is an evolutionary trait as demonstrated by neuroscience. An understanding that merely blames religion for our arrogant views of human infallibility would fail to account for a modernizing and secularizing population that regularly consents to destructive leadership.

It would be reductive to say that divine command theory holds the total blame for this complacency. Even science cannot be deployed without biased value judgements. Just as well, “even the most distinguished scientists are fallible” (Stevenson, 2017, p. 256). As demonstrated by Albert Einstein’s rejection of quantum mechanics and Darwin’s misunderstanding of gametes, science is never complete and can never be treated as separable from the limits of human rationality and perceptions—our perceptions are inherently limited by their timeframe as well as biased toward the adaptations toward survivability. Just as Karl Marx believed that “Religion is . . . the soul of soulless conditions . . . It is the opium of the people,” Jacques Ellul believed that science is an even more effective tool of propaganda than religion, stating that “Modern man worships ‘facts’—that is, he accepts ‘facts’ as the ultimate reality. He is convinced that what is, is good” (Marx, 1843; Ellul, 1965, p. xv). Darwin became secular late in his life and attributed religious devotion to “a distant antecedent . . . in the love of a dog for its master,” proposing that man is obedient to the power that he perceives to benefit his easy living (Stevenson, 2017, p. 255). It is not to say that a dog should love his master—often dogs are quite sympathetic and

tolerant when dependent on caretakers. But it is to say that a dog has a much easier life under a master, and that they will reduce their own willingness to act independently on their motivations in favor of this easy life, the one that they are comfortable. Jean-Paul Sartre's critique of bad faith provides a similar explanation: it is easier to defer one's free will in moral judgement to an imperceptible authority than it is to take up the "anguish" of its justification.

Domesticated dogs never even knew a life outside of the care of humans, the same way most of us have never had to support ourselves independent from the modern tools like money and phones that make our lives so much easier. Once tools like money are developed and established, Ellul argues, they perpetuate themselves and shape societal evolution by their own law. He writes that we adapt more to the tools than the rest of our environment, empowering technology and loosening it from human control:

Technique has become autonomous; it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and which has renounced all tradition. Technique no longer rests on tradition, but rather on previous technical procedures; and its evolution is too rapid, too upsetting, to integrate the older traditions. . . . The autonomy of technique forbids the man of today to choose his destiny (1964, p. 14; p. 140).

Ellul describes how technologies, or "techniques," follow their very own principles in their development. Once a course of efficacy of a tool is set, the judgement of whether its intended aim is proper is out the window—the efficacy will continue to be enhanced. They consider the agency of economic technique in the nineteenth century:

The economic man . . . was formulated . . . by . . . the devaluation of all human activities and tendencies other than the economic . . . the validation of the producing-consuming part of man, while all his other facets were gradually erased . . . Everything happened

through its agency . . . Nothing happened without money; everything happened by means of it. All values were reduced to money values . . . The only important human occupation seemed to be to make money. And this became, in fact, the symbol of human submission to economies, an internal submission more serious than the external (Ellul, 1964, p. 219).

Ellul describes this “autonomy of technique,” where the technological ends of a certain tool or technique perpetuate itself throughout society when humanity submits itself to its efficient maneuver. Natural selection can account for this behavior: to compete with other humans in the same environment, humans must adopt the most efficient tools available, or risk being outcompeted.

Herbert Spencer spread the belief that nature is driven by “survival of the fittest,” conflating the biological sense of fitness with the normative sense of goodness (Stevenson, p. 251). This social theory is dubbed social-Darwinism, or when referring to success derived from manmade financial systems, ‘economic-Darwinism.’ As “fitness” should be perpetuated, social-Darwinists believe that Darwin’s natural selection theory supposes that we ought to reinforce the status quo hierarchies. They believe, on an ostensibly scientific basis, that the short temporal window by which human hierarchies are determined would be reproducible in any conditions—the richest and most powerful people in our current system are scientifically superior, thus must be served and must reproduce, while those at the bottom of the social hierarchies should be sterilized and treated as less than human (eugenics). Stevenson et al. (2017) describes this application of Darwin’s theory as a “justification for unrestrained laissez-faire capitalism” (p. 252). But to conflate temporally and environmentally dependent biological fitness for reproduction and survival is to make a value judgement toward the status quo. Social Darwinism is an abuse of science, as Darwin himself believed that “there was no barrier in principle to a

gradual mental as well as physical evolution *over huge periods of time*” (emphasis added; Stevenson, 2017, p. 253). Even in secular belief systems, there must be an element of arrogance at play when humans cannot distinguish the understanding produced by their limited lifespans from the totality of understanding. There is still an underlying obedience toward the status quo, as produced by our evolutionary path of least resistance; much of human knowledge relies on huge sets of assumptions often unexplored by the parties who act on them.

Many elites, including Darwin’s cousin Francis Galton, argued whether programs of uplift like “[l]egal rights, charity, vaccination, health care, and governmental welfare programs” were interfering with the course of natural selection (Stevenson, 2017, p. 257). The political system was seen as a normative institution of morality, but the economic system was seen as some sort of infallible scientific institution, even though all economic theory depends on philosophical allocations of value just as much as political theories. This unfettered confidence in the economic system, especially among the elite to which it benefited, led many to overlook the fact that capitalism just as well interferes with the course of natural selection, empowering characteristics like greed by manmade means. Still, elite institutions like Stanford University offer “Bachelor of Science” degrees for Economics, perpetuating an uncritical understanding of economics. Few saw the issue clearer than Karl Marx. Given the higher justification of knowledge proven by scientific logic and empirical analysis, beliefs rooted in science can be just treated with just as much if not more infallibility than religion. Freud’s theory of repression became commonplace when Edward Bernays published his work on psychoanalysis. Known as the father of propaganda, Bernays publicly reinforced Freud’s conceptions of human nature through advertising—that humans have repressed motivations toward certain behaviors. Thus, Bernays used science and the high confidence it yields to condition the public toward profitable

behavior—nowhere did the scientific analysis imply this was the intended application (Curtis, 2002).

Marx and Inglehart: Insecure Behavior

Karl Marx has a deterministic stance on human nature known as “historical materialism” (Marx & Engels, 1998). Marx argues that history is shaped by the totality of social hierarchical relations. He argued in his *Manuscripts* that due to the dependence of humans on capital, their subservience thereof would shape the cultural “superstructure,” including culture, ideology, science, and otherwise, which would in turn maintain the dependence on capital. In *The German Ideology*, Marx examines how the dominance of commercial interests shapes the superstructure. In his *Manuscripts*, he analyzes how this superstructure alienates humans from themselves, others, nature, and the fruits of their labor. The only innate nature of man is the drive for sustenance dependent on the environment by which one must find sustenance within. Marx argues that “Men . . . begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization” (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 42). Meaning, once men begin to fulfill their means of survival, their morals and consciousness are formed. In *The German Ideology*, Marx argues that “[t]he class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production” (Marx, 1998, p. 64).

Although the innate propensity toward pursuing advantageous stimuli is void of moral consideration, a positive correlation exists between physiological security and inclination toward moral consideration. Inglehart argues that “Values and behavior are shaped by the degree to which survival is secure.” Inglehart’s *Cultural Evolution* is a sociological examination of evolutionary modernization. He dichotomizes material and postmaterial motivations: material

motivations are the natural forces toward surviving, which always come first. postmaterial motivations are those which rely on material security. Postmaterial motivations and values center tolerance, morality, autonomy, and self-expression. By analyzing intergenerational shifts in values due to decreasing scarcity and rising security, Inglehart develops an understanding of how growing wealth inequality and decreasing job security have reversed the global trend toward postmaterialism. His theory of intergenerational value change is based on two hypotheses. First, the *scarcity hypothesis*, which provides that “people give top priority to their . . . [m]aterial sustenance and physical security . . . when they are insecure, people give top priority to these Materialistic goals; but under secure conditions, people place greater emphasis on Postmaterialist goals such as belonging, esteem and free choice.” Second, the *socialization hypothesis*, which provides that “one’s basic values largely reflect the conditions that prevailed during one’s preadult years,” and that long-held values are attributable to intergenerational population replacement (Inglehart, 2018, p. 14).

Similar to Inglehart’s materialism and postmaterialism, Marx believes there are fixed drives and relative appetites. Fixed drives, like hunger and sexual urge, “exist under all circumstances and which can be changed by social conditions only as far as form and direction are concerned.” Relative appetites “owe their origin to certain social structures and certain conditions of production and communication” (Fromm, 1961, p. 11). For example, desiring money is a relative appetite driven by the economic condition. The relative appetite, in this example, is the mechanism by which a person fulfills their fixed drive of hunger. Marx explains that “need for money is therefore the real need created by the modern economy, and the only need which it creates” (Fromm, 1961, p. 119).

Given the historic increase in wealth inequality and the rise in cost of living, people are regressing away from the very postmaterial value systems that allow the valuation of morality independent from the need to survive. Thus, a path of least resistance reemerges in the human drive toward survival—job security requires subservience to an economic elite. Given the initial comfort that allowed for the destructive, false authority’s empowerment and legitimization, the socialization hypothesis provides a great improbability to human’s rejection of its master so long as they have comfort. It is only once that harsher struggle is forced upon the human that they would adapt to reinstate the comfort by which their socialization primed them. Whereas elites’ inconvenience often leads to reform, the injury and struggle of the working class tends to lead to greater complacency. It is only if these instincts are resisted, and labor is withheld that interest convergence would result from the despair of the working class. Otherwise, it would take disruptions to their ability to labor as a direct result of this injury.

Crisis Management and Elite Convergence

Derrick Bell’s “principle of interest convergence” provides that “[p]olitical systems are most amenable to progressive change when the interests of the elites align with those negatively affected by the system.” Historical evidence supports Bell’s principle: two major hierarchical leveling in history have been attributable to the elite discontent with the upper elite, ruling class. In the 13th century, the Magna Carta was signed by England’s king by force of the lords and barons—the second highest class in society. This established significant rights for the lords and barons and made way for parliamentary government by the new liberal constitution’s assurance of legal protections for lords and barons, thus the necessity of new political institutions. In the 16th century, Luther led a reformation against the Pope, where his 95 theses widely disseminated across Europe. Similar to the end of feudalism, the Protestant Reformation was a success because

political elite supported its thought leader, Luther. The political elite wanted freedom from the Catholic Church, moving to Constantinople (now Istanbul) to establish a secular state.

Given the elite's large investments in the crises we face, the mitigation of climate change and imperialism require a similar flattening of hierarchies through the addressal of wealth inequality. Or it would require the ruling class' perceived threat thereof, them addressing the crises in hopes of maintaining their power in face of tangible demand. Regardless, addressing the crises facing humanity would require a convergence of interest from the upper-class below the ruling class—Marx's "petty bourgeoisie" and Kivel's "buffer-zone" elite. The elite class between the working-class (proletariat) and ruling class (international bourgeoisie) is typically responsible for societal reform. The petty bourgeoisie—often with petty priorities and concerns—is the "in-between class," serving as the "third class within the top-down hierarchy of the United States" (independent but minor businessmen or tradesman; Cloward, 2011, p. 10). Kivel defines the buffer-zone class as the people who direct the wealth of those directly after the top 1%. The people in class people allocate the next top 9% of wealth, although they may not be in that 9% themselves. They take care of the people with the very least wealth to propagate false hope in the status quo and make invisible the suffering created by wealth inequality (Social welfare workers, nurses, teachers, counselors, case workers). They propagate false hope through selective determination of "which people will be the lucky ones to receive jobs and job training, a college education, housing allotments, or health care." They maintain the status quo by controlling those who want to make changes through punitive security positions (Police, security guards, prison wardens, soldiers, deans and administrators, immigration officials, and fathers; Kivel, 2020). The petty bourgeoisie and buffer zone serve as insulation from the elite and keep the system running

regardless of working-class disruptions. If the system no longer served their interests, an interest convergence would occur.

However, there are many challenges to this convergence arising, and a great risk that by the time it does, it will be too late for humanity. According to O. Táíwò in *Reconsidering Reparations*,

We can convert the convergence of interests between elite and oppressed as an opportunity to . . . build the world in the direction of justice. . . . But . . . the overlap between the interest of elites and the oppressed is partial, and the possibilities for change are profoundly constrained by the balance of power we've inherited from centuries past (Táíwò, 2022, p. 173).

It is true that the overlap of interests is not significant enough for the wealth inequality that enables these crises to be addressed any time soon. Given the quite rigid separation of classes, as resultant of what Táíwò views as cumulative advantage and disadvantage from the transatlantic slave trade, the potential for convergence is scant. Any convergence will not be timely.

Americans at-large already distrust our government, understand that corporate greed is built-in to government, and understand that climate change poses a real threat. An effective movement to prevent climate crisis will not begin when humans recognize how our governing institutions perpetuate the climate crisis, nor how they are corrupted by corporate greed. Any meaningful movement to mitigate climate change, and disrupt the wealth inequality that enables it, will rely on a convergence of beliefs from the comfortable elite.

Buffer-zone and petty bourgeois Americans are at the core of the global capitalist and imperialist that threatens human survivability. Only once these humans with the comfort to address morality take either course. Locally, the establishment of physiological security

independent from global elite could make working class and buffer-zone Americans alike more comfortable resisting the global elite who are killing us all. The inaccessibility of labor can also be made possible through a class solidarity among the working class—by withholding labor and delegitimizing the system, demands can be met. If this course is not taken or fails, the inaccessibility of labor resultant of unequal injury the working class from war and climate change will drastically worsen the conditions of the petty bourgeoisie and buffer-zone class. Thus, the system will no longer work in their favor, and the ruling class will seem obsolete, resulting in convergence. The latter is most likely, as the working class does not have nearly enough support or security to resist human nature for the sake of humanity. Morality will prevail if it is circumstantially advantageous to a class of people capable and willing to bring justice, as a proven historical trend. As Machiavelli knows, “Fortuna demands a violent response of those who would control her,” meaning that those who attempt to control fate risk harsh consequences of their actions. Thus, it is best for them to exert power in a somewhat justifiable way, by liberalizing their rule to pacify citizens. This is exactly what we have seen from our rulers, but whenever unrest gets too high, they quickly revoke a right, placing us in a condition of insecurity, thus redirect our attention on their own basis.

Machiavellian Amoralism

The mitigation of these crises requires a moral judgement which does not necessarily need to come about for the survival of *H. sapiens*. For the progress of humanity, we must make moral judgements and be willing to act on them. However, fate is not a progressive system, it is a scientific system. Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat and political philosopher, argued that “people obey only because they fear the consequences of not doing so, whether the loss of life or of privileges . . . [they] can only choose not to obey if [they] possess the power to resist the

demands . . . or [are] willing to accept the consequences of the . . . superiority of coercive force.” Machiavelli’s views align with those demonstrated by scientists all the way from physicists to evolutionary biologists and behavioral psychologists. The consequences of disobeying the ruling class make survival improbable and exacerbate insecurity. Only those with the independent security to resist demands will feel any real inclination to, otherwise the consequences of resistance would outweigh any resistance. Machiavelli argues that legitimate authority does not prevail in a competitive environment, as the exertion of power holds a lower burden of justification than the consensual exercise of authority. He prefers “conformity to moral virtue,” holding that that “those who prefer power to authority are more likely to succeed.” The greatest power arises from a person who adopts a variable *virtù*, meaning that they adapt their outward expression, morals, and behaviors in whatever way is beneficial to power accumulation, without moral consideration (Nederman, 2019). Even if the ecology of the planet is destroyed, the poorest communities in the world are sacrificed for the ease of resource exploitation for the wealthy, those who exercise power will prevail, and will very likely survive, at the very least. The path of least resistance is not a moral path. All our freedoms have been determined by the choices of liberal autocrats who grant privileges, posing as rights, to avoid losing their power.

Conclusion: Humanity Survives by Force

When we do not conflate selective advantage with righteousness, it becomes clear that *H. sapiens* are not doomed to extinction any time soon. A mass death event would greatly destabilize society, but not extinct us. Although humanity had not taken on the risk of intervening with the ecological balance of Earth to this extent until recent decades, humanity also had not developed such profound scientific understanding and technological mechanisms until recent decades. Humans have the capacity for such large-scale applications of sciences and

technologies, to manipulate the world in ways with destructive potential. But human arrogance is not what will get our species killed. Given our technological capability and its resultant rising productivity, mixed with the evolving reproducibility of the knowledge required to use the wealth of manmade tools—even independent of a large, exploitable working-class. Consider artificial intelligence (AI), which greatly lowers the threshold of making human knowledge reproducible. AI computers could very well keep what's left of humanity alive even if a large portion of humanity dies.

If these crises do wipe out a vast portion of humanity, the population may become homogenous in its small class of people. In this possibility, the environmental conditions may be so different than those we evolved in that other species become a threat. The human lifespan is quite long; thus, our species' genetic diversity is low relative to other species. Given micro-organisms, bugs, and short-living organisms reproduce much quicker than humans, it is possible that they evolve much quicker as well, adapting quicker to new environments. If these organisms became pathogenic, homogenous species face elevated risk in extinction events. However, if man wields all their tools—like gene editing—with enough, all risks like these can be defeated, and any demise of man would be entirely independent of anthropogenic etiology. Thus, the arrogant 'humanism' of survival can prevail through the most dystopic landscapes.

Endnotes

1. Some analysts argue that the government proportions of the federal budget are misrepresentative. Since the U.S. government takes out loans for spending, analysts believe 50% to 60% of the total U.S. debt stems from military spending, thus the portion of budget that goes to past military spending is very large. An example of a higher estimate is the War Resisters League's estimate of 80%, as they believe that "if there had been no military spending, most of the national debt would have been eliminated," and that \$2.5 trillion (45%) of the U.S. Federal Budget for the 2025 Fiscal Year is allocated to military spending (2024).

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