

The Caveman Condition

by Marc Brassé

"He who does not know history is destined to repeat it"

Talleyrand

"Wie anders denkt leeft altijd in een dictatuur"

Marc Brassé

This is an essay about the complexities of life

Now I am only a single man. Who am I to write about such profound issues? The title alone already sounds like a crazy man's sermon. But I have been struggling with what has personally happened to me, what I see around me and what I have learned about the past into one unified theory about human social behavior my whole life already. And lo and behold: I have at last come to some sort of a conclusion

My theory basically boils down to what the reader will find bellow. I hope somebody, someday will at all be interested in what I have have written or at least be able to accept that I have come to my standpoints after years of struggling with the meaning of life. I am however confident that, however flawed the form in which I present this to the reader might be, there is a profound insight hidden within these words.

PART 1: What the hell is wrong with us?

Thesis 1: Ultimate capitalism

My son has a new interest. He is breeding Triops. The Triops is a tiny mud sucking beast that has been around for million of years. It's an efficient little critter. It replicates a-sexual. There are no sexes. It just lays eggs that contain a copy of its own genetic makeup. If it evolves it will only be through chance mutation of its genes. No wonder it did not change that much during its existence.

Triops eggs can lie in a dormant state very long. I guess that's why it is so easy to sell a Triops-farm in kit-form.

In it the minuscule eggs are suspended in dry food. Only add water light and sufficient heat and presto. Isn't it fun.

After hatching the young grow at an astonishing rate. To achieve this they are very active. They spend all their time digesting material and thus adding mass to themselves. And presto before you know it you've got a bunch of mature triopses. They might look like something that has just crept out of an primordial soup but they have proven they know how to last.

But this is not where the versatility of this species ends. If resources becomes scarce again they tend to revert to cannibalism. If that even is not enough there are always the eggs that can survive in a dormant stage again until circumstances become more favorable again.

No wonder the Triops has survived. It's almost the perfect "survival-of-the-species" machine.

The luck of the individual specimen is completely subordinate to the need for the species as a hole to survive. If that is the only dominating principle there is little difference between being eaten or being the consumer. If you are eaten you serve the system by making intermediately stored resources available again. If you eat somebody you make these resources and store them in your own system in order to give you the strength to lay eggs and thus sustain the cycle. No matter what you're role is. You are part of the same system.

It's the ultimate form of capitalism!

Postmodern Capitalism

Now what about human capitalism. In itself, as a system to take care of practical , everyday economic stem , it has proven it s merits. Even under s o called communist regimes private property and initiative whatever never fully eradicated, if maybe in name then certainly not in practice.

So in that respect there is not too much reason to doubt it. As long as man cannot be conscious and inventive enough to come up with truly Utopian alternatives that do work, but as we have seen we'll need a very different man fro that then lives today, a system similar to capitalism will have to do.

But what sort of capitalism do we adhere to. Will we at least be able to chose for a SYMBIOTIC kind of capitalism, like into which it seems to turn for a short time after the second world war, another war to end all wars. Where however is that benign capitalism as described by capitalist philosophers like Keynes? That system that by default works for everybody? In reality we ever more encase ourselves in a PARASITIC capitalism like that of the nineteenth century, as it has resurfaced with a vengeance in the 1980ies.

Nowadays it seems that wealth has become the new God and that God must be served with fervor if only to further the individuals personal wealth and security, to the exclusion of everything else. Such a capitalism in which the value of a product only seems to be dependent on what can be extracted from the "stupid "consumer", who deserves to be unloaded is like a VIRAL sickness. It does not concern itself with the true value of goods. It is based on the demigod of marketing. The world is everywhere but the principle is very simple: It is actually more important to make people think they needs something and sell it fro whatever money can be extracted by such imprinting then to sell them anything worthwhile. That principle can only work in a decadent environment where people do still not understand that their real wealth is actually much lower then their conceived wealth.

There is no stability within a system with such a mindset but even the biggest economic collapse since the 1930's has been able to stem it. Seller and and consumer are one and the same, forever intertwined in a maelstrom of hermaphrodite, narcissistic behavior. Ever more absurd schemes must be conceived to keep the money flowing into the right direction. Into the purses of the haves an doubt of the already empty purses of those who are trapped into thinking they have.

Do we really believe that such a system can survive? That we can export the difficult bit of begin economically successful, to the poorer parts of the world, as a poor shadow of old imperial colonialism. Do we really think those people will forever do the hard work for us and we only have to shove the pawns over the checkerboard. For surely that see what the elite does. If they claim they have kept us wealthy throughout

the last 50 years they are in an absurd warped way actually right. They have set up the system in which we are able to live in a sort of unreal Neverneverland until reality catches up with us. And now the going gets tough those "makers" of old feel free to steal everything we own them as far as their mindset is concerned. They do however forget that the same system they are now stretching to its limits are based on the same absurdities. The simple truth is that there is no deserved wealth without hard work. He who does not work must steal. And when stealing becomes the norm no honest work is done anymore, anywhere.

Is that extremist nonsense? One question then. Where does one put the value of all the debts in western society? Is it the capital of those in debt? Do they own their cars and houses. Surely not!. Is it in the hands of the banks? One should hope so. Although they have proven that a lot of their investments have turned into dust. No wonder the average person is not paid a reasonable return on his savings. That money has probably already been spent so one's savings have by the same probability even been turned into a bank's liabilities instead of a cornerstone. But where is the real wealth gone then? Well, after it has been revalued to the real hard "currency" it is in the hands of a minority. A minority that is not even above seeing the depression as a reason to even further increase the differences in income between poor and rich.

In the mean time a benign, balanced capitalism is still sold in theory, in practice however it is reduced into nothing more than propaganda, to forever throw sand into the eyes of those who suffer under the effects of this ongoing cycle of greed, to keep the illusion of a working democracy upright, however democracy groans in real life under the weight of all too obvious discrepancies between the words of the political "elite" and their deeds.

Democracy will always be held at ransom when politics are intermixed into an ever increasing mountain of half truths and all out lies.

Such a system however is not a conscious construction. If it only were. Then we would at least have a plan of some sort. A plan that can be adjusted according to the truth of the circumstances. In reality our world is however ruled by a mindset only, in which the lowest drives are webbed into an ever more complex system of absurd deformations of common sense.

And there even is no critical press to warn us. Journalists are paid wages that firmly place them into the same bourgeois class that keeps the system accelerating into oblivion. Another extreme and old fashioned idea? Why then are journalists or TV hosts nowadays the first to climb on the barricades as soon as a scheme of tax increases for the rich to do are proposed. But what will all those poor 5 times average earners then do? They only forget to include "like me" and would rather point at the extreme rich. These are to blame after all!

But again: this is not a matter of some well conceived conspiracies. There are no Jewish Illuminati out there, who are in total control of our existences. That in itself already is a cop out, to blame everything on a shadowy minority and avoid one's own responsibility within the total system. There never was one single socialist or communist conspiracy either. That is proven by the way the big communist experiment flamed itself out. There even is no U.S. State conspiracy pointed at the ever increasing "freedom loving", hole digging prepper "communities".

Such theories only tell of feelings of unease that are all too real as such. Just like tales about zombie aftermaths and hidden vampire communities seem to shape our modern fairy tales. What are Tolkien's Orcs else than the idea of the eternal Jew, or Nazi for that matter. We know the group as a whole is a mindless monster. But we all accept our roles in the same play with the greatest of ease. For we ourselves are never part of the mindless masses, now are we?

So at least we are vaguely aware that we live in a very unbalanced spontaneous mutating chaos. If there is a "system" it is one of haves and have-nots. But the reality is at least in the west shaped more by the ever increasing number of people in the middle, who keep the status quo upright with their own conservatism but at the same time feel locked out of the green meadows of "Dallasland".

Well Dallasland cannot be. There is not enough in wealth in the world to make us all live like JR. The only way to be that rich is to live like a leech.

And thus we keep moving closer to next unavoidable rim, whatever shape it might take in the end. Will it end in oil wars? Will it end in water wars? Will it end in belated environmental catastrophes as predicted too early by the ever ridiculed 1970's Club Of Rome? Will it end in a third world war instigated in Asia? Or will we just be "lucky" enough to only go through an economic decline as deep as a new middle ages?

An old Marxist would say that this situation will automatically breed new revolutions? But revolutions have never really led to a more stable system either..

Is this all scaremongering nonsense? Well then the author poses another question. What concrete and effective things have we done until now to avoid any of these scenarios? .

If mankind does not wake up the same sort of thing will happen that has happened again and again. The present experiment will go down in flames, empires will again decline and we will at best another experiment incorporating mankind will be started, which will again go under in the complexities of man's natural separatist tendencies which forever fool him into only thinking along individual and tribal lines.

And if man is not careful he might even become usurped at the end of our present experiment, just like the dinosaurs became extinct before they could even become aware of the true threats that influenced their existence. They too were too embroiled in their everyday struggle for genetic survival to even become aware

of the meaning of moving stars.

We, mankind, have proven to only be marginally more conscious as a combined entity. And we are daily throwing away the opportunities these animals did not even have. For we can at least lay out a path for us in abstract terms. But we just as much lack the ability, or even the will to follow a structured course that will bring the biggest possible advantages for a majority. No we still chose to go the individual way, however much we pride ourselves on our social and group skills.

This author does not see those skills play a part that is more than superficial. In a time when greed rules, and sheer lying is called a necessary skill we should wonder if the people who write down such "rules" are doing anything more than bend in the winds of change.

In that respect our flexibility of our species might be our only true skill but it is doubtful that we will come to anything more than a plague of warmongering cavemen if we depend too much on that skill. That evolution favors the strong is what brought us here, there is little doubt about that, but brute evolutionism as described in modern capitalism will not bring us further. Instead the present ways of the world sooner seem to promise a new feudalism, in which after a few world wars the cards have been reshuffled and those that were favored by the circumstances and helped by their animalistic cunning, the author is avoiding the term intelligence here very consciously, just becoming the new elite.

So so capitalism the solution. Surely it is not. It should be reduced back to a practical system for every day use but no longer be elevated to the beginning and end of everything. If capitalism must survive it will have to serve us all instead of rule us. In its present form it is a wasteful system that gambles on the abundance of individual being like nature gambles on an everlasting abundance of organic matter.

Will we be the builders of the future or will we "at best" become the few surviving dwellers of yet another wasteland? Can there be any doubt about what we all as individuals would like to choose for.

But then we should act upon it!

Thesis 2: The Principle of Preset Decline or Why Empires Always Decline:

In history and in the present day the same experiments are indeed repeated time and time again. The cyclic behavior is endless, only apparently distorted by the lack of a completely assured periodicity, but this in itself can be explained by the complexity of the system, of the world we live in.

For the sake of the argument I will start with the end, the absolute depth of the cycle, when a former empire has just fallen, be it the Third Reich, be it the dominance of the Greek world, be it the French Revolution.

Revolutions have a way of shaking things up and thus the rulers of old lose their grip on circumstances at last Hurray!. This is the time for a new elite to appear. At first its presence is not clearly defined. Society is a melting pot and many have needs and ambitions. Some are simply favored by the circumstances, other are further helped by their ruthlessness. But however long or short it might, take sooner or later a new class of rulers will appear.

In the beginning they will not be willing to accept such a label. Are they themselves not former slaves. Their goals and considerations must therefore be benign.

On the surface that argument seems to be sound. A new spirit often arises. Nobody can say the French revolution was a total failure, however quickly the rot set in. It at least made Napoleon, who was the main survivor of the first corruption of the idea's of egalite and fraternity, still export the principles of general law and democracy around Europe.

This then normally is enough to give the masses and the main actors themselves the idea that things are indeed moving in the right direction. At the same however this is the most dangerous moment for any democracy, or more in general for the idea of a symbiotic society.

For as soon as this feeling of ease sets in the new rulers start to see their right to rule confirmed and thus tend inscribe that right into stone. At this very moment the weaknesses in the system (and can there ever be any system without weaknesses?) turns from something that has to be guarded into a toolset. The new elite becomes self centered, personal power and wealth become dominant.

But still everybody sleeps. Things still seem to move in the right direction. The economy has started up again and everybody still seems to get his or her share.

And thus the next critical point arrives. The crowd becomes complacent and thus conservative. Changing anything profoundly then suddenly becomes a threat because it could have an influence on their perceived security and thus nothing must be allowed to happen.

Furthermore economic wealth soon is perceived as a sort of birthright. Real work thus has to be avoided at all cost. Work is for stupid people.

Decadence sets in.

The ruling class sees this perceived stability as a decree to further their power. And so they become too greedy and all earlier principles are buried under self induced illusions. They only talk to their own kin.

Differences in income are on the rise again. A society that allowed itself the illusion that it is classless society becomes openly divided again.

It is the time of the politician and the businessman. Now those old powertools are even abused even in the

clear light of day. After all, the crowd is too stupid and needs to be governed for its own good. The time has come when even (former) socialists earn more per hour than the people who typically voted them into power earn in a week (Job Cohen, the Netherlands, 2013 EU 325,— per hour to head a commission that will not be able to change anything) and / or even start to complain that they are not millionaires yet (Peer Steinbrück, Germany 2013, leader of the SPD, the socialist German Party).

And in a way the elite is right. Although dissatisfaction grows and the belief in democracy declines the general public is still believing in its own illusions: That there always is something for nothing ahead of them. Then the rot sets in. The economy collapses and or an external threat appears, the Huns storming the gates of Rome for that matter. And suddenly when things get really difficult for the first time, nobody is still able to decisively react to the changing circumstances. There are too many entrenched priorities and everybody is afraid of change, however unavoidable it might be. Least of all elite is prepared to change the system that made them rich and powerful.

Enter the next face. Further indecision and thus decline. The existing system must be upheld at any cost for it is the system into which everybody has invested. But since it has become decadent and nonproductive the riches have in reality already evaporated and the status quo cannot be upheld for ever.

Sooner or later there will be a definitive crisis: A war, a revolution, a famine, a new more virile competitive culture. Whatever. The system collapses, under whichever flag it has flown, and the cards are shuffled again. But the parameters are still the same, though the outcome might differ in detail.

Another cycle has begun.

In 2013 the Western world is near the end of such a cycle. Everything we ought to have learned from the Second World War has been forgotten again. In a perverse way the Cold War actually ensured a prolonged period of peace and thus wealth, although we might have paid with annihilation if we had not been so lucky. But the system is again grinding to a halt. All the beautiful visions of a better world are forgotten, buried in every day strife, jealousy and self indulgence. But as always the majority, rulers and followers alike, is still in denial.

Thesis 3: Humans are very bad at behaving like sentient beings.

So are we different to those triops or dinosaurs of old? No, because in essence we hardly behave differently. We might want to think that humans are able to do much more than just sustain the species. But do we? Is capitalism, especially the no holes barred postmodern variant, much more than a primordial soup itself. Those who are well off think they themselves are always in control and that this system provides for the hard worker. In practice things are not that clearly cut. Still humanity behaves like an evolutionary soup in which one experiment is started after the other and most of the time it is the same experiment and only the variables are mixed.

Thesis 4: The denial of chance as a survival mechanism

On the surface individual pro-activity always makes the day. That is what we all want to believe. That whatever the circumstances are, in the end the hard working and honest will survive and prosper. But we can only believe that if we close our eyes for the real way our world functions.

Those who are lucky tend to think that they have deserved every penny they made. A lot of successful people even weave their own personal myths. No anecdote preposterous enough to aid that reputation. The Tales about hardships and hard work are augmented or even invented. Moments of outrageous fortune are however often underplayed.

Of course those who do not try at all never succeed. So we do indeed influence our circumstances. But we should not overestimate the level of control we have. For every lucky person alive there is multitude of others that also ticked all the right boxes but still did not succeed.

A big part of the myth of success is that most people like to be associated with luck and prosperity. In the mean time are afraid to associate ourselves with the "the losers". What if some of that bad luck rubs off on us?

Furthermore the system is finely tuned to accommodate those who have been lucky or are descendants of the lucky. Because people do so much want to associate themselves with the rich and powerful they are always willing to accommodate the lucky. If you are rich it is extremely easy to become even richer. People will often be prepared to do things without a proper reward just to get into favor.

Furthermore lending money to others will make you even richer and if you become so rich you yourself can live off all the dividend others pay to you you will never have to work again. As long as the system more or less stays stable that is.

But alas the system is not stable. Because it is a complex roll of the dice it will never totally stabilize. And thus humanity runs from one crisis to the other.

And in the mean time we keep kidding ourselves we are in total control. Because it is very hard to keep up

your hopes if you accept chance for what it really is. Are the melancholic just sick or are they the only ones who are able to see the truth and thus have to carry that truth for us all, while the majority wallows in denial? Now do not get me wrong: As a pure survival mechanism this attitude works perfectly. If one would not believe in having some control over one's fate one would probably never get out of bed again. If disaster has struck, for instance when a tsunami has cost you your whole economical existence you need to believe in more. Otherwise you probably would never get on your feet again in the first place. So denial indeed is a powerful tool. But at the same time it keeps us from seeing the world as it is.

Question: Is that really all there is?

Is that all humanity counts up to? Just another, be it much more complex, version of the same system that kept the triops going for so long?

Is man with all his imagination and brain power nothing more than another experiment?

I do indeed think that until now human history has been formed in that same mold. In the following text I will rationalize this argument. And off course just as many arguments can probably be made against any of my individual remarks. But the scary thing is that the simplicity of his main argument always re-surfaces when we look at human civilization as a whole.

Thesis 5: Denial keeps us form taking responsibility.

Now what a cynical picture of the world that is. So man is nothing more than another creature that behaves like some biological automaton?

However cynical that standpoint might seem, denying it is denying reality.

What then about our ability to determine between good and bad?

Well it actually is typical how unfashionable words like good, evil, responsibility, justice and truth have become. It seems like these words have nowadays to be avoided at all times. As if they reek of rigid thinking and old isms, In stead there is only talk of the economic effects of an occurrence. But sooner or later this jargon will become unfashionable again in it's own term and then these older words or more fashionable synonyms for them will still be needed.

Concerning the nature of evil. The author does hardly believe in pure evil. The devil is nothing more then an archetype again. Somebody to put the blame on and not take one's own responsibility. I believe in weakness more then in true evil. And I myself am just as weak but at least I keep struggling to overcome my weaknesses while others say that the only way to become an adult is to give in. They call that acceptance but that is where the problem actually sets itself into stone.

For the author the following was quite an emotional discovery. During the holiday season of 2011 he visited a German church together with his family. There was a exposition about the role of the church in the war and the importance of taking responsibility.

This text was included

Der Mensch, der nach der Wahrheit sucht, das sollte das Thema unserer Zeit sein, schließlich jeder Zeit, aber ein pathetischer Akzent liegt auf unserer Zeit, weil sie in großer Gefahr ist, die Wahrheit, die sie noch hat, zu verlieren.

Wer immer behauptet, das Menschen, die das Evangelium wirklich leben, den Krieg mitmachen können, der ist der gotteslästerlichste und infamste Lügner, der die Sonne beleidigt, wer immer er auch sein mag.

Wohin sind wir gekommen mit der schrecklichen Identifikation einer politischen Sachen mit einer christlichen

Welch eine Farce an sich schon, dass säbelrasselnde Soldaten-oberste der Kirche Christi sind.....

Das schrecklichste Erlebnis der Wahrheitssuchenden: Dass den meisten Menschen die Wahrheit ungefähr das Gleichgültigste ist.

Aber das ist nun doch wieder nicht richtig.

Sie wollen ja doch die Wahrheit, aber sie scheuen die Mühe um die Wahrheit.

Darum glauben sie die Lügen, die man ihnen, nichts als Lügen, sondern als Wahrheiten vorsetzt. Das ist bequemer.....

Es ist auch vollständig undenkbar, dass das Christentum auch nur einen Augenblick bestehen könnte, wenn nicht, und seien es auch nur recht wenige, Menschen waren, da wären, die ihre Person dafür einsetzen, wodurch erst Wahrheit wird, die vorher im Wesen wohl war, aber nicht da

war.

Theodor Haecker

The whole text is about the somewhat dubious attitude the German Christians took towards their Christian beliefs if they were so eager to accept the war.

Most striking however is the part highlighted in bold letters:

The most terrible insight for those who seek the truth is that most people are hardly interested in it.

No, that is not completely true.

They do want the truth but they are too lazy to accept it

That's why they believe the lies that they are being fed, not as lies but as truths. That's a much more comfortable feeling....

In other words. People are not often bad as such. It's just that they are lazy. They'll rather choose to follow a "truth" somebody with bad intentions feeds them if that is convenient to them than follow their true conscience and/or objective reasoning.

Unthankful

It is often put forward that one should always be aware how privileged one's life is compared to others and it is only a measure of ingratitude to speak so critically about it. Other people have to live through natural disasters, mayhem, repressive regimes, etc.

Does that really lessen the strength of the argument that evil is all around us? Now natural catastrophes are another thing indeed. Then one can only try to survive and rebuild afterwards. But what about the man made disasters one might endure? Do these not stem from the same human weakness?

Having to survive on flexibility alone, being a human trampoline so to speak, however much one can admire that, it doesn't make the less obvious evils mankind produces more acceptable.

To always adapt

An example. I do have a very good personal female friend to which you might also relate well. She is extremely ethical in her principles and her behavior. But in one sense she is very different. In practice she, and here children, always conform. Which makes them quite successful in adopting to every day life. Once I had one of our little conversations with her. And she put forward that woman in Nazi Germany must have had a very difficult time. That will very much be true. But in the end by ever adjusting German women made the same system work that led to the excesses of that war. And just as often they will seemingly have benefited from the system until the whole thing inevitably fell down. Where does personal human responsibility fit into adapting to the circumstances in spite of everything?

To adapt to an insane system too much is what made the German gas chambers or Vietnam Killing Fields possible at all. Coping in spite of everything might be a very welcome skill when it comes to naked survival but it can still be a path to evil in other ways. If spreading your genetic material by plain survival is the only meaning of life it is the correct strategy. But one thinks being human should mean more.

Maybe that's what makes a survivor differ in a very basic way from those amok makers: To never accept defeat completely, however close one comes to going mad. One should not accept the world as it is because of how it could be, and let's pray for it, maybe some day will be.

It begins with yourself

In the mean time one must withstand the lies people feed one another to hide their own role in keeping a decadent system upright. And in that respect the society we live in is much nearer to the totalitarian systems of old as we would like to accept. Saying the same forces do not exist anymore is a bit like a dictator for the first time criticizing another dictatorship just after having been caught while rigging the first so called free elections in years. Oh, what a coincidence!

Oppressive systems can only survive as long as the majority is prepared to accept them. Be it through being fearful of even worse times (no better propaganda tool than that) or by being directly responsible and having one's own hand in the jar, in the end it is a matter of conforming in spite of common sense or responsibility. How else could such a well intended experiment as socialism have been perverted into something like the Stalin era. The thoughts about the deficiencies of capitalism were sound enough. Where did things go wrong then?

Well, things always go wrong when people are able to attain more power than others. They often sell the idea on the basis of the argument that not all men are equal and thus that not all men can be leaders. For sure not all men are equal. But why do "strong men" never get the problem fixed then? Because at their core they are just as much or even more a caveman as the rest of us. They speak of strength but they only hide their own cowardice. Their most basic fears about being left without something to eat in the winter have been turned into an ever increasing hunger for more power. If they were really strong they would guide others instead of only suppressing them.

Decadence

It's the same power that drives capitalism. Enough is never enough. Whatever sentient arguments are used, in the end the primordial fear of hunger triggers a need to hoard. That is where greed comes from. And greed and the decadence that comes from it has toppled all empires, as it is about to topple our western age of effluence. If nothing is enough we go out stealing until there is nothing more left to steal. We then call that an economic crisis nowadays.

And let's not kid ourselves into thinking that only the strong and dominant lead the world and that the good and thus meek can only follow. That is what keeps all subverted structures in power, how mighty or small they might be. Nobody lives a life in which small scale nepotism, power struggles and petty jealousy do not take their toll. And accepting those small injustices is where it starts. On the foundations of all these smaller injustices the larger ones are built.

But it is easier to walk the walk and conform to the good times until even normal reasoning becomes perverted and there are more managers than makers, until all are converted into nothing more than consumers and productivity drops to such a low level that we must go steal our riches again elsewhere. Now let's call that neo-capitalism but one could just as well call it neo-feudalism.

Because when we are prepared to live in the lap of luxury, kidding ourselves into believing nothing will ever change and turning a blind eye to the fact that things will have to change sooner or later, then we are indeed guilty.

But in the mean time we are setting up our just reward for this all ourselves. Sooner later the oil will run out and then even stealing it will not help anymore to get our national bookkeeping from going down the drain. And because productivity is no longer admired and rewarded the chances that we will come up with technological solutions to our problems is also diminishing. In that respect the author could quite harrowing tales from his very own experience.

Postmodernism

So welcome to our postmodern times in which personal success is made into the measure of all things. And those who are not successful are only weaklings. No matter if they fall at the wayside. Suits them right.

That's the capitalist way. Those who work hard are successful and those who are not successful only have themselves to blame.

Now that would be true if that really is the way things work. But systems that are older as the term capitalism itself are still of more importance as we want to admit. Working hard is seldom rewarded. It is more important how well you adapt to the system and who you know.

And thus capitalism has set itself up for the same decline that all "other" faiths and empires sooner or later encounter. Although the principles may sound sane on the surface they are too easily perverted into a system that only serves a minority until even that minority has drained the strength out of that very same system.

What follows is the end of an empire. Just like the Roman Empire has fallen through sheer decadence the modern neo-colonialist empire will fall. If we do not get our act a new middle ages are bound to fall upon us soon. And who says that is plain scaremongering is not prepared to see the signs.

One of those signs is that ever more people falling at the systems wayside are completely going over the edge. They go on a killing spree or whatever. And afterward nobody wants to understand what drove them to it. It's easier to describe them as just plain evil or at least mad.

Although there is no easy excuse for going berserk it must be accepted that all these people some way or another have been driven to their acts by a lack of recognition. Maybe they might be less intelligent, maybe they might have a lack of a genetic safety switch in the first place but people do not do such things without being very deeply hurt in the first place themselves. That could be in their childhood or later on in life when no help was forthcoming when it was utterly needed. So although one cannot condone their behavior in should indeed think they must have gone quite one should understand how people can be driven to madness.

In the end each culture gets what it deserves and as long as people do not see that there is a need to turn away from all greed and hedonism in the world the excesses will also become ever more extreme. And the good and the meek will be held for ransom as always.

It's in all of us

For evil is in all of us. Especially the Germans insisted for years insisted on Hitler being some evil anomaly. The sort of tail waving, fork wielding, red-skinned monster the Christian church is describing. But in truth Hitler displayed tendencies that one can see in everyday life. My own country, the Netherlands, for instance nowadays has a lot in common with Germany's, pre-nazi Weimar republic. Always someone or some group has to be blamed for that what people as a whole do not take responsibility for. The Jews used to be the fall guys. Now they themselves are building Lesotho's in Palestine. Seeing how human Hitler really was might be less comforting but it would bring us nearer the truth.

That is a rather bleak outlook on life, now is it? The trouble however is that these are only a few examples of what is happening all around us. One can hardly say things have drifted in the right direction since the last really big human crisis, being the second world war. A lot of good intentions have fallen by the way side. For decades the author has been hoping that the pendulum would swing to the other side again but things keep slipping downhill.

Responsibility

The word keeps reappearing. Now do not get me wrong. I am not saying that a person that has been the victim of oppression is directly to be blamed for what he or she has experienced! If he/she has been able to survive at all and still stay a good person that proves one's worth already. In more general terms though: Basically the crudeness of collective behavior is to blame for most things that are wrong in the world. So one cannot blame the individual as such but more the general way in which people interact but do not take responsibility for their own small role in what is happening around them.

It is a very vague and quite subtle difference but a very important one. A person might not carry any direct responsibility but the way people interact in general and especially in societies that do not promote personal responsibility, keeps us making the same mistakes again and again. And what people typically call growing up often amounts to nothing more than giving in. "If they treat me like this I'll treat them similarly and only being a human I cannot be blamed for anything, now can I?" That might be very human indeed but it also is nihilistic, cowardly and stupid.

But it is easy to say what is wrong with the world. What can we do to make it better?

First off all that's where it already starts. We should keep as our goal that the world has to become a better place. Accepting that this is not possible is where the evil already starts to creep in.

Solutions? : Modern psychology

Should we turn to modern psychology? Alas modern psychology is not as scientific as it is claimed. The influence of trends and fashion is too strong. It has even been written that the ability to lie is an important social instrument and that somebody who does / cannot lie is at a disadvantage and thus not entirely sane. Surely he or she is at a disadvantage, but only in a society where truth becomes perverted. Lying might help if you have to fit into a gorilla's pack, where the ability to analyze complex issues is not present. But are we nothing more than apes then?

The author has often discussed this point with professionals. They say that what are at the very core are only crutches that help us to survive in an unjust environment should be taken as the norm and even as a goal. And if we are not willing or able to accept this as the only solution we are called defective. The concept of one's personal responsibility for the whole of the world is completely denied. Worse still, the lying is hallowed as a positive social skill in stead as a source of a lot of pain and injustice in the world. Well at least this stance frees all the "professionals" in this field from the need to strive for more than perfect human weakness. So it seems a whole science has to be distorted to make us able to deny the direction into which our society is moving. No wonder "modern" psychology has never changed anything profoundly.

"Well, it is not our task to judge", the experts say. "Nor are we allowed to act or address the injustices in the world. We may only observe and nudge our patients towards acceptance by facilitating them". That might sound very scientific but in fact it is the same cowardice the author mentioned earlier. It leaves the option to be smug about others peoples behavior without addressing ones own responsibility. By not specifying the problem and even avoiding addressing it the truth is not helped in any way. It's bit like declaring the earth has to stay flat while everybody already knows it is a globe. You cannot keep the sum simple just because it is so damned difficult to get to the core of the problem! If you do you are nothing more than the priest of just another vague faith, burning fragrant substances and hiding behind the billowing smoke.

It's the authors opinion that psychology after a very promising start at the beginning of the previous century has become little more than another commercial industry.

Solutions?: Eastern Atmospheres?

In the end we can only turn to ourselves.

That is where the points that are raised in this essay even touch on the eastern philosophies. In the end we should turn (in)to ourselves for the answer. But the answer is not the same as the solution. That is where these philosophies often avoid the last and most decisive step and thus go down the same road as all faiths. We should not turn into ourselves and then stay there. No if we have found the answer we should start moving out again. We must act upon that insight. We must be part of the solution in stead of the problem

Solutions?: All men are equal (socialism)

No they are not. It might be nice to philosophize about systems in which all people are treated equal but that denies the natural diversification within the species. Denying that differences exists has only led to injustice. Otherwise systems that where / are based on the in itself positive assumption that perfect equality should exist would not have become so easily perverted (socialism, communism). For every well intending person is opposed by at least one other potential Stalin.

On the other hand: If one accepts this diversity it is easy to assume that intelligent or more able people do not have any responsibility for the fate of the ``lesser endowed`` or even that taking such a responsibility denies them their freedom (Nietsche). If such a responsibility is denied total freedom only stands for the total freedom to abuse others. The systems that are based on that assumption (feudalism and its ``modern`` counterpart capitalism) provide similar levels of evil.

So declaring all men are equal is naive but slavishly accepting the opposite also does not give us an answer. Both assumptions deny the necessity of personal responsibility and are as such death ends.

But diversity implies the superiority of some over others. Can superiority at all exist in a benevolent system? An interesting question but the answer is so obvious to me that the question never came to my mind as such. Superiority as a state of mind has only brought sadness to the world. I guess every culture our country there have been times in which the people thought they where superior to others, often "inspired" by rulers or politicians with their own agenda's. In practice these feelings often prove how underdeveloped such societies really are. Feelings of superiority make empires fall. Look at how self-centered the U.S have become. In the meantime their first city has already fallen. In Detroit, once their car manufacturing capital, people now are tearing down buildings to start growing crops again.

A feeling of superiority makes students lazy and lowers the level of education. People start to believe in their own excellence without ever having proven anything. That's when you start to get more managers then workers. In the western world you can see it all around you.

The above is however not meant to prove that real superiority does not exist. But that is exactly why we have to become more then cavemen. Superiority without responsibility again is a negative power. There are a lot of intelligent rich people. But they still behave like hunter gatherers and speculate with oil and even food stock. Is it a sign of superiority to make your fellow men starve? Real superiority must mean taking responsibility. If you are indeed able to see further then the others you must help them to avoid making the same mistakes you once did in your own dark past. Doing good should not be seen as behavior that is dangerous to your own chances of survival. If you think that you actually proof you are inferior and only ruled by ancient, biologically imprinted fears.

Within a tolerant society diversity would not be seen as a threat but as a source of color for our lives. After all. Who has the sole right to say what is better? Those people that make you hate your day job? They may call themselves your superiors but if that word really means anything they will take responsibility for more then your output alone. They should also take responsibility for your happiness! They would have proven their superiority if they had been able to get the best from you, keep you happy and still get rich in the process. Then they would have been worth their money. I f they do not mind about your happiness they have only preyed on you. Is the eagle superior to the fish?

Where would he be without fish to feed him? So what is superior and what is inferior?

Where are we without taking responsibility?

In a very bad place. The only things left after the denial of responsibility are hedonism and decadence, the same powers that have ended all of mans empires. And it looks like the Empire of the ``Western World`` is nearing the end of its realm. Luxury and hedonism are nowadays seen as birthrights and productivity has declined to a ludicrously low level. Never is the need for change greater then at moments when even the imperfect systems of man fail. Otherwise new dark ages will follow.

Where do we start then?

So all principles are fallible, politics, faith, psychology, eastern philosophy? How can we ever win then?

In the end we can only turn to ourselves and accept that our own conscience is where it all starts.

That is not meant as a call for anarchy or the extreme individualism that has plagued the western world for decades. Far from it. It begins with ourselves because that is where all human systems come from. Every group is based on individuals. And only by being aware of one's own responsibility one can change things for the better.

In fact there is only one real sin in the world and that is a general lack of the majority of people to really project themselves into someone else's shoes. Because without this ability we cannot even become aware of a need for change in the first place. Those who rather close their eyes will sooner or later find that everything changes, even that what made them live in the lap of luxury for so long.

With the aforementioned ability to really empathize with others compassion would become nothing more than natural.

Then the next step would also become nothing less than natural. It would become easy to take responsibility of more than one's own survival. It might be true that it is almost impossible to rule your own fate but if that is the only thing one strives towards one is just as guilty and thus condemned as the other person.

Without personal responsibility concepts such as democracy and socialism are turned into mere thought experiments. He or she who is too lazy to take responsibility can never be a true democrat.

So before anything profound can change human nature must change. Becoming truly human means that we must shed the negative animal aspects of our behavior. The only way to reach that goal is to constantly question ourselves and try to be better than we can be. We might fail regularly but it is never too late to learn to avoid earlier mistakes.

The only real evil in the world is to give in and let the caveman in us rule our fates forever.

Can one individual change the world?

Of course not. One individual might introduce change but real change has to be carried by the majority.

However: Too often this in itself truthful insight is abused to deny the very concept of personal responsibility.

Only when at least the majority accepts its accumulation of individual responsibilities can things change for the better. Until that time humanity will stumble on, led by the same fallible system of automated, genetically imprinted responses that gave us famine, pestilence and war since the beginning of times.

Time and time again it is claimed by laymen and professionals alike that one should not try to change the world because that is impossible. It costs too much "negative" energy which should be spent elsewhere. This whole standpoint does not only lead to the acceptance of extreme mediocrity as the norm it also belies reality. And the only visible result is that the money market brings whole countries and economies to its knees. The world's most dominant country accepts one new law after another to make ever bigger deficits politically acceptable while the IMF bank that is dominated by the same country drives other countries into depression by imposing impossible austerity rules.

In every paper, television news program, on any newscast it can be seen that the world is in chaos and that we are still not able to learn from our past mistakes. While I write this the world is going through the worst economic crisis since the 1930's. For years it has been claimed such a thing could never happen again. And still it ditty programs that are economic suicide. If it wasn't so sad one would have to laugh about it. Can nobody remember what happened when Germany was forced to take all the blame after the first world war.

Such developments only prove that the status quo is devising ever more elaborate but also ever more ineffectual ploys to avoid real change. And let us not point the finger at one country. In every country there is an elite that is always trying to consolidate or even widen its influence. And the difference between rich and poor is still increasing. Nowadays even within countries such differences are constantly growing and being accepted by a stupid, faceless majority that will sooner claim it belongs to the winners than accept that what is going on also threatens their future. The mind boggles

So nobody can claim we live in a stable system that takes care of itself. Far from it. We are actually living with a system that is only based on taking advantage of the helplessness or stupidity of others. That principle is even older than the word capitalism. It leads to little more than feudalism, a system of which at least we in the west claim it has been abolished centuries ago.

Thesis 5: If mankind is to survive we will have to change.

Otherwise we will not be able to tackle pollution, generate the energy and resources we need to feed population growth and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Those who claim that the present situation is an

acceptable norm bury their head in the sand. Enter the bigger part of human population whatever the exact figures may be.

So taking responsibility is not only the right thing to do, it is the only thing to do if we want to survive.

Everyone who claims it is not possible to change the world therefore only sows fatalism and is part of the problem and not of the solution.

Heady stuff. But if you start to think things through to the end you will have to come to the same conclusion. If you can't you are just another cavewoman/caveman.

Solutions? : Education

But what is the solution then? Well, the first step is awareness. If we are not even aware of the root of evil and are still hiding behind easier clichés such as faith, ethnicity, social standing, etc. that allow us to point to others. First of all this basic truth would have to be accepted. Then it should be spread.

So basically education is part of the answer, although education alone will not be enough. If education was enough the goals of communism and socialism (or any ism for that matter) would not have become perverted so much. Part of the complexity of the problem is that even those who are said to be the teachers are themselves all too fallible. They are normally often also driven by their own petty goals, as the author has observed many times when coming into contact with so called educated / educating people,

So education it is only part of the solution. But at least it is a start. Because without education awareness will not grow. And without awareness nothing will change for the good at all.

The fact that even well educated, sharp minds come up with nothing better than an evolutionary roll of the dice is as the only solution is very postmodernist and proves my point. How can it be that after thousands of years of so called civilization we still can come up with nothing better than natural selection? Shame on us. The point of my essay / manifest is that we will not develop ourselves further until we make personal responsibility for the greater good part of the equation. That's why democracy fails. That's why even reasonably benevolent empires fail.

I have always savored change. Things eventually always correct themselves but the question is in which form. It's typical how the human condition is ever more taking on the character of a biological plague. One species dominating everything to the exclusion of a natural equilibrium. Now if we were talking about lab rats most people would immediately agree with me that such mechanisms exist. But when it comes to the behavior of humanity I suddenly sound like an antagonist heretic. Why? Things will indeed correct themselves. But if we would be really civilized we would not leave such things to chance. And basically that is my whole point.

As long as we do not accept our weaknesses we will never be able to rise above them.

Change is unavoidable

Leaves fall. Plants wither. All animals die and so must man. Mountains crumble. Even stars collapse. So to say that change can be avoided is a crazy notion. And to hand over responsibility to a superior being or force is another fallacy in which most people seem to indulge to rid themselves of their own role in the equation.

That might sound like an all too depressing outlook on the universe and it surely takes strength to accept it.

But where there is freedom to choose there is opportunity. Either you let change dictate your life or you accept it and turn it into a friend. By taking responsibility you accept that challenge. And even when you fail utterly you can still stand up proud and say: At least I have tried to form my own existence.

You are what you create

If faith is not the answer and change is unavoidable what can one simple singular person do. Well, in fact it is quite simple. Be creative. Not exclusively in the narrower confines of the word but in its broadest sense. We are all human. We all have our weaknesses and failings. Nobody is Superman, nobody is a saint and as far as the Gods are concerned. They are an image of what we wish we might we could be or become but they are not a representation of reality.

We do however have one tool with which we can really define ourselves and that is what we hand over to the world. It's easier to be a cynic, it's even easier to go for the rat race and accumulate power and wealth. But in the end the only thing that defines us is what we leave behind in our trail. And that does not have to be anything high brow. Sharing love and helping people without asking anything in exchange is the biggest gift of all. But even if we are proud we can still contribute to a better world. Build something. Come up with something completely new. Even being productive and keeping our economies in balance already is a positive thing. As long as you do not live a life of decadence that others have to suffer for there is nothing

against living a good life. As long as you do not hurt others with the goals you set yourself the sky actually is the limit.

The question actually simply is if you are prepared to do your utmost to leave behind a legacy based on an ethic set of rules. Or would you rather leave behind a trail of pain and suffering? To anybody with a heart that question might seem rhetorical but fulfilling that promise will prove to be very difficult. And if you snigger at the thought of maintaining a set of ethical guidelines because that is something for the weak you already are a lost cause. Then go forth and repeat the mistakes of your forebears, you cavewoman / caveman.

Very (c)rude!

I would like to confront the reader with a apparently very crude world view. Here it is:

90 % of people are barely intelligent enough to tie their own shoelaces. Of the remaining 10% about 8 % take advantage of this by dressing themselves in power and wealth an intelligent majority would never allow them. The remaining 2 % could really change the world if the other 98 % where not in the way.

That is a crude, demeaning, arrogant and elitist view of reality. And it is very easy to poke holes in it if it is taken too literally. Not all people have shoes for instance let alone shoe laces to tie them. Bu take the remark as a symbol for how difficult people find it to do something which does not come natural to them and the picture already changes. Also one could start a discussion about the actual percentages mentioned. The writer would love to be proven wrong in a positive manner.

What is disturbing however is how the above crude statement seems able to explain about everything that has happened to the author in the past but also explains about everything that is going on in the world at large.

Furthermore it explains why systems that have aimed for a benevolent world have failed so dismally. Having been raised in a period where for a common man socialism seemed the way to go (the 60ties and 70ties) Reality is a lot different. But even the first pages of Karl Marx's Das Kapital contain a lot of truths that are still very relevant to our present world, for instance that the capitalism sooner or later always heads for a crisis because it is inherently unstable.

But even if a studied elite might be able to point out what is wrong with the world and suggest a better system, as long as the majority will and cannot comply to it's underlying needs it is doomed to fail. A socialist system can only work if all people are naturally good (in which case you do not even have to be able to tie your shoelaces to know what is right) or have enough insight and intelligence to adjust their natural (caveman) behavior for the greater good. But history has proven it things do not work that way. And when people are tightly controlled by a system that claims to adjust human nature for the common good the same principle automatically surfaces again. An elite automatically creeps in to misuse their power and totalitarianism is the next step. And alas our crude theorem also explains why democracy fails. If the majority is susceptible to lies on one side and populism on the other it also squanders it's right to shape it's own future.

In the mean time a small elite gets richer and richer. And they get away with it it because their all to low and imprinted ways are explained away by an almost religious litany of economic theories that if one really looks at them critically always seem to turn back to the same point: "The fact that the (rich) individual is always only looking after himself actually is for the good of all", which off course is a the biggest humbug one could ever come up with. Still the the most complex theories about economics are being produced again and again to proof this point. Theories that try to wipe away all common sense with an avalanche of complicating arguments.

So some of the original socialist theories still apply but in a form that Marx and Engels have never foreseen. The original "proletariat" automatically transformed itself into a new "bourgoisy" as soon as its level of comfort rises to a level that makes it afraid the less well off might become its competitors (That bone is rightfully mine, says the Caveman). But when it comes to pointing out the need for change old fashioned socialism has hardly lost its relevance.

But because of the inbuilt resurgence of conservatism in those that are reasonably well off greed always survives. One could call it the inbuilt need for denial within man. One could even call it a bad consciousness but that assumes that some realization of this mechanism actually exists at all.

Capitalism thrives on this pre-programmed tendency towards conservatism. And everything and anybody criticizing these conservative principles is brushed aside as leftist and thus dangerous. It's the age old art of hiding conservative tendencies in a haze of pragmatic arguments. But as have already this plays on the laziness of the "common man". For the same reason it is questionable if the words left and right should at all be included into this essay because they themselves already trigger preconceptions and preoccupations. And what the author, and dare he speak for the other persons mentioned in this essay, is trying to address is a need for common sense and not for old and inadequate labels.

Hard Facts

Avoiding the aforementioned labels would amount to self-censorship. So we must (re)learn to use them within an objective framework or put them to rest forever. The fact that this has become so difficult is in itself a proof of the lack of such objectivity within the systems of man.

Lets therefore introduce some facts to prove some of the above arguments.

In September 2012 a study was published in Germany that concluded that 10 % of the population was owner of 50 % of the private property. At the same time the government kept shrinking. spite of the biggest economic crisis since the 1930's the same study concludes the rich are still getting richer. In the mean time ever more people are falling bellow the poverty line.

In the USA the rift between rich and poor is even more extreme and calculated over the whole world earlier studies have claimed that the richest 10 % own 70 % of private capital. So in that respect the German figures almost seem to be moderate. We are however talking about a west European country that prides itself on its democratic values since the end of the second World War.

No such information is currently available about the Netherlands but since the dutch economy is very closely linked to the German one and trade and amassing wealth are held in even higher regard here it stands to reason that the figures are comparable. In the same month dutch elections where held. During the last decennia The Netherlands have been "led" by governments that where in practice right of center, even when some parties like the PVDA where originally based on socialist principles.

These 2012 elections showed that, at a moment when the former right wing minority government had failed, the main right wing party, the VVD (Vereniging voor Vrijheid en Democratie – Group for Freedom and Democracy. sic.) was still able to get one third of the total number of votes. The runner up, the so called socialist PVDA (Partij Voor De Arbeid – Labour Party), representing another third of the electorate had gained a lot of votes by criticizing the course of the fallen government. Even before voting began both parties declared that there was room for a coalition and that practical considerations where leading and not the principles expressed during campaigning. And thus again a government will appear that claims to speak for the majority but will not be able or willing to keep any promises. And in the constant vacuum behind these silly rituals the submerged wrangling and enrichment will proceed.

What do such figures and facts tell us? That people are so afraid of being called socialists or communists that they are prepared to support a series of governments that are not willing or able to cater for the greater good. It proves democracy does not work. It shows that a big part of the electorate can be manipulated into oversimplified thinking that they to belong to an elite. The other parts kids itself into thinking it is voting for change but does nothing else then vote and forget about what is really going on right after that.

And so a smaller real elite uses them as electoral fodder to keep up programs that drain the state of its regulating influence. Off course it can always be debated if a state is the best keeper of the common good. In the past enough state based systems, for instance the former so called communist USSR, have abused their power. But here again a small elite abuses an emerging system and forgets about to share its gains.

And the majority is too lazy or stupid to look through all the propaganda and see the truth.

In the past decadent systems have always come to pass sooner or alter. And so will this one. What will this lead us to. Another world war? Another revolution. Whatever will happen, in the end the majority will suffer, even the shortsighted elite of the day will loose out and we will again have conducted ourselves like beasts. Again!

And this is not only a Western or capitalist problem It is typical how these things are so elemental that they override differences in culture. We are always told how different we are but in the end there often are only few real differences. Even in countries and cultures that claim to be centered on unity (China, Japan) the same forces work against anybody who is honest, has ethical principles and is creative. One can wonder if other cultures would be more suited to my spirit but the when you get near to them they often are not that different.

And if one tries to discuss what humanity lacks the answer of the average person almost always seems to be that things really are not that bad. That on average everything is moving in the right direction. Some even claim that that the systems of men are comparable to natural selection and we need nothing more. I say that sticking to our present ways makes us nothing more then cavemen with a thin layer of technological varnish.

Towards a better future

Humanity should learn to transcendent that level. There is only one true sin: Our lack of empathy. For if we would really feel what wrong we do to others we would not constantly repeat our mistakes.

But on the short term aggressive behavior and a lack of ethics is rewarded. People are even admired for their antisocial antics. Success is the only thing that counts. And those who behave ethical are sidelined as envious losers .

Being philosophic an ethical should not be a disadvantage. If one thinks long term one needs stability and

certain rules of conduct. Even in that more perfect world the author is dreaming about one would need trade and commerce. But as long as Caveman rules another economic decline is sure to happen and if one looks below the accepted simplified surface there is every indication the West is heading for a very deep and long one. There might even be a sort of new middle ages, which was one of our most barbaric periods.

Until recently the author had the feeling he was almost alone in my perception of such factors. I was for instance painfully aware that my theories might only be an overly complicated tool for me not to accept the opinions / vague theories that so called "professionals" were firing in my direction. But now I am becoming aware that many other people have similar opinions.

One of them actually is a Nobel price winner. His name is Daniel Kahneman. In his newest book "Thinking Fast and Slow" he describes how economic decisions are mostly not taken on a scientific level, as is often suggested by its advocates, but that most decisions are only made on the basis of imprinted behavior.

Other persons like Oscar Negt and Jürgen Habermas from Germany have similar insights. What was told in a radio program about Mr Negt's book "Gesellschaftsentwurf Europa" seems to suggest that he is very much aware of the same sort of behavior in people.

But we must again ask if the benevolent principles of a studied minority are enough to trigger a real change, and even more important, do this in time to avoid another breakdown of historic proportions. Even that can turn into just another repeat of former cycles. Repeating the early 20 century class struggle will hardly help if the outcome will be the same.

Acceptance

We are coming full circle. Accepting this all means we might find ourselves in a seemingly bleak and cynic universe. Are we indeed little more than those little Triops?

But denying reality is not an option. Should we give in then and accept everything that is wrong in the world as unavoidable? We have already seen believing in perfect stability and denying the need for change is equal to falling for the biggest lie of them all. Accepting the world like it is leads to stagnation. It does not make sense to pray for things to stay the same when a tsunami appears at the horizon. So things MUST change. And the fact that there is no tsunami visible at this moment in time should only mean we still have time left to decide and not that we have all the time in the world and therefore nothing needs to change at all. How can we come up with a system that turns us into benevolent beings in spite of our inherent weaknesses? Only a new, better man would not need a system to correct him. But the believe in a better man, an Übermensch, has also brought the world a lot of hardship. So we must hope that we will naturally develop in to such a species. In the mean time we will have to come up with a system that is not susceptible to abuse. That is our most important task for the future.

I think this brings me to a sort of conclusion: The first thing to do is to take personal responsibility and not let just another abusive elite shape our faiths.

Let's be honest. Mankind is addicted to lies. Surely lies seem to work on the short term. They avoid confrontation. They circumvent facing taboo's. They postpone having to look into the deepest crevasses of our mind. Hell, many nowadays call lying a necessary social skill. But most of all lies enable us to deny reality.

And in the end reality will always catch up with us. One might even die in denial. Surrounded by their accumulated wealth but still as naked in their helplessness as the poorest man on earth.

Maybe that is the only true comfort. That in the end even evil is futile and helpless. No realm will last for eternity and even the darkest realms collapse when the truth comes out. What we only still have to learn is to keep replacing evil with new evil.

It is not that I think that total harmony as a realistic goal at all. What can man do against a Tsunami but make the best of the aftermath. Furthermore I see diversity in cultures as a positive thing. As ever I am more concerned with what people do to each other. Diversity does not have to go away. Injustice only has to go. That is very difficult to achieve already.

I like the idea of being a stoic but I have a problem with the idea that one should shut out the world and only concentrate on one's own responsibility to be good. It might be a very practical approach but it clashes a bit with my believe that we all have to take responsibility for humanity as a whole.

If even a Roman Emperor like Marcus Aurelius, with all his power could not find the courage to change the world, where does that leave us?

It is typical how these things are so elemental that they override differences in culture. We are always told how different we are but in the end there often are only few real differences. For me it is typical to hear that in a land like Japan, that I as far as I have been told is so much centered on unity the same forces work against somebody who is honest, has ethical principles and is creative. I have been very naive in wondering if other cultures would be more suited to my spirit but when you get near to them they often are not that different.

Many people keep saying that everything is moving in the right direction and natural selection is all we need. I say that sticking to our present ways makes us nothing more than cavemen with a thin layer of

technological varnish. Humanity should at last learn to transcend that level. There is only one true sin: Our lack of empathy. For if we would really feel what wrong we do to others we would not constantly repeat our mistakes.

Being philosophic should not be a disadvantage. To think long term one needs stability and certain rules of conduct. Even in that more perfect world I am dreaming about one would need trade and commerce. But when caveman rules another economic decline is sure to happen and I think we in the west are heading for a very deep and long one. There might even be a sort of new middle ages, which was one of Europe's most barbaric periods.

I only accept the truth and no politics. I am sure I would also be shunned in even more restrictive cultures because I am very anti authority if the authority is only based on old power structures and not on real skill. I am the fly in the establishments ointment and have often been punished for it, because most people fear raw talent. They are too afraid it will turn their simple worlds upside down.

How many do not simply use the power of argumentation to hide their right-wing tendencies in a haze of pragmatic arguments. Usually they start with sentences like "I believe in the freedom of speech but" just to immediately after that proof with the essence of their words that they are all against it. The language of populists is based on such clichés. As if the tone is more important than the message. As if spicing your words with certain commonplace opinions and expressions is enough to turn them into truth. These people hijack the truth. They think they can win any battle by simply calling out their standpoints louder than anyone else. The sad thing is that they always get bystanders as long as they are able to target a primal fear. And because of this democracy fails.

If somebody would say that there is no easy point to find in this essay I am afraid I must totally agree. To my astonishment you my central point seems to be rather difficult to explain to a lot of people but I am afraid it is not so much the point itself that is difficult but the fact that people automatically start to avoid a message when they do not want to confront themselves with it.

I know that all systems man has come up until now have proven very fallible I do not want to make the mistake of being just another wise guy. So there is not clear cut solution and thus I do not write a naive rulebook. The world is not able to work with a rule book. There are many reasonably good books out there. The bible is one of them. Yet hardly anybody is really prepared to abide by it, least of all the most fanatic self proclaimed Christians. And the same can be said of the Koran or whatever.

What I am saying is that putting the blame on others is cowardly. Saying nothing is wrong and that we are moving in the right direction is more cowardly still. You only get away with it because the rest of the world behaves the same, which is exactly what happens time and time again. We all seem to leave it up to others. We probably will not and cannot change our ways as a collective. So I stand inside the walls and hear the barbarians rage on the other side. Why are zombies such a popular, almost archetypal icon? Or horror flicks about people getting lost in red neck country? On a more subconscious level the people who love these stories feel the same angst I do. They do however use these modern fairy tales to shrug the feeling of. They are not listening to themselves!

Most animals do not kill without reason, no animals fight wars. Only when there are too many rats in one cage they start biting themselves. That's why I almost exclusively talk about cavemen when I describe man. Someone once asked me if I would really react less barbaric when confronted with an extreme situation. He asked me: If you were on a sinking ship and there was only one lifeboat left, would you not do everything to make sure your own child is in that lifeboat?

To me it sounded like he himself would actually not make it to that lifeboat at all. He would more probably trample his own child to death trying to drag it along the corridors together with all the other cavemen. Would I indeed join him?. Would You? Or would we be about 20 feet or so behind him, hugging our children, looking on in disbelief and hoping the way would become unblocked before the whole ship sank. And so I would we just the same, because the majority would again be blocking the exit in blind fear.

For even if you are not an alpha-dog kind of man you are dragged along by the consequences of the deeds of others. I personally want to be something more. And that is the saddest thing of all. The dog that barks the hardest always wins. It's his world alright.

That standpoint has nothing to do with Marxism nor Capitalism as such. Every system breaks down sooner or later because too many people are only fighting their own cause.

So is there no better way? I do not claim to have all the answers. People have claimed to know the answer time and time again indeed and their systems have all dismally failed. But so will capitalism In the mean time I keep searching or something more. Something that puts us above the caveman.

Of course fighting one's own cause is already bloody difficult. But when people start spewing reactionary platitudes they always make me wonder how thin the varnish on their barbarism actually is. At the surface it seems like they are talking about small differences in opinion but often the central point is denied with zeal. Everything to avoid taking responsibility is allowed.

Tolerance is the word. And one step further than tolerance there are compassion and empathy. The only real original sin is a lack of EMPATHY. That is what the caveman cannot feel. He cannot rise above the loneliness of his personal fears and therefore projects them on the rest of the world.

Again and again. And whatever he encounters, it will not wake him up because he only follows the simple programming evolution gave him. Well that worked alright when he still was in his cave but the world has evolved around him and he still refuses to think. And so he burns witches, heretics, foreigners, disbelievers or whoever else comes in handy.

And to those who say that accepting one's lack of power is a sign of adulthood I say: You think you are a fighter but actually you are quitting. And do not call that becoming an adult. I call it giving up on control over your own life.

Of course you have to defend yourself from getting taken advantage of, at least as long as there are so many other beasts out there, but when you actually take over the rules of those you despise

Of course one cannot change the world all alone. But taking responsibility means taking action. Maybe in the smallest form imaginable, by for instance not accepting injustice that is performed in your direct vicinity.

But do not deny it. Never deny it.

The only way man can proof that he is a fully conscious being is to learn to respect the value of all its individual members and as long as we are not basically equipped to take this basic right into consideration we'll have to force ourselves by regulating our behavior by sheer discipline.

By the same token regulating and channeling that discipline is our greatest challenge. Many pitfalls lie on the way and the author does not claim to know the solution but defining the problem surely must be the first step on the road to a more just existence and thus the survival of our species.

Part 2: Formulating a framework

At this moment in time it is very easy to stay entangled in a web of negativism. If we accept the conclusions reached in part 1 the formulation of possible solutions should follow. Otherwise the critic stays only a part of the problem.

Here some practical new problems however surface. Even if we accept that that we still have a lot to learn it is not very pleasant to constantly remind ourselves of our defects. Furthermore, by the very nature of the problem, not many people have the mindset, discipline or even inclination to constantly stay in an elevated analytical mindset.

Normally the solution then is to assist every day deliberations by formulating a sort of rulebook, law or litany even. By concentrating principles in such a way a new danger however surfaces. As soon as thoughts become rules they become rigid and rigidity improves the chance of abuse. As we have already seen he who accepts principles without staying critical about their adaptation is already in danger of denying his own responsibility.

Thus it actually becomes even more important to create a framework that makes the underlying principles incorruptible then to write the rulebook itself.

Is that even possible?

Well, one should at least try! Otherwise nothing will change.

Below the reader finds the first published draft of my manifest: "20 Elements of Benign Materialism" as released my website www.braseee.com in April 2014.

20 Elements of Benign Materialism

Benign Materialism stands for a way of a thinking that is rooted in every day reality and is thus not clouded by secondary factors like politics, religion, etc. Their conventions have become more important then the goals they should serve. Therefore they have lost their usefulness.

In a world filled with more and more human beings day after day, minute after minute, second after second humanity will have to be efficient with all available resources. Either we fight over them, which already is a daily reality, or we share them responsibly. Benign Materialism stand for creating a honest playing field that will serve the majority without repressing the strengths of the individual. The individual represents creativity, the collective stability. If we will fail to integrate both these factors humanity will keep moving from one culling to the next while ever dwindling resources are fought over.

In such a future the principles of natural selection will no longer suffice. In our presents world only a very small minority gains from our systems of inflated inequality. They are kept in power by those who kid themselves into thinking they also belong to the so called elite but actually are not.

A stable system, like nature before man became dominant, might afford to be wasteful in a Darwinian / capitalist way but an instable system, as the reality we live in represents, needs to use all its resources as effective as possible. Every single human life has the potential to be such a resource.

I have called the points below Elements because they reside between formulating what is needed and actual rules. They are meant to act as measuring tools for the implementation of a practical from of Benign Materialism. Thus one could see them as the Elements in a periodic table of basic insights. The sort of insights we need to build a better, sustainable world.

Human history is full of proof of how things could have been done better. If we keep ignoring the facts we will not survive.

It's time to grow up!

Reality:

- 1. The physical world is our only measurable constant.***
- 2. Facts are facts. Denying them is perverting the truth. Each claim which is not sustained by***

hard facts is nothing more than propaganda.

- 3. If one does not know the answer one does not yet know all the facts and vice versa. Perfect solutions will therefore seldom be obvious but best intermediate solutions can always be found if the resolve is there.*

Resources:

- 4. Materialism is benign as long as it is used as a tool and does not become a goal in itself.*
- 5. Resources should be shared equally beyond the confines of ones own family, tribe, class, culture, country or continent.*
- 6. A solution that is not ecologically sustainable can only be intermediate. Otherwise it is just another part of the problem.*
- 7. Only cavemen will kill for more than pure survival and accumulate more than they can digest.*

Responsibility:

- 8. There is not greater sin than mental laziness. Everybody carries an individual part of the responsibility! He / she who does not speak up against injustice helps to sustain it.*
- 9. With every talent comes the responsibility not to abuse it.*
- 10. Doing what is best for the collective will in the end also always honor the individual. Solidarity is no weakness. Nor is it a threat. It is not even a luxury. It's a basic key to our survival.*

Productivity:

- 11. Manual work is not inferior to mental work. Both are equal cornerstones of productivity.*
- 12. One should always be allowed to make the best of ones individual talents*
- 13. To stimulate productivity individual hard work should be rewarded.*
- 14. Any environment in which social skills are placed above creativity and productivity will always become political and thus decadent.*

Power:

- 15. Every system can be abused for individual gain and thus will be in the end. Therefore no system is perfect. Nothing is set in stone.*
- 16. Unrestrained power, be it individual or group based, always leads to abuse.*
- 17. Secrecy lies at the core of all subdivision.*
- 18. People are not born with equal faculties. This should however never lead to abuse and predetermined inequality. Those who insist on inequality for its own sake are looking for a dishonest advantage.*

Personal wealth:

- 19. Nobody shall individually own more than he or she needs to fulfill his / her personal needs and quest for happiness.*
- 20. The relationship between personal earnings and factual productivity should be closely guarded, as should be the difference between minimum and maximum personal wages.*

Like in a real periodic table further Elements might have to be added later to avoid systematic

loopholes. Complexity can however make a system susceptible to deformation and thus abuse. Do not allow the truth to become perverted.

Those who are interested in more details about how I came to my conclusions are invited to download “The Caveman Condition” on the WRITING page.

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Marc Brassé
11 April 2014***

Marc Brassé
December 2011 to April 2014

For further reading:

- Theodor Haecker – Tag und Nachtbücher / Journal In The Night (1947) ASIN B000081Y2E
- Joseph Stiglitz – Der Preis der Ungleichheit: Wie die Spaltung der Gesellschaft unsere Zukunft bedroht (2012) ISBN 978 – 3827500199
- Daniel Kahneman - Thinking Fast and Slow (2012) ISBN 978 – 0141033570
- J.D. Taylor – Negative Capitalism: Cynicism in the Neoliberal Era (2013) ISBN 978 – 1780992600