

# Fatal Errors of Humanity

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The current ways of civilization cannot be continued much longer because the basic concepts of human existence are wrong and humanity has been destroying her community and her only habitat. This essay is an attempt to point out the fundamental errors that would lead to the destruction of the ecosystem and civilization and to show a way to a peaceful world, by clearly conceptualizing what many people seem to be feeling but unable to formulate.

The current concepts of civilization are based on irrational perceptions of human nature and of the natural world and on impossible ideals. People should know that there is an alternative way to the one inherited from the ancient world and no longer possible in the changed situation.

## Options for humanity

Humanity has a narrow window of time to choose a path for the future from two options. One is the continuation of the current ways. This will lead to further social conflicts and another global war and probably to an end of the civilization as we know it, if not to the end of Homo sapiens.

The other option is to adopt the ways of nature and assure a peaceful future. The way will be long, tedious and arduous and requires a profound change in the way man views his life.

Here I try to show this alternative way, assuming that humanity wishes to continue indefinite evolution in a peaceful world. A basic requirement is that the human population be reduced but this is just one of the necessary measures. Humanity needs to understand, and correct, the cause of the current situation, namely, the lack of rational guiding principles, or constitution of humanity. Instead we have the following combination of irrationality, idealism, shortsightedness, egoism, brutality and ignorance:

- freedom of procreation,
- right to own whatever wealth one can acquire based on competition,
- promotion of consumption for economic growth,
- right to life for every human while animals and plants are viewed as consumable resources,
- idealized view of human nature that does not admit evil in human mind,
- war won justifies killings and seizure of territory and properties,
- perception of environment as trash dump,
- disregard of the finiteness of space, resources and capacities of the systems of the planet,
- disregard of the principles of the biosphere,
- disregard of the conditions for the functioning of the systems of the planet.

## Global environment

Man evolved in and is adapted to the current equilibrium in the systems of the Earth. This equilibrium was achieved by hundreds of millions of years of evolution of the biosphere, removing carbon dioxide from the air, establishing great expanses of forests, wetlands, coral reefs, and animal and microbe communities, each adapted to its habitats in intricate global mutual dependence.

Man is the latest addition to this community and is the only rebellious species. He has been releasing, in a short time-span of his existence, much of the carbon dioxide stored in the earth for tens to hundreds of millions of years. He has destroyed much of the biosphere and disturbed the functioning of the entire system. A consequence is the climate change.

Some people dispute the climate change, either from ignorance or immediate self-interest. Science is honest and solid. If difficult to understand, which is quite natural for most people, it should be accepted. Man can now manipulate photons, electrons and atoms and understand the size, structure and functioning of the universe and most people enjoy the results of science. But, somehow, some people refuse to acknowledge the basic functioning of the systems of the planet and their services, on which man depends entirely for his life and which science has been clarifying. It is time to correct the errors of humanity.

## Current world

The most visible surface of civilization is really marvelous: science, technology, medicine, agriculture, civil engineering, communication, transport, entertainment. Humanity has developed a high civilization and is proud, perhaps with reason. But, we all know that the world is full of difficulties. Most people avoid thinking of them as it makes them uncomfortable and anyway they cannot do much about them. The problem is that people who could do something are not addressing them as they should be.

The causes of this situation include: first, the human habitat conditions, the current equilibrium in the systems of the Earth, are changing due to abuses by humans; second, the natural resources accumulated over millions of years are being exhausted; third, the wealth of the planet is taken by small groups of people and unavailable to a vast majority of the population; fourth, some people in positions of decision maintain idealistic and impossible views of human nature and the natural world and consequently prevent the adoption of rational ways.

As long as the Dons promote the growth of population and consumption, dig up all natural resources and control all the wealth, as long as the Nobles promote noble but impossible ideals and reject necessary measures demanded by nature, as long as most people support this situation, even if reluctantly, not knowing alternatives or the consequence of continuation, then the societies will continue to have conflicts and the planet will continue being ravaged and crowded over by humans, to the exclusion of millions of other species.

The Earth is the only home for humanity and it is being covered with trash. The biosphere is being extinguished and even the geological structures of the crust are being damaged. The services of nature, which man depends on but abused without knowing their values or finiteness, will decline. Humanity seems intrinsically doomed, as were all the civilizations in history, by her own blind self-destructive nature. In some decades at most, I think, shortages of resources and social and environmental collapse will cause another world war, this time all-out with biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. Many people will die young wondering why, or perhaps even without time to wonder.

There have always been wars throughout history with much waste and suffering but they never threatened the continuity of the species *Homo sapiens*. However, the situation is now changed. Man developed technologies that can end the civilization and, possibly, the species. The best that can be hoped for would be a dark age, from which humanity may, or may not, recover.

Today, the world is full of difficulties, such as armed conflict, famine, natural disaster, terrorism, refugees, drug problems, and human trafficking, and they only grow because the so-called world leaders are not addressing the fundamental causes, such as inequity and population issues. Many of the ignored people are driven to petty crimes to survive, or resort to drugs to alleviate their suffering, or sneak into another country, and some, those with some spirit and quite-natural anger and hatred and with nothing to lose, rebel against the system and adopt, in a final protest, shootings in city center, suicide bombings or even large-scale wars, perhaps a prelude to the coming global one. Trying to stem these tides by force, by border control, or by accommodating million refugees, while maintaining the system that engenders them, will only increase the trend.

The consequence is that nations or groups of people will compete for diminishing resources with whatever means available and for this purpose spend huge amounts of efforts and resources. And the Dons respond to this demand by making almost any sorts of weapons available to those who can pay, except nuclear arms, for now. Some nations maintain, and are willing to use, hundreds or thousands of nuclear weapons, and the means of their delivery to anywhere in the world, and so others would naturally want the same, to at least have some hope of avoiding direct attacks. But those that have try to prevent them to do so, calling them rogue states or evil nations. They are only doing what the others did decades ago in much larger scales and they are thousand times more afraid of the others than the other way around.

The direct causes of the coming war include ravages of the planet, shortages of resources, human population size, and concentration of wealth but the fundamental problem is the human nature, especially idealism, blindness or shortsightedness, evilness, greed, brutality, selfishness, and weakness. These traits are common to everyone, to varying degrees. The cause of the current situation is that the Dons and the Nobles have used these traits to gain wealth, power, prestige, or to satisfy their ego. Some of these people seem genuinely well intentioned but the results are just the same. Their fault is shortsightedness, namely, they see only a small point and do not see the consequences of their actions to the whole. The most notable, and most damaging, consequence is the huge and growing human population that causes ravages of the planet and conflicts over resources, land most of all.

The idealism or blindness is manifest in some social systems and rules such as the inclusion of limitless procreation among the declared human rights and the prohibition of abortion, euthanasia and death penalty. Respect

for human life is a noble sentiment but it cannot be absolute. The insistence of absolute claim to life is a manifestation of ignorance of how the systems of nature work and of the historical, and current, facts of civilizations. In what idealists promote there are much internal contradictions, such as maintaining alive mass murderers and terminally ill patients and saving a few newborns with genetic or other defects at huge costs while thousands or millions of innocent and healthy people who can be saved at the same cost are dying. Some of these ideals could, perhaps, be realized in a world of a limited population size but not in the current world of a huge and growing population. Death is an unavoidable fact of life and humanity needs to learn to accept it, however reluctantly, for the peace of the community as a whole. We all know, and need to acknowledge, that there is evilness in human mind. Societies need to eliminate some of the most extreme before the situation reaches a stage of social conflict or war and innocent people are killed.

Another error of humanity is trying to achieve a single world community. Some people seem to consider it an ultimate ideal. On conceptual level it may be an ideal but in the real world it is not. A nation is a group of people, with common language, history, customs, values and beliefs, trying to achieve common ideals with sovereignty within boundaries recognized by the neighbors. Each people are different from others. Trying to mix all the peoples of the world in a single community is a misguided idea and a cause of conflicts.

In order to assure a peaceful future, some definitive measures need to be taken soon. Half-measures such as carbon tax and solar electricity will not change the situation.

### **Necessary measures**

The most fundamental measure is the reduction of population [1] and this starts with the control of fertility. The huge population is at the base of all problems such as poverty, exhaustion of resources, CO2 emission, accumulation of trash, conflicts, migrants and need to create jobs. The principle of the biosphere is a two-child limit but this is against the current ideal of free procreation and will be difficult to realize. Another measure is to limit consumption and maintain healthy human habitats. This is against the current drive for economic growth and will be equally difficult, as discussed below. Other measures include equity, individual rights and obligations, and the concept of a nation. Humanity needs to establish principles for peace and her evolution as a rational species, not in the model of the survival of the fittest of wild animals and plants.

### **Games on the Olympus**

The games continue on the summit while the world below burns and crumbles. From the lofty temple, the Dons, their minions and the Nobles see tall buildings above the clouds and mist, passenger planes flying in all directions, and thousand-foot cruise ships, billion-dollar private yachts and fleets of carrier groups on the oceans. They are pleased and conclude that humanity is well and human development has no limit.

From time to time they hear rumors such as that the climate is changing, that species are vanishing, and that huge numbers of people are dying of hunger or fleeing from armed conflicts or natural disasters. The minions call a conference to discuss ways to solve these problems and come up with perfect solutions. They feel good at solving another problem of man and pass the responsibility of their execution to him. Fifteen or twenty years later, seeing the worsening situation, younger minions with their own enthusiasm repeat the same process and announce their own proposals with ceremony and fanfare and feel good at their achievement.

The Dons continue erecting moai - taller and taller buildings, auto-racing circuits, Olympic stadiums, huge military machines - and continue showing off their wealth - huge houses, private jets and yachts, collections of multi-million-dollar jewels and paintings. They serve bread and circus to those people who fit into their scheme of raking in all available wealth, by deforesting, fracking the crust of the planet, offering fast foods and plastics conveniences, offering entertainments such as auto racing, sports championship, world cup, Olympic Games, casinos, film and music festivals, while giving them a minimum condition to keep them happy and working. Another scheme is the globalization of economy to utilize the cheapest labor and to sell the products to scoop up small hard-won savings of the poorest people. Men do not earn enough to sustain a family and women are forced to work out of home. This is nicely promoted as women's rights and serves to increase the work force but sacrifices the traditional tranquil family life and the caring of small children. Yet another scheme is the use of the global communication networks together with social structures and coordinated social education to make people believe that they must have toys such as automobile, computer, TV, credit card, mobile phone, internet and social media. Those people are happily gorging themselves, traveling around the world, singing, dancing, cheering, chatting, playing games, while those who do not fit in, actually a majority, are ignored and left to live on the margin of society, trying to find a living in trash heaps, or dying of hunger, or fleeing from conflicts. Still more strategy: the Olympus coordinated the global campaign to

promote the so-called sustainable development. As presented, it is a dream-come-true: continuous limitless economic growth in peace, liberty, equality and fraternity while maintaining the planet healthy and beautiful. But in reality it is an impossible fantasy, a ploy to keep the game and festival going a little longer. After felling natural forests, they dedicate vast areas to monoculture farms, for grains, oil-palm, eucalyptus, beef-cattle, where few species can survive and in compensation erect forests of wind-turbine towers, even in the seas.

The Dons seem to be living only for today and for their ego, not even for the tomorrow of their children. Another problem is the Nobles. So many people have been brainwashed and some of what the idealists say are hard to refute, however shortsighted and irrational they may be if the whole is considered. I have some hope for the awakening of the minions and common people but they are powerless. Most people, I think, would be happy to live through life repeating organized tranquil routine days, caring for their children, accepting the finiteness, marveling the wonders of the world science continues revealing, and performing due shares in the community. But the Dons and the Nobles have erased this possibility.

Humanity continues wandering in the dark, chasing a mirage, unknowing what ails her, much less why. If the fundamental causes are unknown, solutions cannot be found.

### **The ways of nature**

Some principles can be perceived, such as constant population size of every species, elimination of the weak and misfit, mutual dependence between species, maintenance of the habitat conditions, consumption of renewable resources, and recycling of all resources. In short, all the systems and species are interlinked and function as an integrated whole. On these principles the biosphere has prospered vigorously for millions of years.

The fundamental principle is the preservation of the equilibrium in the geophysical systems and the biosphere and it requires another principle, constant population size compatible with the capacities of the habitats.

### **Ways to a peaceful civilization**

Humanity needs to sort out the current confusion of

- most activities being based on winner-takes-all,
- promoting all sorts of rights and ideals,
- promoting all sorts of consumption for the sake of economic growth,
- celebrating the birth of any number of children,

and establish basic principles of human existence. This cannot be accomplished by nuclear weapons or border control. Reason, logical thinking and science, attributes that distinguish man from other animals, can guide this process.

Some examples of the principles are that humanity cannot

- increase her population beyond equilibrium level,
- destroy the biosphere,
- disturb the functional cycles in the systems of the Earth,
- drill, dig, frack and damage the crust,
- release to the air the carbon stored in the earth for millions of years,
- consume and discard to the environment industrial products that are not or cannot be reprocessed to forms harmless to nature,
- insist on ideals incompatible with the rules of nature, nor
- allow some people to own disproportionate share of the wealth of the planet.

### **Constitution of humanity**

Humanity needs to formulate a constitution to assure peace and indefinite evolution, acknowledging some well-known facts such as discussed above and avoiding distraction by illusions and fantasies such as space colonization and limitless human rights. Idealists have been trying to impose a noble framework but their base is wrong, in not acknowledging the restrictions of nature and the evil in human mind, and so, however strongly they may be convinced and feel good at their nobleness, their framework is un-workable and they only confuse people. The limitless procreation is actually a cause of miseries and needless deaths.

The evolution of conceptual identity of humanity seems to have ceased at the beginning of the iron-age despite the enormous advances since in our understanding of the world, perhaps shackled in stone-age beliefs. Man found in iron an ideal material for weapon and since then has been developing all sorts of tools to kill fellow humans and other

co-inhabitants and destroying his only habitat. Technology seems to have run far beyond conscience. An intrinsic difficulty is that while the collective knowledge is cumulative, individual mind starts blank, ready to absorb the same ancient teachings generation after generation. In order to assure a peaceful future Humanity needs to wake out of this sleepwalk and correct the situation she has created.

The following framework for peace can be the foundation of the constitution.

### **Framework for peace [2]**

1. The Earth is finite in space, resources and capacity of its systems;
2. Man is adapted to the current equilibrium in the systems of the Earth;
3. A healthy biosphere is essential for equilibrium in the habitats for man;
4. The biosphere is maintained by photosynthesis in plants;
5. There is a limit to the size of the biosphere;
6. An increase of human population means a reduction of those of other species;
7. Perturbations in the biosphere as well as in other systems could break the equilibrium;
8. In a closed system the effective fertility rate of each species must be that of replacement;
9. There cannot be human rights that lead to the destruction of the community;
10. The concept of community needs to include all humanity and the biosphere;
11. Ultimately man will have to live with renewable resources;
12. The principles of economy need to be modified;
13. Equity requires a limit to personal wealth;
14. The meaning of life must be found in something other than procreation or consumption;
15. All ideals cannot be realized;
16. Some new rationality needs to be added to the rules of community;
17. Evolutionary success of Homo sapiens will be greater in a small permanent community;
18. The Earth can support indefinitely an abundant lifestyle in a limited global civilization;
19. Many wars were due to mismatches between available resources and human demands on them;
20. Human population must be reduced.

### **Hope**

The necessary measures will be hard to accept for most people, as they have been conditioned for so long in the ways of the Dons and the Nobles. I maintain some hope that concerned people in the wide fields of science will come together in time and assure a peaceful future for humanity.

### **References**

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2. Yuji Ishiguro, *One-Billion World*, Booklink Publicações Ltd, Rio de Janeiro, 2010.