

The Ethics of Inequality

by

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“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The prose of Thomas Jefferson’s revered Declaration of Independence predicates the founding of this nation upon a premise that can be difficult to reconcile with reality. The words ring with the flow and meter of sincerity striving for truth; yet remain doomed by their nature to fall short of the mark. We the *species* are a population of 7 billion individual humans, all unique; co-existing on this quaint little planet we call the Earth. The magnitude of that diversity equates to 7 billion viewpoints multiplied by the number of issues facing the whole of human society, a product of unfathomable proportions.

Equal is defined: “as great as; the same as, like or alike in quantity, degree, value, etc. The preceding paragraph may sound to the reader’s ear like something akin to the splitting of hairs, and I would offer a rebuttal of no two hairs being equal and certainly not the halves of a single hair split in twain. I would also point out a mathematical symbol that summarizes my argument with a simple elegance.

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We’re all comfortable with the symbolism represented here; we know that whatever is found on the left side is *equal* to that found on the right. An argument could be made that different expressions can be equal, yielding the same eventual outcome. The inverse of that argument could also be interpreted as using different methods of expressing a single basic quantity. What is absolutely clear from any definition is that $1 \neq 7,000,000,000$. How do we

integrate the diverse intentions and needs of humanity without carrying over the attitudes of persecution and violent persuasion so common in the evolution world culture? We start by recognizing that while we are not all created equal, we are all equally human.

"You can tell the greatness of a man by what makes him angry" Abraham Lincoln

Humanity is entrenched in the depths of a global social identity crisis. History teaches us that we all "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" throughout the span of our existence, yet we revere and exalt use of the same oppressive and violent qualities in popular entertainment. The media saturation committed by so called "reality television" is a travesty of entertainment, addicting its broad following to a spoon fed diet of non-stop housewives drama, bad-girl battle royal sex parties and an unending stream of rape, abuse and murder cases. Awareness I understand and advocate, but enough is enough; one must remember that familiarity breeds contempt.

Pride in freedom of choice is conflicted by the "go forth and proselytize" mentality most prevalent in the not-so-forbidden topics of politics and religion. The majority of people seem to expect others to listen to and agree with their point of view while remaining mute upon the subject of their own differing proclivities. Freedom of speech is encouraged until it crosses the invisible line and steps on your paradigm.

A firm but not quite official knock at the door usually heralds the arrival of some religious sect, cult or organization on a mission to convert me to their system of beliefs. In the span of a single weekend, I was privy to a crusade of divergent faith. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and the Catholics from the church around the corner all had pamphlets in hand as they invariably interrupted my day; well-meaning attempts to save my soul, however, unwelcome and

uninvited. I wonder what their reactions would have been had I bluntly stated the hypothesis that their collective religions are based entirely on the movement of the sun throughout the seasons of the year? Is there a possibility that this approach would encourage a more strenuous attempt to convert me to their point of view from my obviously heathen beliefs? Most likely, therefore I tolerated the intrusion, nodded and agreed in the proper places and wished them well upon their various ways.

In polite company, one is expected to steer clear of the subjects of religion and politics in order to maintain the decorum of avoiding argument in favor of more peaceful relations. The inevitable result of that course of action is a debilitating lack of conversation devoted to what may well be the most important instigators of social strife. If you do not choose action, the choice will be made for you by default. Power becomes delegated by proxy to solve issues that are inherently individual in nature, matters of choice that cannot be legislated.

Responsibility and morality are neither inherent properties nor quantifiable in units, cannot be transferred, delegated or assumed and ultimately settle firmly around the neck of the executor of the relevant decision. While choice is truly the only freedom that exists in life, it is simultaneously the prime causality of personal responsibilities affecting the course of all social interaction. This world is full of those who seem blithely unaware of that basic principle, moving haphazardly through life and complaining loudly of the results, "it's not fair!" Well, I've got some news for you; fair comes once a year and you pay at the gate!

In the natural world, there are no wars to protest, genocidal leaders to follow or oppressive regimes to rally against; the universal law is eat or be eaten. This is a prime tenet of basic survival, a trait deeply ingrained within the human animal; it is survival of the fittest.

Gazelles do not debate the finer points of territorial incursion with a pride of invading lions; they flee to avoid being consumed. Our instincts were honed for millennia to survive in a world that no longer exists. It is time to adapt our attitudes.

People simply aren't meant to get along all of the time; rarely are they able to accomplish that feat even within that most basic and closely knit of social units, the family. This may be an uncomfortable truth to fathom, however the evidence supporting this postulate surrounds us at every turn. Domestic violence, child abuse, school shootings, rape, murder and robbery are rampant from coast to coast and still the media outlets beg for more footage.

Take into consideration the sheer quantity of time, effort and resource consumed by conflict around the globe. Start with regions involved in all out warfare, add to it countries with open rebellions in progress, police actions, suppression of terrorism and anarchistic warlords vying for power compounded with espionage, political upheaval, religious unrest, and socio-economic uncertainty and you begin to paint an accurate picture of this sea of troubles.

The battle for the "holy-land" has been raging for more than two thousand years; none have gained mastery and no end to the conflict is in sight. How can the claim to worship of a peaceful god be supported by unending bloodshed? It cannot. Those who claim they serve the peace, yet formulate the machinations of war must by their very nature have a vested interest in the outcome. Christianity, Islam and Judaism all claim to be the only way to heaven, commit atrocities in the name of God against one another, yet all stem from the same source.

Conflict and strife have played a major role in political, social and technological development throughout the course of history. Advances in nearly every branch of modern knowledge can be traced back to a militaristic origin, from the bone-club to robotic spacecraft.

Names immortalized in the annals of antiquity such as Alexander, Julius and Napoleon are some of the many for whom entry into the tomes of history took place astride the saddle of a warhorse. We are a warlike species and will use any intelligence or asset as a means of gaining superiority. Technology that can yield an advantage will become the priority for the powerful to remain in power. This philosophy is rooted in a paradigm that is better left behind. If humanity could put the effort into creation that has traditionally gone into destruction, we would have orbital hotels, the flying car and colonies on Luna, perhaps even beyond.

Here in the United States of America our population is dependent upon a multitude of media feeds supplying informative distraction around any issue you can dream of, yet so few of those I see on a day to day basis have any interest in the news or current world events. The astounding range of our modern technology gives us the ability to reach out and touch nearly any piece of information dreamt of; yet streaming media, gaming and pornography remain the most profitable content online.

A result of this media dependence is a form of blindness to the true needs of the modern human being. How much is too much? When does technology exceed the moral capability of the people it is intended to serve? From a certain point of view the technology in use today has made its supplicants weak and lazy, evidenced by the proliferation of a disposable fast-food fueled obsessively unhealthy population. Commercial advertisements preying upon the compulsive need for "keeping up with the Kardashians" are selling out the latest bling encrusted media streaming brass knuckle smart phones while children worldwide languish in starvation and poverty. The undercurrent of intolerant tolerance coursing through the daily vein of thought hides itself in plain sight through the use of contrivances such as "polite discourse" and "political correctness". Everyone can't be right, can they? We all know the difference of right and wrong,

between tolerance out of respect opposed to fear of reprisal and the disrespect intolerant behavior breeds. We are each ultimately responsible to ourselves for our own actions.

In this life there are three questions you must answer about yourself; who you are, where you are from and where you are going. Conflicted cultures everywhere can attribute their strife to numerous factors. Failure to respect the answers another has to these questions, overzealous pride in their own answers and indifferent ignorance altogether are some that come to mind immediately. I believe that if we the species were more committed to a unified set of answers we would reap the benefits of unimaginable greatness.

I for one shall continue to answer as I have for the majority of my life; I am Human, from Planet Earth and I am Going Forward.

