

Review of Edward Dutton's "The Past is a Future Country"

20230102

*This is too long for email. Click on **Review of Edward Dutton's** in your email to switch from email to Substack. It is a draft of a review for Amazon. I suspect it is also too long for Amazon, so I'm posting it here first to get feedback.*

Edward Dutton is always highly quotable. One of his central points: "Wokeness is the new child mortality; the new crucible of evolution." In other words, the woke will not inherit the earth. They don't breed.

Another term to like is "clever-silly," applied to Nobel prize winning economists (viz Bernanke, Krugman) embracing Modern Monetary Theory, MMT. Also call "Magic Money Tree." He uses the term mid-wit, which he has defined elsewhere thus:

Mid-wits increasingly dominate by their numbers, shouting down opponents. They are now more confident than ever, because some of them have earned newly-dumbed-down credentials at universities.

The big thing about mid-wits is that they are clever enough to know that it is "smart" to follow and propagate the politically dominant ideology. This licenses them to sneer and abuse those who are more interested in the truth, and are pointing out the problems in the narrative. Hence political correctness.

But mid-wits aren't clever and confident enough to reach their own opinions, and to value truth over social status.

Increasingly, mid-wits and mid-wittery are driving the more talented people and those who think for themselves out of universities.

Mid-wits thrive in areas where disputes cannot be settled by experiment or empirical means. Opinion-driven areas such as humanities are the favorites of mid-wits. Be a mid-wit in say chemistry or electronics, and you will quickly be exposed. But be a mid-wit espousing critical race theory and alleging systematic oppression, and you can impress all your friends and get a well-paying career as an academic or journalist before you are disproved.

Matthew Crawford elaborates that A **halfwit** is somebody who sacrifices academic disciplines and rigor, establishing a mild to severe messianic complex that is difficult to penetrate with facts and somebody is **witless** if they lack both instincts and education.

The strength of this book is Dutton's writing and his absolute lack of fear of calling things as he sees them. He is one of the few writers willing to put all of the factors into the equation. As always, he taunts the demons of political correctness in every conceivable way: sex and gender, race, intelligence, virtue signaling and political correctness itself, the sanctity of institutions such as government and academia, and hobby horses such as global warming. The graphs projecting the future of society, compiled with his co-author Rayner-Hilles, are a little bit raw, having been taken directly from the computer without editing in more comprehensible chart and axis labels. The text that supports them is more useful.

This review consists primarily of quotes from the book, taken chapter by chapter. The authors' conclusion is that civilization throughout the world is headed toward a reprise of the Bronze Age collapse of 1200 BC. It will be due to factors that Dutton has explored repeatedly since [At Our Wits End](#) - Why We're Becoming Less Intelligent and What it Means for the Future. The mid-wits have taken over, crowding out the genius that would be required to keep things going. To the extent that we are having children, they are born into the

stupid strata of society. They will not have the ability to keep things going, or even to sustain themselves in a general collapse.

The mid-wits have meanwhile totally bungled the financial management of society, mindlessly printing money. Women have ascended to positions of power for which they are temperamentally unsuited, being on the average more sentimental, less analytical than men. They support policies that are detrimental to people like themselves: open borders, transsexuality, Black Lives Matter and defunding the police.

The authors' best guess as to where things are headed is toward a multistage collapse in which the talented few successively escape mismanaged polities until only a fraction remain, most likely small, homogeneous and traditional, often religious redoubts. This review is written from Eastern Europe for precisely the reasons the authors give in Chapter 5.

Here follow the points worth quoting in each of the chapters. Paragraphs opening with a quote are lifted directly from the text.

Chapter 1. - The Paradox of Left-Wing Hegemon. The right wing has a fertility advantage. Even though left-wing agenda seems to be taking over – people are individualistic, homosexuality is approved, all sex outside marriage is approved, those with traditional conservative values are the people that are having children.

A prime reason intelligence is low among the fertile is that social programs encourage low intelligence people to have children. The average IQ of English on welfare is 85. Nonetheless, there is a segment of the more fertile population that is quite intelligent.

Virtue signaling is more prevalent among intelligent people because intelligence predicts absorbing the dominant ideology and persuading yourself that you believe it to the social gains associated with it. The virtue previously signaled was religiosity. Today's virtues are equality and harm avoidance.

“Such a society becomes highly individualistic and materialistic and, whether it is in Athens, Rome or Baghdad, you see the rise of feminism and women in positions of power. In declining Baghdad there were even female lawyers and imams.” There is a cycle. Civilizations get rich, become decadent and collapse, after which there is a return to the countryside and the simpler life. At that point it begins again, with selection for intelligence.

The authors doubt that China or a confederacy of the elites in Western society will manage to control the destiny of humanity. They, like the rest of us, are getting stupider. They simply will not have the means. They are not replacing themselves any more than the rest of us. Per James Flynn in [Does your family make you smarter](#) their kids on average are much more ... average than they.

The book anticipates a hypothetical pandemic, “The consequence of which will be a massive population collapse; mass death, in which possibly as much as 90% of the world population will die off a relatively short period of time. This will be global, in a way that earlier collapses were not to the same extent, because of the globalized, interconnected nature of the modern world.” Perhaps Covid and the biological products that have been injected into 70% of the world's population fit his description. Even at this early date they have measurably increased mortality and decreased fertility.

The authors write that this is going to be a collapse like the end of the Bronze Age, the collapse of the Mycenaean Greeks, the Hittites, the new Kingdom Egyptians the Assyrians and the Babylonians and the Elamites about 1200 BC, which was followed by a dark age about 800 years. "This book will be a story of exile in abandonment in that context, not triumph and rejuvenation. There will be a great escape whereby intelligent, conservative people flee the apocalyptic chaos to establish refuges of civilization in which they weather the storm of the dark age."

Chapter 2 - The Psychology of Conservatives and Liberals. Conservatives are group oriented, more focused on society whereas liberals are focused on the individual. The woke philosophy is all about championing individuals. Liberals, following Rousseau, see people as having been created equal. They believe that the observed inequalities are the result of evils perpetrated upon the weak. Conservatives see inequality as the evolved, natural state of man.

Chapter 3 - "Why does culture always seem to move to the left?" The authors cite Jonathan Haidt's five moral foundations: care, fairness, loyalty to the group, authority and sanctity or purity. Liberals tend to see only the first two, the individualizing moral foundations. Conservatives see as well the last three, called binding moral foundations, and weight all five equally. The fact that conservatives can see the liberal point of view, but not vice-versa, pushes society ever leftward.

More intelligent people better discern the prevailing worldview. They see the social benefits of conforming to that dominant worldview. They are better at forcing themselves to believe it by coming up with superficially convincing arguments for doing so, thus gaining social status.

The sexes see things differently. "Indeed, British psychologist Simon Baron Cohen has argued that we should conceive of a spectrum between what he calls the "extreme male brain" at one end and the "extreme female brain" at the other based on data about the ways in which males and females think differently on average. The extreme female brain is deeply concerned with how people feel and with everybody getting along. It is high in empathy and low in systematizing, being "system-blind." The extreme male brain, conversely, is primarily concerned with systematizing as well as with competition, hierarchy, and order, and it is low in empathy."

Women, and female thinking, are becoming dominant. "We are increasingly seeing a trend among the woke left, ready and willing to sacrifice not just large swaths of the life sciences, but even the scientific method itself, under the umbrella accusation that it is a conspiratorial factory of sexist and racist ideas."

Chapter 4 – The Weakening of Group Selection. For a group to thrive it must monitor and remove selfish, antisocial, free riding, or parasitic individuals. Those kinds of people will tend to be selected out due to social selection. Those traits will die out as their possessors do not successfully raise children.

Group selected humans followed what biologists call a slow life history: stable pair bonds, fidelity, investment in children, strong commitment to society. As Dutton wrote in *At Our Wits End*, we are becoming less intelligent. The dialog is dominated by mid-wits, a characteristic of which is clever-silly ideas.

"An example would be postmodernism, which, typically mixed in with 'Critical Theory', avers that 'truth' is merely the oppressive worldview forcibly instituted by powerful groups, and should be 'deconstructed' in order to empower the disempowered and oppressed. Postmodernist thought is almost invariably presented in highly verbose, opaque, and profound-seeming prose."

Religiousness was selected for in preindustrial conditions. It led to female fidelity and in group solidarity. Atheism is correlated with mutation, a deviation from what was selected for." Indeed, the clever sillies will subject everything that makes sense of the world (in which is adaptive to believe) to their critique. And they will strongly morally condemn those who dare to disagree with them, as is characteristic of narcissistic individualists, especially when disagreement punctures their belief in their own superiority, a belief which permits them to cope with a fundamental sense of insecurity."

To paraphrase the authors' examples of clever-silly ideas, multiculturalism induces an elevated state of anxiety – we evolved to be comfortable associating with people like ourselves. Temperament is heritable – we understand how people in our tribe think and behave. Extreme environmentalism is causing many people to reduce their fertility or even abandon it. Only those highly prone to wanting children by hardcoded genetic impulses, making them resistant to this dysphoria, end up doing so. Feminism encourages women to become highly educated and put status above children, limiting or eliminating their fertility.

The authors reiterate a core thesis: "In a sense, the ability to resist leftist-induced dysphoria is the new crucible of evolution. Where once the crucible of evolution was child mortality, it is now woke morality."

"...patriarchy can be regarded as adaptive, because if female sexuality is controlled, males are less worried about being cuckolded, so they are less likely to jealously fight each other, and more likely to cooperate, and their children enjoy confidence in who their father is, their full siblings and the rest of their extended family on their father's side. All of this elevates kin-cooperation and positive tribal ethnocentrism, thus aiding group selection. Accordingly, the acceptance, and promotion, of patriarchy becomes part of the religion with both males and females being selected to live in a patriarchal environment. Females who were submissive to the patriarchy were more likely to be invested in by males, and less likely to be cast out. Indeed, in this context, females will compete with each other to signal their patriarchal values, in order to attract the best quality men, and distrust men who do not appreciate these efforts."

"And if the nature of the group changes, such that it ceases to be composed overwhelmingly of genetically healthy people or overwhelmingly of group oriented people – and it will cease to socialize its offspring properly, resulting in more and more offspring adopting fitness reducing behavior or even developing abnormal sexuality.

"...Being adapted to patriarchy, females are adapted, to a greater extent than males, to a situation in which choices are made for them, usually by their parents, and particularly by their fathers. Left to their own devices, they are, accordingly, more likely to make maladaptive choices. These choices would be rendered even more maladaptive by a runaway individualistic society positively encouraging them to make maladaptive choices. This would be in line with evidence that being wealthy is far more damaging to the fertility of females than to the fertility of males. "

"It also appears that Eastern Europe is following a very different political trajectory from that of the West. It is much higher in binding values, as expressed in relatively strong ethnocentric attitudes, religiosity (in some Eastern European countries, at least), and intolerance of homosexuality....

"If such countries continue with these attitudes, we can predict that, eventually, at least in the more northern states, they will be manifestly safer, and more stable, than Western European countries, because they will be lower in ethnic conflict and thus higher in cooperation. Their success may then motivate Westerners to act to imitate them."

"Then there is the issue of declining intelligence in Western countries, which we have already touched upon a few times. Intelligence is associated with liberal values, and with racial tolerance; at least when liberalism is the dominant way of thinking. Intelligence is also associated with generalized altruism, and with an ability to overcome cognitive or instinctive biases; rendering one interested in possibilities which might not necessarily elevate genetic fitness.

"For these reasons, as intelligence declines—holding everything else constant—we would predict that people would become higher in negative ethnocentrism. Intelligence is also negatively associated with religiousness, meaning that, as intelligence declines, we might expect people to become more religious, and, potentially, more ethnocentric as a result. Furthermore, as intelligence continues to decline, we would predict that, ultimately, living standards will get worse, and, therefore, mortality salience and general stress will increase. This can be predicted to elevate both religiousness and ethnocentrism as we have already argued.

"As far as we can see, the Black Lives Matter movement—and the religious fervour, violence, iconoclasm, and polarization that it represents —is a significant landmark on the road to the future down which we are now walking."

Chapter 6 - Modelling the Future

The authors generate a large number of computer models. Models produce predictive numbers, which as the “population bomb,” “peak oil,” “climate catastrophe,” and recent Imperial College, London Covid projections tell us can be very wide of the mark. However, the accompanying text is very insightful.

“Having children is connected with the idea that life has eternal significance.”

“The provision of healthcare and centrally heated housing will be among the first to go. Homelessness and crime will ensue. A population that has been artificially propped up for centuries by generous welfare payments and free or heavily subsidized healthcare will, in fits and jolts, be gradually reintroduced to normal Darwinian conditions.”

“...liberalism is now dying—everywhere. It is dying among the more intelligent; it is dying among the less intelligent. It is dying among blacks; it is dying among whites. It is dying among men; it is dying among women. Only, it hasn't been dying up till now of course; liberalism has been thriving. It is liberal **genes** that have been dying.”

“As we've said, left-wing identification, or viewpoint, peaks among the Millennial generation and then there is a sudden ‘Generation Z’ reversal. This would be indicative of the notion of the West having reached ‘Peak Woke’ and Generation Z or ‘Zoomers’ reacting strongly against it. And indeed, many indicators illustrate this. Support for the Republican Party takes a sharp dip among Millennials and then sharply rises among Generation Z in the white male sample.”

Chapter 7 - The New Byzantiums.

Black Lives Matter used mob rule and intimidation to get its way. They cowed the major political parties, and most large corporations, into supporting them.

“The female average IQ differs little from the male IQ, except that the male range is wider. But females are higher in Conscientiousness, which is the other crucial predictor of educational The result is the rise The ‘Head Girl’ (who) combines normal range high intelligence with high Conscientiousness, high Agreeableness and the higher social conformity, and concern with empathy over systematizing that, on average, distinguishes stereotypical females from stereotypical males.”

Richard Lynn, an author Dutton frequently cites, writing in [Sex Differences in Intelligence](#) would not consider the difference “little.” He concludes that European women have an average IQ about four points lower and a narrower distribution of intelligence than men. They would be disproportionately represented among Dutton's “mid-wits.”

”It is widely agreed by scholars of societal cycles that there are eight key markers of civilizational decline, at least some of which may be with us already:

1. A decrease in stratification, and differentiation, in terms of the kinds of work pursued.
2. A decline in how economically specific the society is. Could this already be with us in the form of people increasingly switching jobs or juggling multiple part-time jobs?
3. A weaker relationship between the political class and the economic class, which implies lack of state control. Could this already be with us, in the rise of Big Tech?
4. A fall in the resources invested in culture and arts. Could this already be with us, in the growing attitude that the purpose of higher education is simply to make money?
5. Restriction in exchange of ideas between individuals. Could this already be with us, with the rise of Big Tech censorship? On the other hand, this situation is artificially created by individualist ideologues.
6. Decrease in opportunities for trade and the distribution of resources. Do we see this in the partial breakdown of free trade blocs, such as the European Union? However, this breakdown is, again, voluntary.
7. A loss of coordination; society being decreasingly well organized. Could this already be with us such as in the sluggish response to the beginnings of Covid-19 in March 2020?

8. Breakaway states and smaller polities. This can be seen in Britain splitting from the European Union, as well as in powerful separatist movements in Scotland, Flanders, and Catalonia“

The title “The Past is a Future Place” sets the authors’ theme. We have been living beyond our means for quite a while. We have been spending down the accumulated wealth of our parents’ and grandparents’ generations. Not just the material wealth, but also the wealth of spirit and character that enabled us to achieve this richness.

We are getting stupider and less agreeable. We are getting becoming more individualistic and less group oriented. Civilization is falling apart.

The great majority of mankind are not prepared for the fall. They will not be physically healthy enough to take care of themselves. They will not be intelligent enough to figure out how to cope. They will not have been educated enough as to how things work – electrical grids, water and systems, auto maintenance. Most don't have talent enough to live on their own.

We are all familiar with the fall of Rome. Most historians peg it at 410 A.D. The Roman Empire, however, survived until the 15th century as the Byzantine Empire, when it succumbed to the Ottoman Turks.

The late Bronze Age collapse of about 1200 B.C. was much more complete. Not coincidentally, it happened at a time when men ceased to be manly, women started to run things, and people stopped having families.

Chapter 8 – The Long Slide.

“There is an extent to which, if you want to have children, you need to think about something beyond the self. You need to have a desire to nurture somebody else, and to sacrifice your own selfish desires for the good of somebody else. And what is 'the good' of somebody else? It is often assumed to mean raising them such that they can become successful and contented members of society, which means that they have to learn to be cooperative with other people and, sometimes, to sacrifice their own selfish desires for the collective good.”

“Of course, some children are not raised like this. They are indulged, and raised as individualists, and there is a growing body of evidence that those children experience considerable problems adjusting to being independent adults in comparison to those who are raised in a traditional and group-oriented fashion, when the necessary confounds are controlled for.”

“Once the society switched towards individualizing values, more and more people became individualists, and, eventually, these people were encouraged into, or depressed into, not wanting children, or, at least, they did not want large families. This occurred due to never-before seen conditions of luxury, permitting runaway individualism.“

“Regional inequalities within and between countries (are) only reversed, or otherwise treated, by government intervention; social housing, town or city planning, tax incentives, and subsidies. But with the coming multiplication of the numbers of governments in the world, governments will be decreasingly able to affect these forces for regional inequalities due to being in intense competition with each other.”

Reviewer’s conclusion

The authors apply an evolutionary paradigm in explaining the chaos in the modern world. Increasing stupidity is a product of evolution. It is revealed by falling IQ tests, standardized test scores, vocabularies and other measurable artifacts of societies.

It would be harder to measure the increasing level of deleterious mutations in the human genome, but the evidence is all around us. Though the measurements are somewhat time-bound and subjective, the number

of recorded instances of mental disease has gone up dramatically. Most of us who have led long lives would agree that people are crazier than they were in our youth.

The autism spectrum is one of Dutton's recurrent themes. Though he does not go deeply into the causes, the evidence that it is caused by environmental factors, primarily the childhood vaccination schedule. See my video review at [Turtles All The Way Down: Vaccine Science and Myth](#) and [The Political Economy of Autism](#).

The authors' major conclusion is that our present civilization is in the state of collapse. Countries will fall apart. Russia may be the first to collapse. Just as the Soviet Union was an artificial conglomeration of unwilling participants, the rump Russian Federation is likewise an artificial agglomeration of Finns, Tatars, Dagestanis, Tuvas, Chechens, Ingushians and others forced to unite with the more powerful Slavs. When it loses its present disastrously ill-advised war, the Federation may spin apart.

The authors tell us how same could happen in the United States. The profoundly deep corruption being exposed by the Twitter scandal reinforces the reality of the corruption exposed by the Hunter Biden laptop, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden and so many others. Amazing books such as Robert Malone's [Lies my Government Told Me](#) and Whitney Webb's [One Nation Under Blackmail](#) are spilling hugely damaging revelations one after another.

Their scenario for the disintegration of the United States is not quite as straightforward as mine for Russia, because white conservatives, white liberals, Blacks and Hispanics do not possess as clearly defined geographical territories. There would have to be considerable relocation. However, said relocation is already taking place as people exit New York and California for Texas and Florida. The vast relocations after World War II – Germans leaving land that became Polish, Poles leaving land that became Russian and so on – took place, however uncomfortably.

The most significant call of all, and the one not made by other authors, is the widespread depopulation that will take place in the chaos and economic collapse. It will not be a mere prolongation of the birth dearth of the past 50 years, but a die off due to disease and the less intelligent, less robust people's inability to survive the coming harsh conditions.

Their optimistic conclusion is that just as at the end of the Bronze Age and Roman collapses there will be pockets of intelligence people who survive and start the cycle of civilization over again. Our challenge is not to attempt to perpetuate today's moribund countries and societies, but to perpetuate our own bloodlines and culture by creating our own policies and institutions.