

Why our status quo has failed and is beyond reform Charles Hugh Smith

Reading Charles Hugh Smith is always a pleasure. He is so profoundly logical and organized. In this book he makes a very good case that the world is headed for an economic disaster that he cannot avoid. The question is what happens next.

The only advice that I would give to Charles, and the reader, is to broaden his perspective. Charles addresses his readership, and analyzes the population of the countries that he is discussing, as rational individuals. There are several shortcomings with this perspective.

First of all, from an evolutionary standpoint, we evolve as a gene pool, not as individuals. The demographic problems he discusses are not problems of individuals but of populations. We, the European population, are simply not reproducing ourselves. Even when we produce flesh and blood errors, we do not endow them with the cultural heritage which is part and parcel of who we are. There is a spiritual dimension to this. Having children is not an irrational act. The rationalist Smith needs to observe that it is some religious or evolutionary impetus that drives us to have children, nothing which can be explained logically. They do not make sense.

On another tangent, we are products of evolution, and evolution has continued to break next bead in human populations over the past 10,000 years. This is the meat of books by Nicholas Wade, Gregory Clark, Stephen Pinker and many others. The implication for Smith's thesis is that he cannot assume that we are all capable of absorbing his wisdom. We are systematically irrational, even the smartest of us. That smartest being the one or 2% who would read Smith's books in the first place. All of humanity is profoundly out of touch with its own self-interest.

An observation that I would and is that although it is our irrationality that has driven us to expand our numbers past the carrying capacity of the earth, that irrationality seems to be constraining her further reproduction. Quite simply put, liberalism, per progressive politics has convinced people that they ought not to reproduce. Moreover, they are not. At intellectual levels beneath the progressives we find populations that are simply not sufficiently comfortable with their situation in life to feel that they ought to reproduce. You have disaffected white kids, gamers, who want nothing to do with the commitments of family. This disaffection is becoming evident in all populations, even Hispanics and Blacks that have historically not been touched by such concerns.

What this means to me is that yes, as we no longer have meaningful work for most people in the world, the problem will solve itself at least to some degree because the people whose children would not have work are more and more not having those children. The overpopulation problem seems to be solving itself in some degree because people are not having children. The question then is, how to raise children how for those of us who are having children to raise them to be prepared for life in the late 21st century. This will be after the broad economic collapse, after the Ponzi scheme subjected Smith describes so well have fallen apart. It will be after the globalization has started to recede, and populations arm again more self-sufficient in terms of the food that they grow in the products that they manufacture. And probably is poorer as well. My personal opinion is that we need to raise this right rising generation with a certain irrationality called religion otherwise they will go nowhere. In particular I would point to ascetic Judaism, Mormonism and the Hutterites as a model of its sub pools of the gene pool that seemed to be reproducing themselves. As much is.

As much then, as Smith wraps his arms around the entirety of a big problem, even his bright grasp seems to overlook significant aspects of the question. Those are the aspects that bear on our human irrationality, and the role of your rationality in our reproduction. I would offer that we have somehow, irrationally, managed to reproduce ourselves for the past several million years. It would not be wise to bet against it happening again.